

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 1 of 82

- 1- Summer Fest Ad
- 2- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller
- 6- Jr. Teener Box Score: Groton 11, Milbank 0
- 7- Jr. Teener Box Score: Groton 16, Clark 10
- 8- Jr. Teener Box Score: Groton 12, Clark 1
- 9- Jr. Teener Box Score: Groton 16, Webster 4
- 10- Jr. Teener Box Score: Groton 11, Webster 4
- 11- Area COVID-19 Cases
- 12- June 25th COVID-19 UPDATE
- 15- Updated Baseball Schedule
- 16- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs
- 17- Weather Pages
- 20- Daily Devotional
- 21- 2020 Groton Events
- 22- News from the Associated Press



Congratulations Groton Area Graduates and Families from the Groton Lions & Leos Clubs... To help you celebrate this milestone, we invite you to Summer Fest 2020 in the Groton City Park, Sunday, July 12th. Summer Fest may help you with a fun place for your guests to spend some time between graduation events. See our flyer below or go to Summer Fest 2020 on Facebook.



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

© 2019 Groton Daily Independent

#123 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Our situation continues to grow worse. We are now at 2,432,800 cases in the US. There were 39,500 new cases reported today, which is an increase for the fourth consecutive day and our third consecutive day over 30,000 new cases; it is also perilously close to 40,000, a mark we really do not want to hit. This represents a 1.7% in total cases since yesterday; this is also higher than yesterday. I can say with certainty, no matter whose data you're consulting, this is the highest one-day new case report since the pandemic reached our shores. We've been doing this for five months now, and apparently we haven't learned a damned thing in that time.

124,344 people have died, 2423 of them reported today. Considering we had 754 yesterday, this looks pretty frightening; but it's too soon to panic. Turns out New Jersey added 1654 probable cases to its official count; these are deaths that occurred over the past months which have been reclassified as Covid-19, but they are not deaths from today. If we deduct those 1654 from today's total, we're at 769, which is much more in line with the kind of thing we've been seeing. It's not great, but it's no spike either.

I have 30 states reporting percentage increases in total cases greater than the overall US percentage increase of 1.7%. We talked last night about the fact that this may not be very important in states with very small numbers of cases because a small number of additional cases has an outsized effect on this percentage for them. I'm tracking those in case something blows up there, but at the moment, they're not a big worry. When we pull those out, we have 25 I'm tracking. These are as follows: AZ (5.1), MS (4.7), ID (4.7), FL (4.60), TX (4.5), SC (4.0), AR (4.0), OK (3.8), AL (3.6), UT (3.3), NV (3.0), WV (2.5), TN (2.4), WA (2.4), MO (2.4), GA (2.3), NC (2.1), IA (2.1), WI (2.0), OH (1.9), KY (1.9), CA (1.8), LA (1.8), NM (1.8), and OR (1.7). All of them show R_e over 1. (Remember that R_e is reproduction number; this shows evidence of a worsening outbreak when over 1, steady numbers at 1, and declines under 1.) Overall, 33 states are showing R_e at or over 1, four more than we had last night. That, in conjunction with the big increase in cases, is plenty to worry about.

The eight states whose two-week rolling averages show largest increases in case numbers are CA, TX, FL, GA, AZ, NC, LA, and OH. The eight showing the least change are NY, NJ, MA, PA, MI, CT, IA, and KY. The eight showing the greatest declines are IL, MD, VA, IN, MN, NE, RI, and DC.

The CDC reported today that they estimate between 5% and 8% of Americans, at least 20 million, have been infected with SARS-CoV-2 so far; this is around ten times the official case count you see above. The estimates are based on antibody tests, which can show past infection, and community surveillance measures. Given how inadequate testing availability has been throughout this outbreak in the US and the fact that a large share of infections is mild or asymptomatic, many cases were simply never identified. While this number of potential cases is huge, for anyone holding out hope we are nearing herd immunity, this will be disappointing news. We're not close.

Texas, Alabama, Missouri, and Nevada had record numbers of new cases today with Texas adding almost 6000. Its rolling seven-day average is at a new high and 340% higher than it was on Memorial Day. A surprise birthday party in Texas attended by 25 relatives resulted in 17 family members being diagnosed with Covid-19, seven who were at the party and another 10 to whom they transmitted it; three are hospitalized, a couple who've been married 68 years and their daughter who has breast cancer. Texas also reported more deaths than it has in over a month. Ohio had a big spike in new cases as well to 892, which is 250 more than yesterday. The home counties of Dallas, Phoenix, and Tampa all reported record-high case averages every day for more than two weeks running this month. Mississippi reported almost 1100 new cases today, the second time in four days they've been over 1000. They also report a record number of hospitalizations, and public health officials are voicing fears the system will become overwhelmed within days. The state's stay-at-home order ended June 1.

We'll also go ahead and add one more university to the ever-growing list of those quarantining student-athletes who have returned to campus for summer workouts. This one is Grand Canyon University in Ari-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 3 of 82

zona, where six people, four students and two staff, have tested positive. The University has quarantined the entire team. Here are the colleges and universities on that list at the moment: Alabama, Arkansas, Arkansas State, Auburn, Baylor, Boise State, Central Florida, Clemson, East Central, Florida, Florida State, Grand Canyon, Houston, Iowa, Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State, Kentucky, Louisiana, Louisiana State, Louisiana Tech, Marshall, Michigan, Michigan State, Mississippi, Mississippi State, North Dakota State, North Texas, Notre Dame, Oklahoma State, Rutgers, South Florida, Southern Methodist, Tennessee, Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech, Texas State, Troy, University of Texas at San Antonio, West Virginia.

A further concern regarding colleges and universities is the rest of the students. Several institutions have already reported case counts ticking up on campus, even though most are still closed to in-person classes until the fall semester opens. The University of South Carolina at Columbia, for example, has seen a spike in cases—79 new infections in the past eight days. These have been linked to gatherings off campus in neighborhoods and bars. Many students at universities live off-campus, so in addition to cases on campus, spread to the community is a concern.

College and university neighborhood outbreaks are frequently linked to bars, a popular evening destination for students. Bars are particularly good places to acquire an infection. Around 100 people tested positive after visiting bars around Louisiana State; downtown bars in Boise, Idaho, were the center of clusters of infections there; and several Florida bars have acted as foci of large outbreaks. According to Dr. Assaf Bitton, executive director of Ariadne Labs at Brigham and Women's Hospital and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, "Except for maybe a hospital with sick patients, I couldn't imagine too many more risky places than a super cramped indoor bar with poor ventilation and hundreds of people."

Long conversations in close contact are an excellent way to spread this virus. Speech releases many times more particles than even coughing, and these tend to be smaller and lighter particles which will drift in the air for longer. The closer together the people are, the greater the chance of transmission. And the louder speech is, the greater the exposure. Since bars tend to play loud music, it is usual to move closer together to talk and to speak more loudly, both of which enhance transmission. And, of course, there is also the risk factor provided by alcohol; judgment is frequently impaired as people drink, so it is less likely they will observe social distancing and other precautions.

Bars have been advised to keep music at lower volume so patrons can maintain social distance and do not need to shout to be heard. These businesses tend to run on fairly thin margins, so limitations on capacity can pose a challenge for owners. There has been talk in some localities of opening up sidewalks for bar patrons to increase the number of people who can be served without crowding. Outdoor settings are safer than indoor ones anyway, so this would serve a dual purpose in mitigating risk.

University officials acknowledge there isn't much they can do to control student behavior once students leave campus, but when they do, the community becomes at risk from campus outbreaks. Neighborhoods near campuses in addition to LSU have reported summer outbreaks too, Michigan State and South Carolina, for example. This sort of consideration should be part of institutional planning as we head into fall. According to The Chronicle for Higher Education, around 64% of campus plans for fall they reviewed include a return to in-person classes, so these concerns are relevant.

The states with the largest increases in cases since last week are as follows: Arizona, South Carolina, Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Idaho, California, Utah, Nevada, Montana, and Oregon. Hospitalizations have increased most sharply in California, Texas, Florida, Utah, and Oregon with Arizona, Arkansas, North and South Carolina, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah reporting record numbers of hospitalizations. And I can't believe I'm still saying this, but testing shortfalls have apparently seriously hampered states' capacity to get their hands around these outbreaks. We are hearing that labs are overwhelmed with more test kits than they can process, waiting lines are hours long at testing sites, and some states simply cannot get the kits in the first place. We have had months to solve these problems, and we are still unable to test at the levels needed to get these spikes all over the country under control.

I read a paper today that looked in some depth at likely transmission modes for Covid-19. The paper cites studies that find the virus remains infectious in aerosols (fine-particle clouds) for hours. Temperature, humidity, and UV radiation can influence how long it remains infectious. It also notes that viral load in the

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 4 of 82

upper respiratory tract (from which it is shed) is highest at the onset of symptoms, so peak infectiousness occurs shortly before and at the time of onset, which means there is "substantial asymptomatic transmission." And it concludes "airborne transmission of COVID-19 represents the dominant route for infection."

This study examines pandemic trends in three epicenters of infection, China, Italy, and the United States. It attributes mitigation in China to "lockdown of all cities and rural areas in the whole country, isolation of residents having close contact with infected people, and mandated wearing of face masks in public" and mitigation in Italy to "similar quarantine, isolation, and city lockdown measures." Then it says about the US, which used quarantine and isolation, some lockdowns, and social distancing, "Obviously, the continuous rise in the US infected numbers casts doubt on the effectiveness of those preventive measures alone," noting that, when specified localities like New York City began to require face masks, things did, indeed, begin to change in those localities. Here is the conclusion, "The inability of social distancing, quarantine, and isolation alone to curb the spread of COVID-19 is also evident from the linearity of the infection curve prior to the onset of the face-covering rule in Italy on April 6 and in NYC on April 17. Hence, the difference made by implementing face covering significantly shapes the pandemic trends worldwide."

The evidence just keeps piling up, doesn't it? I read an interview with biology professor, Dr. Karen Stine, of Auburn University about masks and transmission of Covid-19. She said, "Early on, scientists and doctors were not encouraging (and in fact were discouraging) mask use. But as evidence mounted, we learned from it—that's how science works—and now, the scientific and medical advice has changed. The consensus now is that wearing a mask in public can greatly reduce transmission of the COVID-19 virus." She also mentions the predominant spread through respiratory droplets and the effectiveness of masks at blocking the release of those droplets, citing studies that show evidence of their effectiveness in reducing transmission. Then the interviewer said, "But some people feel wearing a mask infringes on their freedom." Her reply: "Perhaps it does a bit. But if mild inconvenience outweighs civic responsibility for you in a time of national crisis—and over 100,000 deaths nationwide certainly qualifies as a crisis—are you comfortable with what that says about your values?" What, indeed?

And on the subject of transmission—and masks, there's this. Despite massive crowds, there have not been spikes in cases associated with the recent protests in various cities around the country. In many locations where there were protests with most people wearing masks, not even a single case has been linked to them. What we are seeing with much more frequency, is outbreaks linked to parties. We talked about bars earlier tonight; now we turn our attention to other kinds of gatherings. There was the birthday party in Texas, also mentioned earlier. There have been many others—14 cases arising from a party in Whatcom County, Washington, and another 15 cases associated with the first 14. Before that was done, 31 employers had to take action as a result of this gathering. I hope it was a fun one.

Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota, one of the country's foremost experts on pandemic spread, was interviewed on Meet the Press Sunday. He said he doesn't see this pandemic in the US easing between now and fall; he doesn't think we'll have a second or third wave because he believes we'll still be in the first one. He pointed out that, while we're doing much more testing, the surges are outpacing growth in testing, which means we have real growth in spread. Here's the punchline (if only this were a joke—and it most assuredly is not), "I'm actually of the mind right now—I think this is more like a forest fire. I don't think that this is going to slow down. Wherever there's wood to burn, this fire is going to burn, and right now we have a lot of susceptible people." That's not exactly what I wanted to hear

There's something headed our way that might complicate our situation in the US, a massive dust plume from the Sahara Desert. This is apparently a regular occurrence this time of year; but this appears to be the worst dust cloud from the Sahara in some 50 years. We are tracking it across the Atlantic Ocean, and it's due to arrive in the southeastern part of the country any day now. The dust can reduce visibility and aggravate respiratory problems for residents in its path. We expect effects on those with chronic respiratory conditions, and it seems likely it could create complications for those infected with this coronavirus as the dust irritates lungs that are already under stress. Additionally, this is probably not a good time for those with conditions aggravated by the dust to seek medical treatment when our health care system in

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 5 of 82

that part of the country is already under enormous stress.

Before we leave this thoroughly depressing report, I'll give you a small ray of sunshine. There are trials underway for a very old, but almost forgotten, treatment for severe cases of Covid-19, radiation. Over a century ago, before the advent of antibiotics, x-ray treatment was tried in treating pneumonias. Trials were done in hundreds of patients and showed great promise, but once antibiotics hit the market, interest died down. It hasn't really been tested for pneumonias since WW II; but now that we're dealing with a pneumonia for which antibiotics are useless, there is new interest.

There are trials underway in the US, Italy, Spain, India, and Iran. The dose of radiation is very small, far less than would be used to treat a cancer, for example, and the goal is not to kill the virus with it. In fact, a dose of radiation sufficient to inactivate virus in the lungs would be super-damaging to the patient. Instead, the target of the radiation is white blood cells active in immune responses called lymphocytes. These are the cells that make cytokines—messaging chemicals that can lead to the cytokine storm we now know is doing so much damage in many Covid-19 patients. Lymphocytes are highly sensitive to the DNA damage radiation can cause, and they sort of commit suicide in a process of programmed cell death called apoptosis whenever they detect the slightest damage.

Preliminary results from a trial in five patients at Emory University look pretty good. The median age of the patients was 90, so these were not young, healthy patients in the first place. All of them were on oxygen, and four recovered within a few days to the point where they no longer needed the oxygen. The fifth was still receiving oxygen, but still alive. There were no side effects apparent. Now this is a very small study, but it's promising. Ohio State University and Brigham and Women's Hospital are enrolling patients in larger studies (24 and 48 patients, respectively) right now. These should provide further information on how well this treatment might work and on who benefits most from it. I have not heard anything about the European and Asian trials, but I'll look out for more news.

One of the first Covid-19 cases in Texas, and Fort Worth's very first, was the Rev. Robert Pace, an Episcopalian priest. He got pretty sick and was hospitalized for a few days; he had a rough time, but made a full recovery. About that experience, he said, "I always like to be first at some things, but not this one."

A few weeks after he tested negative for the virus and was declared recovered, he received a call from the doctor who had treated him. The doctor needed a favor, some blood. He had a patient who'd been on a ventilator for a week and whose lungs were shutting down; he didn't expect the man to live, and he was out of options. And so he decided to take a shot at using convalescent plasma; since the Reverend and this patient had the same blood type, the doctor asked for a plasma donation.

Pace said, "It was this wonderful feeling, the idea that I could directly affect someone who needed it. I was elated. 'Sign me up. Where do I go?'" Several plasma treatments later, the patient rebounded, coming off the ventilator and eventually returning home to finish his recovery. It's too soon to say for sure that the plasma is what made the difference, but that is a possibility. The physician arranged a meeting between donor and recipient a couple of months later. Pace reports, "It was one of the most joyous feelings to walk into the little courtyard and see him standing there, healthy and whole. I was so humbled."

Since supply is limited, not every patient can be treated with convalescent plasma, but the more times we do this, the more evidence we accumulate that will tell us how much difference it can make. Five more times, Rev. Pace has been asked for plasma, and five more times he's been pleased to go in and donate; he's allowed to donate monthly, and he goes in as often as he is able. He says, "I feel like we can all participate in miracles every day. Reflecting on this particular time in our country and in our world, we can all listen and we can look for opportunities to love our neighbor and to help our neighbor. That's what we're supposed to be doing."

Enough said.

Keep yourself healthy. We'll talk tomorrow.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 6 of 82

Milbank 14u 0 - 11 Groton Jr. Teeners

📍 Home 🎪 Exhibition 📅 Wednesday June 24, 2020

	1	2	3	4	5	R	H	E
MLBN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
GRTN	0	2	4	1	4	11	11	1

BATTING

Milbank 14u	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO	LOB
K Bergman...	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
J Pederson...	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
J Schulte (P...	2	0	0	0	0	2	0
O Tesch (S...	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
J Haysauer...	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
J Jonason (...)	2	0	0	0	0	2	0
M Seyer (RF)	2	0	0	0	0	2	0
R Rabe (1B)	2	0	0	0	0	2	1
E Hanson (C)	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Totals	16	0	0	0	1	11	2

LOB: 2

Groton Jr. Te	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO	LOB
T Diegel (CF)	4	1	0	1	0	2	3
R Groebing...	4	2	2	1	0	2	0
B Flieds (2B)	4	1	1	2	0	1	0
B Althoff (1B)	2	2	1	1	0	0	0
C Dunker (3B)	3	0	1	1	0	2	2
K Hoover (SS)	3	2	3	1	0	0	0
K Antonsen...	3	1	1	0	0	2	2
L Ringgenb...	1	1	1	1	2	0	0
B Imrie (RF)	2	1	1	1	1	0	1
Totals	26	11	11	9	3	9	5

2B: C Dunker, **TB:** B Althoff, K Hoover 3, C Dunker 2, K Antonsen, R Groebinghoff 2, B Flieds, L Ringgenberg, B Imrie, **SF:** B Althoff, **SB:** B Althoff 2, K Hoover 3, R Groebinghoff 2, B Flieds, L Ringgenberg 2, B Imrie, **LOB:** 5

PITCHING

Milbank 14u	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
J Schulte	4.0	10	7	6	1	9	0
O Tesch	0.0	1	4	1	2	0	0
Totals	4.0	11	11	7	3	9	0

P-S: J Schulte 88-59, O Tesch 22-9, **WP:** J Schulte 3, **BF:** J Schulte 25, O Tesch 5

Groton Jr. Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
D Abeln	5.0	0	0	0	1	11	0
Totals	5.0	0	0	0	1	11	0

P-S: D Abeln 68-47, **BF:** D Abeln 17

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 7 of 82

Groton Jr. Teeners 16 - 10 Clark Teeners

📍 Away 🏠 Non-League 📅 Monday June 22, 2020

	1	2	3	4	5	R	H	E
GRTN	1	5	8	1	1	16	7	3
CLRK	5	5	0	0	0	10	4	3

BATTING

Groton Jr. Te	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO	LOB
K Hoover (3...	4	0	1	2	0	0	3
B Flihs (SS	3	1	1	1	1	1	2
B Althoff (LF	2	1	0	0	1	0	4
C Dunker (CF	2	1	0	0	1	1	4
J Zak (P, LF,...	2	2	1	2	1	1	1
K Antonsen...	2	1	1	1	0	1	2
B Imrie (RF	2	1	0	1	1	0	1
C Mcinerne...	0	2	0	0	3	0	0
D Abeln (C	2	2	1	0	1	0	1
L Ringgenb...	3	2	1	2	0	0	2
T Diegel (LF	1	2	1	1	1	0	0
R Groebing...	1	1	0	1	2	0	1
Totals	24	16	7	11	12	4	7

2B: K Antonsen, J Zak, **3B:** L Ringgenberg, **TB:** K Antonsen 2, K Hoover, L Ringgenberg 3, T Diegel, B Flihs, D Abeln, J Zak 2, **SAC:** K Antonsen, **HBP:** T Diegel, **SB:** B Imrie, K Antonsen 2, L Ringgenberg, T Diegel 3, C Mcinerney, D Abeln 2, C Dunker, B Althoff, **LOB:** 7

PITCHING

Groton Jr. Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
J Zak	1.0	1	6	2	5	2	0
L Ringgenb...	1.0	2	4	0	4	2	0
R Groebing...	3.0	1	0	0	2	6	0
Totals	5.0	4	10	1	11	10	0

P-S: L Ringgenberg 43-18, R Groebinghoff 62-33, J Zak 49-16, **WP:** L Ringgenberg 5, J Zak 2, **HBP:** R Groebinghoff, J Zak, **BF:** L Ringgenberg 9, R Groebinghoff 13, J Zak 11

Clark Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO	LOB
J Kannegieter...	2	2	0	1	0	1	3
T Huber (P,...	3	1	2	0	0	1	2
C Mudgett (...	1	1	0	0	2	0	1
C Gaikowski...	1	2	0	1	2	1	1
M McElhon...	3	1	1	2	0	1	3
E Larson (1...	3	1	1	2	0	0	0
C Pommer (...	1	0	0	0	2	1	2
K Vandersni...	2	0	0	0	1	2	1
D Langten (...	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
R Hansen (RF	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
W Olson	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
J Helkern	1	1	0	0	1	0	2
Totals	20	10	4	6	11	10	8

2B: T Huber 2, **TB:** M McElhone, T Huber 4, E Larson, **CS:** C Mudgett, R Hansen, **HBP:** J Kannegieter, D Langten, **SB:** J Kannegieter, C Gaikowski, M McElhone 2, J Helkern, E Larson, **LOB:** 8

Clark Teeners	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
T Huber	2.0	1	8	6	7	3	0
E Larson	0.1	4	6	5	1	0	0
J Kannegieter	2.2	2	2	2	4	1	0
Totals	5.0	7	16	13	12	4	0

P-S: J Kannegieter 57-25, T Huber 71-29, E Larson 32-17, **WP:** J Kannegieter, T Huber 7, **HBP:** T Huber, **BF:** J Kannegieter 15, T Huber 16, E Larson 7

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 8 of 82

Groton Jr. Teeners 12 - 1 Clark Teeners

📍 Away 🏠 Non-League 📅 Monday June 22, 2020

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
GRTN	5	2	1	1	0	1	2	12	9	0
CLRK	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6

BATTING

Groton Jr. Te	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO	LOB
B Fliehs (2B	2	1	0	0	1	1	2
R Groebing...	3	1	0	1	1	1	4
K Hoover (SS	4	1	1	1	0	0	4
B Althoff (P,...	3	1	1	1	1	0	0
C Dunker (3...	4	2	2	1	0	0	1
L Ringgenb...	1	1	1	0	2	0	0
T Diegel (CF	3	1	0	0	0	0	2
D Abeln (LF	2	1	1	0	1	0	1
K Antonsen...	3	1	1	0	0	1	1
B Imrie (RF	1	1	0	0	2	0	1
J Zak (1B	3	1	2	1	0	0	1
C Mcinerney	2	0	0	0	1	2	3
Totals	31	12	9	5	9	5	8

2B: C Dunker, J Zak, K Hoover, **TB:** K Antonsen, C Dunker 3, D Abeln, J Zak 3, K Hoover 2, B Althoff, L Ringgenberg, **HBP:** B Fliehs, **SB:** B Imrie, C Dunker 3, R Groebinghoff, D Abeln 2, J Zak, L Ringgenberg, **LOB:** 8

PITCHING

Groton Jr. Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
B Althoff	4.0	0	1	1	5	9	0
C Dunker	3.0	0	0	0	2	8	0
Totals	7.0	0	1	1	7	17	0

P-S: C Dunker 53-31, B Althoff 82-47, **WP:** B Althoff, **HBP:** C Dunker, **BF:** C Dunker 12, B Althoff 17

Clark Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO	LOB
M McElhon...	2	1	0	0	1	2	2
T Huber (C	2	0	0	0	1	0	1
C Mudgett (...	1	0	0	0	2	0	1
C Gaikowski	2	0	0	0	1	2	1
J Helkenny...	3	0	0	0	0	2	3
J Kannegieter...	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
M Severson...	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
W Olson	2	0	0	0	0	2	1
J McElhone...	2	0	0	0	0	2	1
J Orthaus (RF	2	0	0	0	0	2	1
A Peterson	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
D Severson...	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
Totals	21	1	0	0	7	17	7

HBP: J Kannegieter, **SB:** C Mudgett, M McElhone, **LOB:** 7

Clark Teeners	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
J Helkenny	1.0	2	6	3	5	2	0
C Mudgett	6.0	7	6	3	4	3	0
Totals	7.0	9	12	6	9	5	0

P-S: C Mudgett 89-56, J Helkenny 52-21, **WP:** C Mudgett, J Helkenny 4, **HBP:** C Mudgett, **BF:** C Mudgett 31, J Helkenny 10

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 9 of 82

Webster 14u 4 - 16 Groton Jr. Teeners

📍 Home 🎪 Exhibition 📅 Friday June 19, 2020

	1	2	3	4	5	R	H	E
WBST	1	1	1	0	1	4	2	2
GRTN	4	7	2	3	X	16	11	0

BATTING

Webster 14u	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO	LOB
C Williams (C	1	1	0	0	2	0	0
B Amdahl (C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J Shoemake...	2	0	0	1	0	1	2
C Mount (1B	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
J Mccreary...	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
M Mount (P	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
B Snaza (SS	1	2	1	0	2	0	0
G Baumgar...	3	0	1	2	0	0	1
S Schmig (LF	3	0	0	0	0	1	4
T Kurkowski...	1	1	0	0	2	1	1
K Stoks (RF	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
D Snaza (CF	2	0	0	0	0	1	3
Totals	17	4	2	3	8	4	6

TB: B Snaza, G Baumgarn, **SB:** B Snaza 3, **LOB:** 6

Groton Jr. Te	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO	LOB
B Flihs (P...	3	2	1	0	1	0	1
T Diegel (CF	3	1	1	0	1	1	2
R Groebing...	4	1	1	2	0	1	3
B Althoff (1B	1	3	1	0	2	0	0
L Ringgen...	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
C Dunker (C	3	4	3	4	1	0	0
D Abeln (LF	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
B Imrie (P	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
J Zak (3B	2	1	1	2	2	1	1
K Hoover (2B	2	1	1	2	1	0	1
K Antonsen...	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Totals	22	16	11	12	12	4	6

2B: K Hoover, C Dunker 2, K Antonsen, **3B:** J Zak, C Dunker, **TB:** T Diegel, J Zak 3, K Hoover 2, C Dunker 7, R Groebinghoff, L Ringgenberg, B Flihs, K Antonsen 2, B Althoff, **SB:** T Diegel, K Hoover, R Groebinghoff, L Ringgenberg, B Flihs, K Antonsen, B Althoff, **LOB:** 6

PITCHING

Webster 14u	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
J Shoemaker	1.1	4	7	7	4	1	0
J Mccreary	0.2	3	4	4	2	0	0
M Mount	2.0	4	5	4	6	3	0
Totals	4.0	11	16	15	12	4	0

P-S: J Mccreary 27-13, M Mount 65-29, J Shoemaker 56-29, **WP:** J Mccreary, M Mount 2, J Shoemaker 3, **BF:** J Mccreary 7, M Mount 15, J Shoemaker 12

Groton Jr. Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
B Flihs	2.0	1	3	3	6	2	0
B Imrie	3.0	1	1	1	2	2	0
Totals	5.0	2	4	4	8	4	0

P-S: B Flihs 58-24, B Imrie 50-27, **WP:** B Flihs 2, B Imrie, **BF:** B Flihs 13, B Imrie 12

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 10 of 82

Webster 14u 4 - 11 Groton Jr. Teeners

📍 Home 🎟 Exhibition 📅 Friday June 19, 2020

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
WBST	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	2	3
GRTN	2	3	0	0	3	3	X	11	9	0

BATTING

Webster 14u	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO	LOB
B Amdahl (...)	2	0	0	1	2	2	2
C Mount (3B)	3	0	0	1	0	3	4
J Shoemake...	4	0	0	0	0	3	4
B Snaza (SS)	2	1	1	0	1	0	3
C Williams (...)	2	1	0	0	1	2	1
B Bearman...	2	1	0	0	2	0	2
M Mount (1B)	2	1	1	1	1	0	1
T Donse (RF...)	3	0	0	0	0	2	5
K Kwasnew...	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
J Mccrear...	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Totals	22	4	2	4	8	14	8

TB: B Snaza, M Mount, **HBP:** C Williams, C Mount, B Snaza, **SB:** B Amdahl, B Snaza, **LOB:** 8

PITCHING

Webster 14u	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
C Williams	2.0	4	5	4	2	1	0
B Amdahl	4.0	5	6	3	2	1	0
Totals	6.0	9	11	7	4	2	0

P-S: B Amdahl 73-41, C Williams 46-23, **WP:** B Amdahl, C Williams 2, **HBP:** B Amdahl 2, C Williams 2, **BF:** B Amdahl 22, C Williams 14

Groton Jr. Te	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO	LOB
B Fliehs (2B)	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
R Groebbling...	4	2	2	0	0	1	1
C Dunker (SS)	3	4	2	0	1	0	2
B Althoff (1B)	2	2	2	1	1	0	0
K Hoover (P...)	4	1	2	3	0	0	3
L Ringgenb...	1	0	0	1	0	1	2
T Diegel (CF)	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
K Antonse...	2	0	1	1	0	0	3
D Abeln (LF,...	2	1	0	1	2	0	2
B Imrie (RF)	4	0	0	0	0	0	5
Totals	27	11	9	7	4	2	7

2B: B Althoff, K Hoover, **3B:** C Dunker, **TB:** K Antonsen, R Groebblinghoff 2, C Dunker 4, B Althoff 3, K Hoover 3, **SF:** L Ringgenberg, **HBP:** B Fliehs, L Ringgenberg 2, B Althoff, **SB:** D Abeln, B Fliehs, C Dunker, B Althoff, K Hoover, **LOB:** 7

Groton Jr. Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
K Hoover	3.0	0	1	1	3	8	0
K Antonsen	0.1	0	3	3	4	0	0
D Abeln	3.2	2	0	0	1	6	0
Totals	7.0	2	4	4	8	14	0

P-S: D Abeln 50-34, K Antonsen 26-6, K Hoover 55-32, **WP:** D Abeln, K Antonsen 2, K Hoover, **HBP:** K Antonsen 2, K Hoover, **BF:** D Abeln 13, K Antonsen 7, K Hoover 13

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 11 of 82

Area COVID-19 Cases

	June 17	June 18	June 19	June 20	June 21	June 22	June 23
Minnesota	30,882	31,296	31,675	32,031	32,467	32,920	33,227
Nebraska	17,031	17,226	17,415	17,591	17,707	17,810	17,957
Montana	614	630	655	666	698	717	734
Colorado	29,442	29,673	29,901	30,187	30,349	30,539	30,705
Wyoming	866	884	906	927	930	947	974
North Dakota	3124	3166	3193	3226	3251	3288	3313
South Dakota	5966	6050	6109	6158	6225	6297	6326
United States	2,137,731	2,163,290	2,191,200	2,222,600	2,255,119	2,280,969	2,312,302
US Deaths	116,963	117,717	118,435	119,131	119,719	119,977	120,402

Minnesota	+129	+414	+379	+356	+436	+453	+307
Nebraska	+180	+195	+189	+176	+116	+103	+147
Montana	+5	+16	+25	+11	+32	+19	+17
Colorado	+143	+231	+228	+286	+162	+190	+166
Wyoming	+10	+18	+22	+21	+3	+17	+27
North Dakota	+23	+42	+27	+33	+25	+37	+25
South Dakota	+38	+84	+59	+49	+67	+72	+29
United States	+26,109	+25,559	+27,910	+31,400	+32,519	+25,850	+31,333
US Deaths	+849	+754	+718	+696	+588	+258	+425

	June 24	June 25	
Minnesota	33,469	33,763	34,123
Nebraska	18,092	18,221	18,346
Montana	743	766	803
Colorado	30,893	31,155	31,479
Wyoming	992	1016	1052
North Dakota	3320	3362	3393
South Dakota	6353	6419	6479
United States	2,347,102	2,381,369	2,422,312
US Deaths	121,225	121,979	124,415

Minnesota	+242	+417	+360
Nebraska	+135	+129	+125
Montana	+9	+23	+37
Colorado	+188	+262	+324
Wyoming	+18	+24	+36
North Dakota	+7*	+42	+31
South Dakota	+27	+66	+60
United States	+34,800	+34,267	+40,943
US Deaths	+823	+754	+2,439

* Due to a temporary software issue with the Electronic Lab Reporting System, most of the results from June 22 will be delayed. The issue has been resolved and as the system catches up today, the numbers will be reported out on June 24. Thank you for your understanding.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 12 of 82

June 25th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Buffalo and Faulk counties each registered their first deaths from COVID-19. Pennington County had its 13th death. This includes two females and one male and two in the 70-79 age group and one in the 40-49 age group. That will make the total deaths in South Dakota at 87.

Marshall County has rejoined the fully recovered list. Minnehaha leads the state with 10 positive cases while Pennington has seven and Brown and Oglala Lakota each had five.

Brown County:

Active Cases: +1 (22)
Recovered: +7 (311)
Total Positive: +5 (335)
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (18)
Deaths: 2
Negative Tests: +28 (2736)
Percent Recovered: 92.8% (-0.2)

South Dakota:

Positive: +60 (6479 total)
Negative: +717 (69375 total)
Hospitalized: +3 (632 total). 79 currently hospitalized (down 2 from yesterday)
Deaths: +3 (87 total)
Recovered: +38 (5592) total
Active Cases: +19 (800)
Percent Recovered: 86.3% Down .2

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Butte +7 (426), Campbell 61, Haakon +1 (221), Harding +1 (38), Jones +1 (27), Perkins +1 (75), Potter +2 (167), unassigned +3 (4681).

Beadle: +4 positive, +3 recovered (412 of 508 recovered)
Bennett: +1 positive (1 of 4 recovered)
Brookings: +3 positive, +2 recovered (40 of 57 recovered)
Brown: +5 positive, +4 recovered (311 of 335 recovered)
Brule: +1 positive (11 of 17 recovered)
Charles Mix: +1 positive +1 recovered (24 of 57 recovered)
Clay: +3 positive, +3 recovered (62 of 79 recovered)
Codington: +2 positive (45 of 51 recovered)
Corson: +1 positive (12 of 17 recovered)
Fall River: +2 positive (4 of 9 recovered)
Hanson: +1 positive (2 of 6 recovered)
Hughes: +4 positive, +2 recovered (26 of 42 recovered)
Lincoln: +3 positive, +1 recovered (301 of 329 recovered)
Marshall: +1 recovered (5 of 5 recovered)
McCook: +1 positive (6 of 6 recovered)
Meade: +1 positive (34 of 44 recovered)
Miner: +2 positive (2 of 7 recovered)
Minnehaha: +10 positive, +7 recovered (3284 of 3560 recovered)

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 13 of 82

Oglala Lakota: +5 positive, +1 recovered (40 of 65 recovered)
Pennington: +7 positive, +11 recovered (328 of 482 recovered)
Spink: +1 positive (5 of 10 recovered)
Todd: +1 positive, +1 recovered (42 of 52 recovered)
Yankton: +1 positive, +1 recovered (57 of 71 recovered)

Fully recovered from positive cases (added Marshall): Day 13-13, Deuel 1-1, Douglas 4-4, Grant 13-13, Gregory 1-1, Hyde 3-3, Marshall 5-5, McPherson 4-4, Sanborn 12-12, Sully 1-1, Ziebach 2-2.

The NDDoH & private labs report 2,967 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 32 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 3,393. NDDoH reports no new deaths.

State & private labs have reported 165,430 total completed tests.
3,064 ND patients are recovered.

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian, Non-Hispanic	696	11%
Black, Non-Hispanic	963	15%
Hispanic	1061	16%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	893	14%
Other	681	11%
White, Non-Hispanic	2185	34%

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	6
Brown	2
Buffalo	1
Faulk	1
Jackson	1
Jerauld	1
Lake	1
Lincoln	1
McCook	1
Meade	1
Minnehaha	56
Pennington	13
Todd	1
Union	1

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 14 of 82

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	34	33	261
Beadle	508	412	1357
Bennett	4	1	401
Bon Homme	11	10	545
Brookings	57	40	1534
Brown	335	311	2736
Brule	17	11	439
Buffalo	68	51	427
Butte	0	0	426
Campbell	0	0	61
Charles Mix	57	24	531
Clark	13	10	307
Clay	79	62	889
Codington	51	45	1764
Corson	17	12	126
Custer	7	1	464
Davison	35	30	1522
Day	13	13	384
Deuel	1	1	274
Dewey	4	0	824
Douglas	4	4	297
Edmunds	6	4	286
Fall River	9	4	566
Faulk	23	16	108
Grant	13	13	504
Gregory	1	1	220
Haakon	0	0	221
Hamlin	11	9	343
Hand	7	6	178
Hanson	6	2	125
Harding	0	0	38
Hughes	42	26	1011
Hutchinson	10	9	654

Hyde	3	3	91
Jackson	6	2	275
Jerauld	39	35	225
Jones	0	0	27
Kingsbury	6	3	388
Lake	18	15	635
Lawrence	17	12	1200
Lincoln	329	301	4091
Lyman	55	29	614
Marshall	5	5	274
McCook	9	6	445
McPherson	4	4	159
Meade	44	34	1194
Mellette	3	1	160
Miner	7	2	171
Minnehaha	3560	3284	18400
Moody	21	19	427
Oglala Lakota	65	40	1928
Pennington	482	328	6048
Perkins	0	0	75
Potter	0	0	167
Roberts	40	37	947
Sanborn	12	12	167
Spink	10	5	867
Stanley	12	10	123
Sully	1	1	40
Todd	52	42	835
Tripp	13	8	353
Turner	24	23	627
Union	118	106	1278
Walworth	8	5	366
Yankton	71	57	2138
Ziebach	2	2	136
Unassigned****	0	0	4681

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	3126	48
Male	3353	39

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	664	0
20-29 years	1329	1
30-39 years	1401	3
40-49 years	1052	6
50-59 years	1032	12
60-69 years	585	13
70-79 years	220	11
80+ years	196	41

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 15 of 82

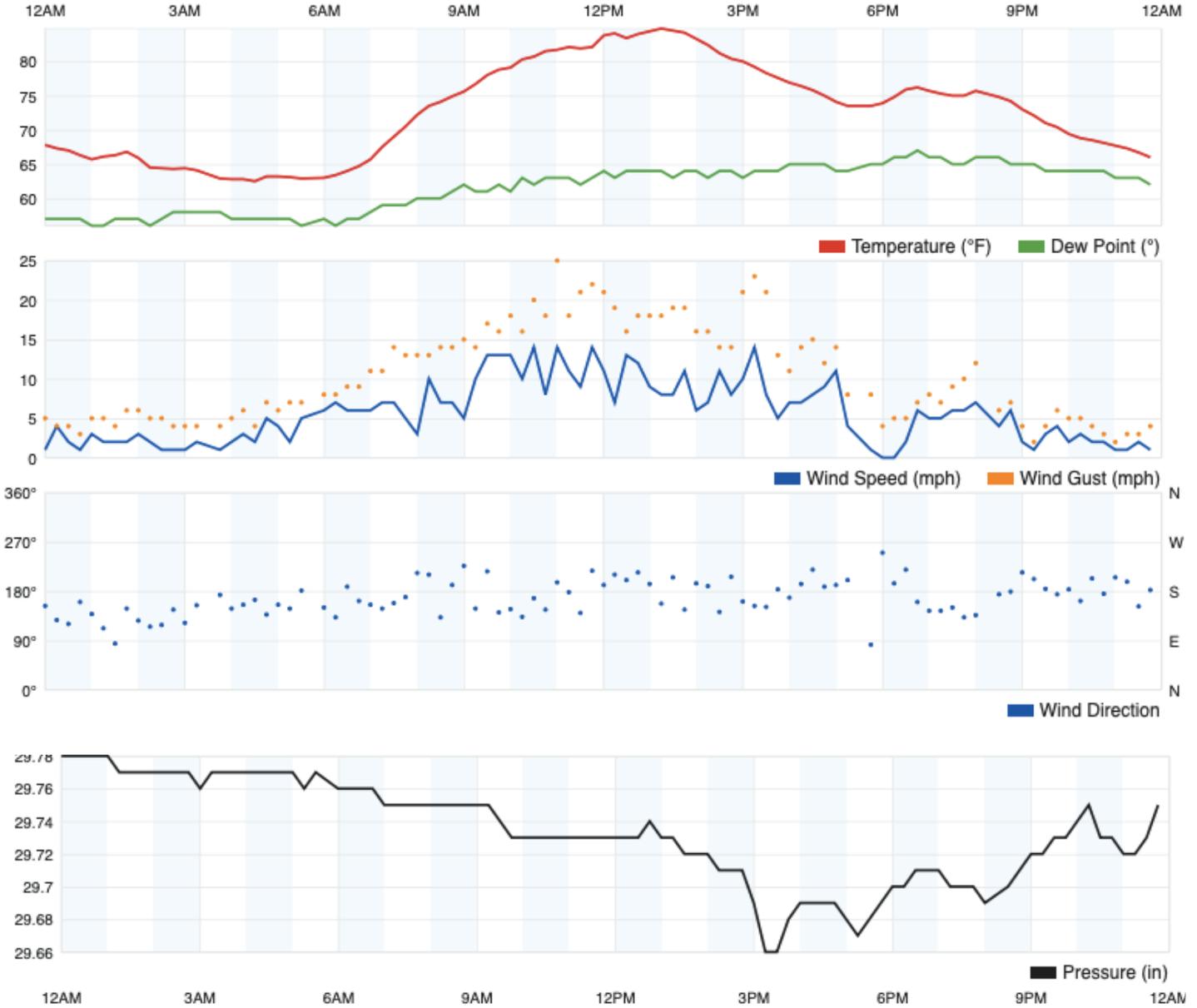
Baseball Schedule

Date	Team	Opponent	Location	Time
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 9	Jr. Legion	Milbank	Milbank	5:30 (1)
July 9	Legion	Milbank	Milbank	7:00 (1)
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)

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 16 of 82

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 17 of 82

Today



Sunny

High: 86 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 58 °F

Saturday



Sunny

High: 89 °F

Saturday
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 68 °F

Sunday



Mostly Sunny
then Slight
Chance
T-storms

High: 91 °F



Very Warm Overnight Temperatures



For those who like to keep the windows open at night, uncomfortably warm nights are ahead **Saturday Night through at least the middle of next week...**

LOWS in the mid 60s to low 70s

Warmer air approaching! After highs in the 80s today, expect upper 80s and 90s for highs Saturday through at least Tuesday of next week. For those who like to keep windows open at night, expect uncomfortably warm nights Saturday Night through at least the middle of next week. Lows will be in the mid 60s to low 70s.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 18 of 82

Today in Weather History

June 26, 1998: Heavy rains of 2 to 5 inches fell across much of northern and eastern Brown, western and northern Day and all of Marshall County during the afternoon and evening hours. The additional heavy rain only exacerbated the flooding which had been occurring over much of this area for years. Kidder, in northern Marshall County, received up to 5 inches of rain on the 26th after receiving around 2 inches on the 25th. The heavy rain on the 26th flooded the whole town, filling nearly every basement. One resident had the basement walls cave in. Areas of Britton were also flooded with water in many basements. The heavy rains added to the already thousands of acres of crop and pastureland under water. One farmer in Day County, near Webster, had documented over one-half million dollars in damages to fences, buildings, land, and income from the prolonged flooding. On his farm, he had 15 buildings under water. This farmer said the highest he had measured the water from flooding was 9 feet, but for this year it had gone up to 21 feet. As a result of this and past heavy rains and also many years of above-average precipitation, about 22 percent of the total farm and pastureland acres in the three counties were flooded or too wet to farm. Some rainfall amounts included 2.30 inches at Sand Lake NWR, 2.7 inches at Langford, 2.95 inches at Groton, 3.5 inches northwest of Bristol, and 5.10 inches 9N 9W of Britton.

June 26, 2008: During the evening hours, a compact upper-level low-pressure system tracking through the Northern Plains interacted with a very moist and unstable air mass over western and central South Dakota resulting in a widespread severe weather outbreak. Three confirmed tornadoes occurred briefly in western Dewey County. Little or no damage was reported, and all three tornadoes were rated EF0. In addition to the tornadoes, multiple reports of large hail were received over Corson and Dewey Counties, including some to the size of baseballs near the communities of McLaughlin and Isabel. The large hail broke out many home and vehicle windows and damaged many roofs in Dewey, Corson, and Sully Counties. Significant wind damage occurred over sections of Sully County. There were multiple reports of wind gusts more than 70 mph, with the most concentrated swath of damaging winds extending from near Sutton Bay, eastward to the city of Onida, then southeast to the community of Harrold. The storm survey began near Sutton Bay on Lake Oahe, where a wind gust of 92 mph was recorded. The most significant property damage was found further east near the community of Agar where multiple grain bins were either damaged or destroyed. Nine miles west of Agar, a barn was destroyed, and a large pine tree was snapped in half. Winds in this area were estimated to range from 80 to 100 mph. Near the intersection of Highways 1804 and 175th Street, several Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) electrical transmission towers were collapsed entirely. The damage is consistent with wind speeds ranging from 130-140 mph. In the city of Onida, a bank roof was damaged, and the city was without power until the next day. Four miles north of Onida, a feed wagon was tossed nearly 40 feet. In Harrold, several railroad cars were tipped over. Also of great significance during the event was the peak wind speed of 124 mph recorded at the Onida airport. This wind speed is the strongest wind gust ever measured in the Aberdeen County Warning Area and the 4th highest wind speed ever reported in South Dakota.

1807: Lightning strikes a gunpowder factory in the small European country of Luxembourg, killing more than 300 people. The Luxembourg disaster may have been the most deadly lightning strike in history.

1986: Hurricane Bonnie made landfall on the upper Texas coast. A wind gust to 98 mph occurred at Sea Rim State Park. Ace, Texas recorded a total of 13 inches of rain.

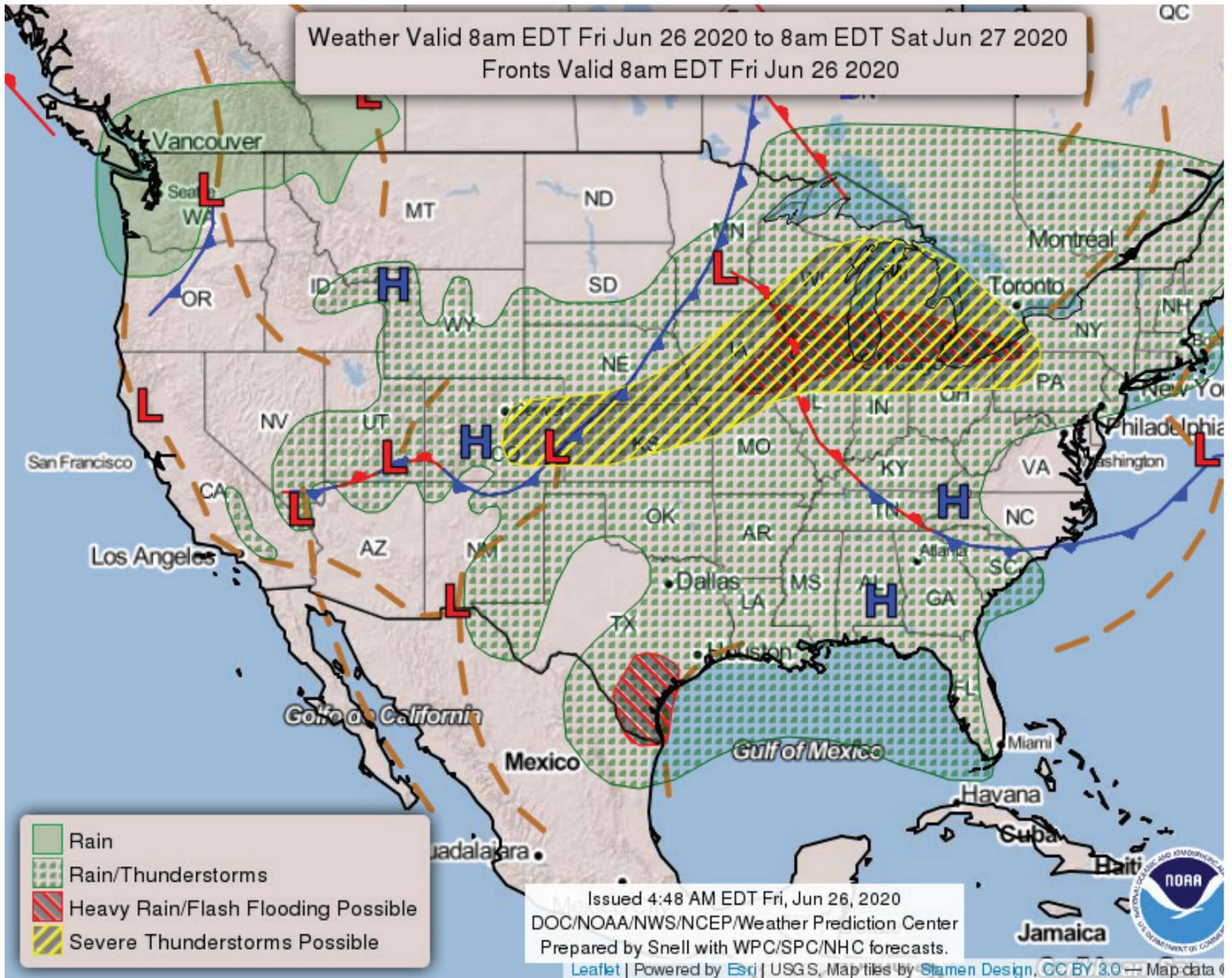
Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 19 of 82

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 85 °F at 1:13 PM
Low Temp: 62 °F at 4:28 AM
Wind: 25 mph at 10:56 AM
Precip: .00

Record High: 109° in 1933
Record Low: 39° in 2017
Average High: 81°F
Average Low: 57°F
Average Precip in June.: 3.09
Precip to date in June.: 2.47
Average Precip to date: 10.23
Precip Year to Date: 7.12
Sunset Tonight: 9:26 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:47 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 20 of 82



ONLY ONE WAY

Janie was having lunch with her friend Margie who had just started a new job. Anxiously, she asked, "How do you like your new boss?"

"Well, he's O.K.," said Margie. Then continued, "He's kind of bigoted, though."

"What do you mean, bigoted?" she wondered.

"Well," answered Margie, "he thinks that words can only be spelled one way."

Being bigoted is not always wrong. Sometimes it is necessary and important, even critical. Though we often think a bigoted person is unreasonable and unwholesome, there are times when it is essential to be fanatical about some things in life.

One of those "things" is the "way to the Father." Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me!"

Peter was also bigoted when he said, "There is salvation in no one else! There is no other name in all of heaven for people to call on to save them."

There are those whom we encounter every day that refuse to accept the fact that there is only one Name and one Person who can be called upon for salvation. This one way to eternal life did not come from a church or the disciples but from Jesus Himself.

God designated His Jesus – His One and only Son - to be the Savior of the world. There is no one else or any other way. Accept that "Way" today!

Prayer: Lord, help us to realize how important it is to fully accept, believe, and declare that You alone are the only way to God and eternal life. May we never waver. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." John 14:1-6

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 21 of 82

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
- 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
- 07/24/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ferney Open 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

News from the Associated Press

Sioux Falls police review teen arrest over excessive force

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls police won't release video footage from police cameras while they review the arrest of a juvenile that was caught on a social media video over the weekend and criticized for excessive use of force, the police chief said.

Videos of the arrest on Saturday shortly after 3 a.m. were taken by a bystander and posted on social media, drawing accusations that officers had used excessive force while they responded to a call for an alleged assault in downtown Sioux Falls.

The videos on social media show officers threatening to shoot someone in a car who did not obey their commands to stop the car. Police then broke the car's window with a baton, dragged the driver from the vehicle and forced her to the ground. The officer proceeded to place his knee on the driver's neck while she lied on her stomach on the ground. The driver was later identified as 17-year-old Janaisa Williams.

Officers also dragged TyJon Hardiman, 19, out of the backseat of the car.

"I was very scared when they threw me to the ground. I didn't know what to do. I had my hands behind my back. I thought I was going to get killed. They were already threatening to shoot us for no reason. I did not know what happened," Hardiman told KELO-TV.

Hardiman, who's Black, said the encounter with police comes at a "perfect" time to help "prove something is obviously wrong with the law enforcement."

"That (video) is only a small piece of the interaction," Sioux Falls Police Chief Matt Burns said during a police briefing with news media Monday morning. "I think that's a key to understand."

He said the department is reviewing what happened to determine if officers used excessive force. But police will not release video from body cameras, dashboard cameras or security videos, he said. Public records law in South Dakota does not require video footage from police cameras to be released.

Burns said before the police made the arrest, an officer tried to stop the vehicle, which was stuck in traffic, by reaching through the driver's window and turning off the keys. But the driver fled, rolling up the window and dragging the police officer for a short distance.

Police later caught up with the vehicle in a parking garage where a bystander captured the arrest on video.

Officers arrested one person inside the vehicle in connection to the assault call to which they were responding. Lovetee Teah, 21, of Sioux Falls, was charged with simple assault, Burns said.

The police department is expected to release the results of the review in the coming days.

Burns has said he his department would not make policy changes in response to nationwide protests against police brutality and racial injustice sparked by the May 25 death of George Floyd, a Black man who died after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee to Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes.

Wildfire near Mount Rushmore contained ahead of Trump visit

CUSTER, S.D. (AP) — A wildfire located near Mount Rushmore in South Dakota has been completely contained, according to Gov. Kristi Noem's office.

The fire comes amid preparations for President Donald Trump's visit to the monument for Independence Day celebrations and fireworks next week. The state called in 117 firefighters, including from Colorado and Wyoming. Some wildfire experts have raised concerns that the pyrotechnics could spark more fires, especially because the region has seen dry weather this year.

The fire started in Custer State Park on Wednesday burned an estimated 60 acres (24 hectares) about 6 miles (10 kilometers) south of the 79-year-old stone monument. The governor's office initially reported the fire spanned 150 acres (60 hectares), but revised that estimate on Thursday.

The Rocky Mountain Area Coordination Center tweeted Wednesday evening that eight aircraft had been deployed to fight the wildfire and that hotshot crews of highly trained firefighters.

Noem has said that event planners are hoping for rain this week, but are monitoring fire conditions and

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 23 of 82

would decide if it is safe to set off fireworks.

Watchdogs: Trump's Independence Day gala in 2019 cost \$13M

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

President Donald Trump's Fourth of July gala in the nation's capital last year cost taxpayers more than \$13 million, twice as much as previous celebrations, government watchdogs reported Thursday. Trump's desire to have Department of Defense military vehicles participate helped drive up the cost, as did the president's attendance near the Lincoln Memorial.

Trump's military-focused Independence Day event went beyond the traditional concert on the Capitol lawn featuring the National Symphony Orchestra and fireworks near the Washington Monument. Trump altered the lineup last year by adding his own speech from near the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, shifting the fireworks closer to that landmark and summoning an array of tanks and warplanes to entertain the crowds.

A White House spokesman declined to directly address the findings on costs. Responding to Democratic lawmakers' charges that the president's spending on the Fourth of July is extravagant and amounts to political activity on the taxpayer's dime, spokesman Judd Deere said Trump's celebration "is not about politics."

"It's about all Americans coming together to celebrate Independence Day, our great armed forces and their heroic sacrifices, which have preserved our freedoms for generations, and our amazing heritage," Deere said.

The Interior Department called the 2019 event "an incredible celebration," but also refused to comment on the costs accrued then or what's expected for this year's event.

The White House has said Trump plans to mark the holiday this year by attending a fireworks show July 3 at Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills of South Dakota and then celebrating in the nation's capital on Independence Day.

Trump and first lady Melania Trump will host the event from the White House's South Lawn and the Ellipse, with music, military demonstrations and flyovers. The president also is expected to deliver remarks.

The White House has said this year's event will have a different look because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Government Accountability Office estimated that holiday celebrations from 2016 to 2018 cost from \$6 million to \$7 million annually. Its estimate for 2019 did not include costs such as the military flyovers of the National Mall.

Three Democrats on the Senate Appropriations Committee had asked for the GAO investigation of how much the federal government spent on the 2019 festivities.

Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., said in a statement that the findings showed careless use of unbudgeted taxpayer money to meet Trump's "extravagant demands."

The senators, in a letter to the GAO that was released Thursday, requested that the agency examine costs for the Trump's Fourth of July plans this year.

The president "intends to use these Fourth of July celebrations as a way to marshal the resources of federal agencies to conduct de facto political events with official funds," Udall and Sens. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., and Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., wrote congressional investigators.

Extra costs for last year's fete included a \$2.5 million contract to an unidentified private entity for overall event planning, paid out of National Park Service appropriations, according to the congressional investigators.

The presence of Trump and other top government officials required numerous Secret Service agents and overtime, the investigators said.

District of Columbia officials had to consult with engineers on whether city roads, bridges and sewers would stand up to the weight of Bradley Fighting Vehicles, rolled in to serve as props on both sides of musical bands near the Lincoln Memorial.

Officials report dip in unemployment, but urge virus caution

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Even as South Dakota's unemployment numbers indicated the economic hardships created by the coronavirus pandemic seemed to be easing, officials warned Thursday that residents

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 24 of 82

must remain cautious to prevent the spread of infections.

The state has seen a decrease in the number of new cases over the last two weeks. Health officials on Thursday reported three new deaths from COVID-19, along with 60 new cases. That's a small increase from daily totals reported earlier in the week.

Health officials warned that even though the warmer weather might entice people to attend summertime gatherings, they must still keep in mind how easily the coronavirus can spread. Other states have seen dramatic spikes in infections as restrictions have been lifted.

"We understand that summer is the time when we're used to mixing in large crowds, attending events, whether it be pool parties or concerts or family gatherings" said South Dakota State Epidemiologist Dr. Josh Clayton. "We can still do so, but need to do so in a safe manner."

The largest planned event next week is a fireworks display at Mount Rushmore on July 3, which President Donald Trump plans to attend. Organizers are offering 7,500 tickets and don't plan to enforce social distancing.

An influx of visitors would be good news for the state's tourism industry, but would pose the risk of new infections.

The total number of coronavirus cases confirmed by the South Dakota Department of Health has reached 6,479, but 86% of those people have recovered. There are currently 800 active cases of COVID-19, and 79 people of them 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.

Of the deaths reported Thursday, two of the victims were in their 70s and one was in their 40s. They were two women and a man from Buffalo, Faulk and Pennington counties, the Department of Health said. So far, 87 people have died from COVID-19 in the state.

Meanwhile, the Department of Labor and Regulation reported that during the week ending on June 20, 857 people completed new claims for unemployment, a decrease from previous weeks. Over 18,000 people were still receiving unemployment benefits during the week ending June 6, but that was a decline from the peak of unemployment during the first week of May.

Native Americans protesting Trump trip to Mount Rushmore

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — President Donald Trump's plans to kick off Independence Day with a showy display at Mount Rushmore have angered Native Americans, who view the monument as a desecration of land violently stolen from them and used to pay homage to leaders hostile to Indigenous people.

Several groups led by Native American activists are planning protests for Trump's July 3 visit, part of Trump's "comeback" campaign for a nation reeling from sickness, unemployment and, recently, social unrest. The event is slated to include fighter jets thundering over the 79-year-old stone monument in South Dakota's Black Hills and the first fireworks display at the site since 2009.

But it comes amid a national reckoning over racism and a reconsideration of the symbolism of monuments around the globe. Many Native American activists say the Rushmore memorial is as reprehensible as the many Confederate monuments being toppled around the nation.

"Mount Rushmore is a symbol of white supremacy, of structural racism that's still alive and well in society today," said Nick Tilsen, a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe and the president of a local activist organization called NDN Collective. "It's an injustice to actively steal Indigenous people's land, then carve the white faces of the conquerors who committed genocide."

While some activists, like Tilsen, want to see the monument removed and the Black Hills returned to the Lakota, others have called for a share in the economic benefits from the region.

Trump has long shown a fascination with Mount Rushmore. South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem said in 2018 that he once told her straight-faced that it was his dream to have his face carved into the monument. He

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 25 of 82

later joked at a campaign rally about getting enshrined alongside George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. And while it was Noem, a Republican, who pushed for a return of fireworks on the eve of Independence Day, Trump committed to visiting South Dakota for the celebration.

Some wildfire experts have raised concerns the pyrotechnics could spark fires, especially because the region has seen dry weather this year. Firefighters called in crews from two other states to help Thursday as a blaze consumed approximately 150 acres (61 hectares) about 6 miles (10 kilometers) south of the monument.

The four faces, carved into the mountain with dynamite and drills, are known as the "shrine to democracy." The presidents were chosen by sculptor Gutzon Borglum for their leadership during four phases of American development: Washington led the birth of the nation; Jefferson sparked its westward expansion; Lincoln preserved the union and emancipated slaves; Roosevelt championed industrial innovation.

And yet, for many Native American people, including the Lakota, Cheyenne, Omaha, Arapaho, Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache, the monument is a desecration to the Black Hills, which they consider sacred. Lakota people know the area as Paha Sapa — "the heart of everything that is."

As monuments to Confederate and Colonial leaders have been removed nationwide, some conservatives have expressed fear that Mount Rushmore could be next. Commentator Ben Shapiro this week suggested that the "woke historical revisionist priesthood" wanted to blow up the monument. Noem responded by tweeting, "Not on my watch."

The governor told Fox News on Wednesday, "These men have flaws, obviously every leader has flaws, but we're missing the opportunity we have in this discussion to talk about the virtues and what they brought to this country, and the fact that this is the foundation that we're built on and the heritage we should be carrying forward."

Tim Giago, a journalist who is a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe, said he doesn't see four great American leaders when he looks at the monument; he sees four white men who either made racist remarks or initiated actions that removed Native Americans from their land. Washington and Jefferson held slaves. Lincoln, though he led the abolition of slavery, approved the hanging of 38 Dakota men in Minnesota after a violent conflict with white settlers there. Roosevelt is reported to have said, "I don't go so far as to think that the only good Indians are dead Indians, but I believe nine out of every 10 are ..."

The monument has long been a "Rorschach test," said John Taliaferro, author of "Great White Fathers," a history of the monument. "All sorts of people can go there and see it in different ways."

The monument often starts conversations on the paradox of American democracy — that a republic that promoted the ideals of freedom, determination and innovation also enslaved people and drove others from their land, he said.

"If we're having this discussion today about what American democracy is, Mount Rushmore is really serving its purpose because that conversation goes on there," he said. "Is it fragile? Is it permanent? Is it cracking somewhat?"

The monument was conceived in the 1920s as a tourist draw for the new fad in vacationing called the road trip. South Dakota historian Doane Robinson recruited Borglum to abandon his work creating the Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial in Georgia, which was to feature Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis and Stonewall Jackson.

Borglum was a member of the Ku Klux Klan, according to Mount Rushmore historian and writer Tom Griffith. Borglum joined the Klan to raise money for the Confederate memorial, and Griffith argues his allegiance was more practical than ideological.

Native American activists have long staged protests at the site to raise awareness of the history of the Black Hills, which were seized despite treaties with the United States protecting the land. Fifty years ago, a group of activists associated with an organization called United Native Americans climbed to the top of the monument and occupied it.

Quanah Brightman, who now runs United Native Americans, said the activism in the 1970s grew out of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. He hopes a similar movement for Native Americans comes from

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 26 of 82

the Black Lives Matter movement.

"What people find here is the story of America — it's multidimensional, it's complex," Griffith said. "It's important to understand it was people just trying to do right as best they knew it then."

The White House declined to comment.

Mitchell woman arrested in death of 5-year-old boy

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — A Mitchell woman is accused of causing injuries that killed a 5-year-old boy.

The 21-year-old woman has been arrested on probable charges of first-degree manslaughter and abuse or cruelty to a minor, according to police.

The woman and child lived in the same home, but police haven't said whether they are related.

On Monday night, the woman brought the boy to Queen of Peace Hospital where he later died, authorities said.

An autopsy Tuesday showed the boy died of blunt force trauma to the abdomen, the Argus Leader reported. The woman admitted kicking the child in the stomach and stomping on his abdomen, police said.

Country music reckons with racial stereotypes and its future

By KRISTIN M. HALL AP Entertainment Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — When country singer Rissi Palmer was working on her debut album, she wanted a song like Gretchen Wilson's "Redneck Woman," a song that would introduce her and tell her story to fans.

On her 2007 debut single, "Country Girl," she celebrated her country roots while explaining that she didn't have to look or talk a certain way to call herself a country girl.

"I said that I am not white in the first verse, and the label was like, 'No, no, no,'" said Palmer, who then rewrote the lyrics to make it feel more universal. "It was very intentional when I wrote that song to talk about all the women, or all the people, that might not necessarily fit in the box, but are still of the same mindset."

The country music industry has long been hesitant to address its long and complicated history with race, but the death of George Floyd in police custody and the protests it sparked in the U.S. and around the world became a sound too loud for the genre to ignore.

Over the past weeks, country artists, labels and country music organizations posted about Black Lives Matter on social media, participated in the industry wide Blackout Tuesday or denounced racism outright. On Thursday, Grammy-winning country group, The Dixie Chicks announced it would drop "dixie" from its name. The group said in a statement that it wanted to meet "this moment."

But Black artists say the industry still needs to address the systematic racial barriers that have been entrenched in country music for decades. Stereotypes that country music is just for white audiences, written by white songwriters, and sung by mostly white males are reinforced daily on country radio, playlists, label rosters and tour lineups. In recent years, however, the conversations about country music have shifted to a broader acknowledgement that non-white artists have always been in the genre, even if they aren't always recognized.

Artist/scholar Rhiannon Giddens received a MacArthur Foundation grant for her work to reclaim Black contributions to country and folk music. And artists like Darius Rucker, Kane Brown and Jimmie Allen have all had No. 1 country hits in recent years, while Mickey Guyton just released an unflinching song called "Black Like Me." But that ingrained culture of exclusivity remains a struggle to change.

"You can look at the reviews of my first album. I was called colored, like, 'I didn't know colored people like country music,'" said Palmer, who had three singles reach the Hot Country Songs Chart. "I used to get messages all the time on MySpace, saying, 'I am so sick of you. Why are you trying to be white?' or 'Why are you trying to take over country music?'"

Change hasn't been easy. After Grammy-winning country group Lady Antebellum announced they were changing their name to Lady A, they later had to apologize to a Black singer who had been using that

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 27 of 82

stage name for years.

Atlanta-based country rapper Breland also wanted to address, with a wink and a smile, country music's racial blinders with his TikTok-fueled song "My Truck." The music video starts with a white guy in a black cowboy hat singing as smoke billows across a dusty landscape, then Breland abruptly shoves him out of the frame to announce, "Don't touch my truck."

"I just felt like it was time for people to change their perspective on what country music is and what country music can be, because there is an audience of country music listeners under 30 who believe Black Lives Matter," said Breland, whose song reached No. 26 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart and has been remixed with Sam Hunt.

Like Lil Nas X's genre bending "Old Town Road," Breland playfully fuses trap rhythms with country tropes about horses, do-si-dos and beer on his self-titled EP and sings with country artists Chase Rice and Lauren Alaina. Breland said country music labels can't just continue to focus on one type of audience.

"There's a group of country listeners who love country music because of the way it sounds, but don't love some of the politics that they know are going on behind the scenes," he said.

Historically country music was created by and played in both white and Black communities in the South, but the music became marketed along racial lines in the Jim Crow era, said Amanda Marie Martinez, a historian and writer who is studying country music and race. White country music was stigmatized early on as "hillbilly music" so the industry started pushing it toward the rising white middle class as a way to make the genre more respected and hugely profitable.

"In the process, they've also prioritized the white, middle income, relatively conservative listener as their demographic, kind of the opposite of youth culture," Martinez said.

But there were periods of diversity, such as the post-Civil Rights era, when Black artists like Charley Pride, Linda Martell, O.B. McClinton and Stoney Edwards were having success, alongside Johnny Rodriguez and Freddy Fender, who were singing in English and Spanish.

Black artists today are also reclaiming spaces that have been overwhelmingly white domains.

Claude Kelly and Chuck Harmony, who work as a duo called Louis York, were already hit-making songwriters and producers behind pop songs like "Party in the USA" by Miley Cyrus and "Grenade" by Bruno Mars when they moved to Franklin, Tennessee, a Nashville suburb that is home to historical sites of a major Civil War battle and plantations where slaves were once held. There they set up their Weirdo Workshop artist collective and have worked with Jimmie Allen and noted author/poet Caroline Randall Williams.

"We knew that if we were to make our mark in this town as musicians and as Black musicians that playing the Grand Ole Opry would be the pinnacle for that," Harmony said.

They got a standing ovation at the Opry, but more importantly for Harmony, he wanted the audience to learn about country music's roots.

"I just wanted their unbiased, undivided attention, so that they can make the correlation between the music that they came to see and the music that we make as Black people," Harmony said.

Both the Academy of Country Music and the Country Music Association started diversity task forces more than a year ago when country music was being criticized for a lack of female voices and women were being left out of major categories like entertainer of the year.

Becky Gardenhire, a top executive at talent agency WME in Nashville who leads ACM's diversity task force, said they are looking at ways to recruit and retain diverse voices, both in the boardroom and on the stage, with efforts like mentorships, networking and outreach to build up a pipeline of future leaders and artists.

"We're hungry for diversity. We want the candidates to come and knock on the door, but we have to also show them that the door is open for them," said Damon Whiteside, CEO of ACM.

But just as country artists outwardly reflect a predominantly white image, there are few Black country music executives working behind the scenes. Candice Watkins got one of her first big breaks in country music working as the day-to-day manager for Keith Urban between 2009 and 2011.

"That changed my life because obviously he's a superstar," said Watkins, who is now the vice president for marketing for Big Loud Records, whose roster includes Jake Owen and Morgan Wallen.

But in that manager's role, she realized that she was often the only Black person at the boardroom table.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 28 of 82

Watkins said her label supports her and values her opinion, but she knows that might not be the same for other minorities and their companies.

"How is a young A&R person empowered to come back to the table and maybe pitch a Black artist or person of color? Culturally speaking, do they feel free to do that or do they automatically know this is dangerous ground for them to even bring up?" Watkins said. "There's a dismantling of culture that needs to happen."

Palmer, who is recording a podcast that focuses on the experiences of women of color in country music, said she feels optimistic that the current discussions about race and country music can lead to progress, if real changes are implemented.

"I love country music, always have, always will. It's healing music. It's beautiful music at its core. It's heartfelt. It's spiritual," Palmer said. "And it would be a shame if not everybody got to enjoy it because of the outward package."

The Latest: World Bank provides cash aid for poor Jordanians

By The Associated Press undefined

AMMAN, Jordan — The World Bank says it will provide \$374 million in cash support to 270,000 poor families in Jordan, including many who lost income due to the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown.

The bank announced the aid on Friday, saying it was co-financed by the U.K.'s international development agency.

Jordan took strict measures to contain its outbreak, including a 24-hour curfew that was in effect for several days in March. It has reported more than 1,000 cases but only nine fatalities.

The lockdown came at an enormous cost. The country's vital tourism industry has been at a standstill since March, and many businesses that were forced to close three months ago have only been allowed to reopen in the last few weeks.

Jordan is a close Western ally that has long been seen as an island of stability in a turbulent region. It hosts hundreds of thousands of refugees from the conflict in neighboring Syria.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- Virus taking stronger hold in US, other populated countries
- Governors who quickly reopened backpedal as virus surges
- After waves of COVID deaths, care homes face legal reckoning
- While India's leaders have promised coronavirus testing and care for all who need it, regardless of income, treatment options are as stratified and unequal as the country itself.
- U.S. officials estimate that 20 million Americans have been infected with the coronavirus since it first arrived in the United States, with millions never knowing they had it. Thursday's estimate is roughly 10 times the 2.3 million cases that have been confirmed in the U.S.
- A government whistleblower ousted from a top scientific job alleges that the Trump administration is intensifying its campaign to punish him for revealing shortcomings in the U.S. coronavirus response.

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

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

STOCKHOLM — Sweden's chief epidemiologist Anders Tegnell has lashed out at the World Health Organization, calling it "a total mistake" to put his nation on a list of countries where "accelerated transmission" could overwhelm health systems.

Tegnell told Swedish radio on Friday: "This is unfortunately a total misjudgment of the Swedish data." A report by the WHO's Europe office on Thursday named 11 countries, including Sweden, Armenia, Al-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 29 of 82

bania, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. Sweden has seen a steep rise in the number of COVID19 cases but this has been attributed to an increase in testing.

Tegnell said: "We can point at all other parameters we measure, i.e. how many serious cases we have, they are decreasing. The number of admissions into intensive care is at a very low level and even deaths are starting to decline."

Sweden has repeatedly defended its strategy by explaining it defers little to other countries despite having never imposed a lockdown. Large gatherings are banned but restaurants and schools for young children have stayed open. The government urged social distancing, and Swedes have largely complied.

LONDON — British shopping mall owner Intu is scrambling to avoid bankruptcy after failing to strike a deal with its creditors after being hammered by lower rent payments from retail clients in the COVID-19 pandemic.

The group, which owns the Trafford Centre, has been trying to secure a "standstill" on loans and must reach a deal by midnight Friday. The company has struggled with a 4.5 billion pound (\$5.6 billion) debt burden this year.

The company says in a statement that its board is "considering the position of Intu with a view to protecting the interests of its stakeholders. This is likely to involve the appointment of administrators."

The company employs 3,000 people. A further 102,000 work for the shops within its shopping centers.

TOKYO — Tokyo has confirmed 54 new cases of the coronavirus, with the number staying at its highest since early May.

Japan lifted a seven-week pandemic state emergency in late May, and social and business activity has since largely resumed.

Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike said although the new daily cases remain high, but capital is not facing a second wave of infections. She said the rate of infection was not increasing rapidly as in late March, and that Tokyo's hospitals and health system are able to cope.

Koike said experts are now working to compile a new "caution scale" that better fits social and economic activities in the ongoing phase of living with the virus.

Most of the latest cases are people in their 20s and 30s. Koike said many recent cases are linked to workplaces and nightclubs and transmitted to family members.

Tokyo has had 5,997 cases and 325 deaths, about one-third of the national total.

BERLIN — A German meat company says it plans to perform daily coronavirus tests on all 5,000 workers involved in the production process amid concerns about a series of outbreaks at slaughterhouses in the country.

Westfleisch, one of Germany's biggest meat processing companies, said Friday that it is already conducting weekly tests on the workers but from next week wants to perform them daily.

Westfleisch suffered a COVID-19 outbreak involving hundreds of workers at its plant in the western town of Coesfeld in May, but that has since passed.

Rival firm Toennies Group is at the center of an outbreak in the nearby region of Guetersloh that has led to a partial lockdown as authorities try to prevent the spread of the virus to the wider community.

Westfleisch executive Steen Soennichsen said the tests would be examined by external labs and results would be available within hours, allowing the company to act swiftly if there are any new cases.

ROCHESTER, Minn. — Mayo Clinic is ending pay cuts that the Minnesota-based health system imposed to deal with a patient downturn caused by the novel coronavirus.

The Star Tribune reports Mayo plans to restore pay and return furloughed workers this summer.

In April, Mayo announced plans to cut pay to more than 20,000 employees and seek furloughs when elective surgeries were halted in anticipation of a surge in COVID-19 patients.

The clinic was projecting a possible \$3 billion loss in 2020. But Mayo says patient volumes reached 80%

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 30 of 82

to 90% of normal by mid-June, which was a quicker-than-expected recovery.

PHOENIX — An Arizona nightclub faces a misdemeanor charge for alleged failure to enforce its own social distancing policies as the number of COVID-19 cases continued rising.

Scottsdale police announced the case against the nightclub Riot House, saying officers saw both customers and employees “not practicing physical distancing, not wearing face coverings and not complying with their plan.”

It appears to be the first such case against an Arizona business during the pandemic for alleged failure to follow its own social distancing rules.

The state Department of Health Services reported 3,056 additional COVID-19 cases Thursday, the fourth day in a week in which the state had daily increases over 3,000.

Republican Gov. Doug Ducey, who lifted stay-home restrictions in May, cautioned that the expectation is that the numbers will be worse in the next couple of weeks.

SALT LAKE CITY — Utah reported its second-highest daily number of new COVID-19 cases Thursday as the state deals with a troubling surge that started after state leaders allowed businesses to reopen.

The 590 new cases are behind only the 643 on Saturday, state health department figures show. The state has averaged 503 confirmed cases per day over the last week, more than double the 200-per-day rate the state’s epidemiologist recommended the state should be at by July 1 to avoid having to consider a total shutdown of the economy.

Gov. Gary Herbert, a Republican, has said he will not shut down the economy but has agreed to wait at least two weeks before loosening any more restrictions.

LANSING, Mich. — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Thursday allowed for the return of pro sports in Michigan as long as fans aren’t in attendance.

The move followed Major League Baseball’s decision this week to set a 60-game schedule to start July 23 or July 24 in empty ballparks. The governor said pro teams can resume operations notwithstanding capacity limits and restrictions on gatherings and events to curb the coronavirus.

Games must be played without a live audience for the “time being.” Only staff of the facility and media can attend.

Whitmer’s order does not address college sports.

There were 33.7 new confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus per 100,000 people in Michigan over the past two weeks. That’s the eight-lowest rate in the U.S. More than 6,100 deaths have been recorded and nearly 69,000 people have been infected.

NEW ORLEANS — Students will be wearing face masks and washing their hands several times a day when Louisiana schools reopen for the upcoming school year in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Those are among requirements that were set and will be enforced by the Louisiana Department of Health. State Education Superintendent Cade Brumley said another 14 suggestions also are on the list of precautions.

State officials say school systems need to have plans for all-classroom, all-distance and hybrid teaching. If possible, they should have a laptop or tablet for every student and ensure that all students can connect to the internet.

Virus taking stronger hold in US, other populated countries

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — While China moved closer to containing a fresh outbreak in Beijing, the coronavirus took a stronger hold elsewhere, including the United States, where surging infections across

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 31 of 82

southern states have highlighted the risks of reopening economies without effective treatment or vaccines.

Another record daily increase in India on Friday pushed the country's caseload toward half a million, and other countries with big populations like Indonesia, Pakistan and Mexico grappled with large caseloads and strained health care systems.

South Africa, which accounts for about half of the infections on the African continent with 118,375, reported a record 6,579 new cases, as transmissions increase after it loosened what had been one of the world's strictest lockdowns earlier this month.

Mexico reported some of its highest 24-hour counts so far with 6,104 new cases and 736 additional deaths, as its treasury secretary began isolating at home after a positive test.

In China, where the pandemic originated in December, authorities have mobilized resources for mass testing and locked down parts of Beijing this month due to an outbreak that has infected 260 people. The 11 new cases reported in the capital Friday continued a downward trend that suggests transmissions have been largely brought under control.

The United States, which counts the most infections in the world, is seeing daily jumps in COVID-19 cases nearing the peak reached in late April.

Arizona's 3,056 additional infections reported Thursday was the fourth day in a week with a increase over 3,000. Transmissions have spiked following Republican Gov. Doug Ducey's decision to lift stay-home restrictions in May.

Twenty-three percent of tests conducted in the state over the past seven days have been positive, nearly triple the national average, and a record 415 patients were on ventilators.

The numbers "continue to go in the wrong direction," said Ducey, who confirmed that the state has postponed further efforts to reopen.

He pushed back against reporters' questions about his position on the use of masks and his attendance at President Donald Trump's indoor campaign event this week at a Phoenix church. Many of the 3,000 people who attended did not wear face coverings.

Mississippi announced a record 1,092 new cases of coronavirus, the second time this week its daily count reached new highs.

After making one of the most aggressive pushes in the nation to reopen, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas has put off lifting any more restrictions and reimposed a ban on elective surgeries in some places to preserve hospital space.

The United States reported 34,500 COVID-19 cases Wednesday, slightly fewer than the day before but still near the high of 36,400 reached April 24, according to a count kept by Johns Hopkins University.

Deaths tolls have dropped even as the number of infections have increased, possibly reflecting better medical treatments and better efforts to prevent infections among the most vulnerable, like nursing home residents. A rising proportion of cases in the U.S. is among younger people, who are more likely than their elders to survive a bout with COVID-19.

"This is still serious," said Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, but "we're in a different situation today than we were in March or April."

India, which has the world's second-largest population, has seen regular record daily increases. The 24-hour spike of 17,296 new infections reported Friday raised the national caseload past 490,000, including 15,301 fatalities. Indian Railways delayed the resumption of regular train services by more than a month, until Aug. 12.

In India and in neighboring Pakistan, government leaders have resisted new restrictions, citing economic concerns. The world's fourth-most populous country, Indonesia, passed 50,000 confirmed cases on Thursday, with at least 2,620 deaths, the highest number of cases and fatalities in Southeast Asia. That's up from just two positive cases in early March.

President Joko Widodo said his administration wants Indonesia's economy back on track but safe from the virus, and started the country's reopening earlier this month. The government says the pandemic is expected to raise the nation's poverty rate to 10.2%.

A comeback of the virus is also erasing hard-won gains in South Korea, which reported 39 newly con-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 32 of 82

firmed cases on Friday, mostly from the densely populated capital area that had escaped the worst of the country's outbreak in February and March. There's criticism that authorities, concerned about a fragile economy, were too quick to ease social distancing guidelines and reopen schools starting in May.

Japan's capital, Tokyo, confirmed 54 new cases, continuing a steady rise that's raising concern about a need for stronger preventive measures. Gov. Yuriko Koike has downplayed fears about a major surge that would overwhelm the city's hospitals.

Australia on Friday reported 37 new cases of the coronavirus, including 30 in Victoria state, where health authorities are scrambling to contain an outbreak. Authorities said they tested 20,000 people in Melbourne suburbs as they went door-to-door in their attempts to stamp out the virus.

In Europe, the official in charge of Spain's response to COVID-19 says imported infections are a growing source of concern as the continent readies to welcome more visitors.

Epidemiologist Fernando Simón said Thursday that 54 people who had contracted the disease in the past week have been linked to recently arrived visitors in Spain. He suggested that controls should be strict and that regional and local governments should be ready to apply localized isolation to avoid spreading the disease.

In Britain, Health Secretary Matt Hancock warned that the government has the power to close beaches and other public spaces amid growing concerns over the public's adherence to social distancing rules.

Huge crowds on English beaches Thursday prompted the concern. Trash bins overflowed, extra police were called and the rural roads gridlocked by beachgoers now have signs stating the area is full.

There were also concerns surrounding jubilant Liverpool fans gathering outside the soccer club's stadium to celebrate the team's first league title in 30 years.

In Germany, Westfleisch, one of the country's biggest meat processing companies, said Friday it plans to perform daily coronavirus tests on all 5,000 workers involved in the production process amid concerns about a series of outbreaks at slaughterhouses.

Associated Press journalists around the world contributed to this report.

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. CARE HOMES FACE LEGAL RECKONING IN FRANCE Families of some of the 14,000 elderly who died are banding together to sue the facilities that failed to keep them updated about COVID-19 deaths and infections.

2. DECAYING OIL TANKER OFF YEMEN A HAZARD The U.N. says the abandoned vessel is at risk of rupture or exploding, causing environmental damage to Red Sea marine life, desalination factories and international shipping routes.

3. TRUMP TARGETS 'OBAMACARE' AGAIN The White House is urging the Supreme Court to overturn the Affordable Care Act even as HealthCare.gov. has added close to half a million people who lost their health insurance amid the pandemic.

4. 'A PROBLEM THAT WE NEED TO SOLVE' Sen. Kamala Harris, a strong contender to become Joe Biden's running mate, is taking a leading role as many Americans reflect on the country's legacy of systemic racism.

5. 'WE'RE HUNGRY FOR DIVERSITY' Country artists have long been hesitant to address racial issues, but the rallies over racial injustice this year have become too important for the genre to ignore.

Trump zeroes in on base to overcome reelection obstacles

By AAMER MADHANI and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is sharpening his focus on his most ardent base of supporters as concern grows inside his campaign that his standing in the battleground states that will decide

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 33 of 82

the 2020 election is slipping.

Trump turned his attention this week to “left wing mobs” toppling Confederate monuments and visited the nation’s southern border to spotlight progress on his 2016 campaign promise to build a U.S.-Mexico border wall.

He ignored public health experts warning Americans to avoid large gatherings by holding two large campaign events in Oklahoma and Arizona, parts of the country where coronavirus infections are surging.

With his rhetorical turn, Trump is feeding red meat issues to a base that helped spur his upset victory over Hillary Clinton in 2016. But he risks appearing to ignore larger issues that are jolting the country, like the pandemic and racial injustice, while underplaying economic issues, even though polling shows that to be an area where Trump performs relatively well.

“This might be the only path for him at this point,” said Dan Schnur, who served as a campaign adviser to Arizona Sen. John McCain and California Gov. Pete Wilson. “Most of the center is no longer available to him. Motivating his base is not just his best available strategy. It might be the only one.”

The Republican president’s advisers believe there are few undecideds when it comes to Trump, with only a sliver of voters who may change their mind and warm to him. The more effective use of resources is to make sure those who like him turn out to vote, according to campaign and White House officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe internal strategy.

Trump takes a measure of comfort in the fact he found himself in a similar position in 2016. Polls throughout his race against Clinton showed him with a deficit, often just as wide as some polls now suggest, before he closed that gap in the final days of the campaign as the base coalesced around him.

As he did with Clinton, Trump has tried to drive up Democratic rival Joe Biden’s negatives, pushing unsubstantiated claims about his mental acuity and his son Hunter’s business dealings. But Trump has had little success in driving Biden into the deeply negative territory where Clinton found herself.

Biden’s campaign is confident the circumstances for Trump, who now has a well-established political record, have complicated his ability to drag down his opponent with a barrage of attacks.

“The reality is this is a different election than 2016 was,” said Symone Sanders, a senior adviser to the Biden campaign. “In 2016, a lot of voters went to the polls asking what kind of president Trump would be. It’s no longer a theory of what kind of president Donald Trump will be.”

Trump hopes to get as much of that base to turn out while persuading the voters who have shown tepid enthusiasm for Biden to stay home. Indeed, while many national and battleground polls show Trump trailing Biden, surveys have suggested that some of the former vice president’s support is lukewarm.

Trump’s team feels confident that approximately 40% of the electorate supports him and notes his approval rating has remained unusually stable during his term. The president’s campaign advisers believe it comes down to getting a bigger proportion of the smaller group of people who love Trump to turn out than the larger group of voters who express tepid support for Biden.

With that in mind, the campaign has renewed its focus on plays to please the base. Among them: the border wall and other hard-line immigration executive orders; a promise to produce a list of conservative Supreme Court nominees; public consideration of acknowledging Israel’s annexation of parts of the West Bank to satisfy evangelicals; and, most strikingly, a focus on reopening the nation’s economy over publicly dwelling on the pandemic.

South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, one of Trump’s closest allies in Congress, said Trump can win with “a little more message discipline” and a focus on policies that separate him and Biden.

“Just make it more about policy and less about your personality,” Graham told reporters.

Last weekend, Trump held a big-arena rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that drew a relatively sparse crowd for a president who’s used to overflow audiences. He then took part on Tuesday in a jam-packed event at a Phoenix megachurch — albeit in a smaller venue — for young conservatives. Both are the sort of events that Trump is counting on helping him turn the tide.

“November 3 is a big day,” Trump told attendees at a Students for Trump event in Phoenix. “Get out. Get the parents, get the friends, get the husband, get the wife, get everybody.”

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 34 of 82

Arizona has emerged as a growing hot spot for the virus, and Phoenix's Democratic mayor, Kate Gallego, implored that such an event — most participants declined to wear masks and didn't practice social distancing — could not be safely carried out.

Karen Kedrowski, a political scientist at Iowa State University, said such events help Trump echo ardent conservatives' frustrations that the lockdown has lasted too long. But Trump's attempt to amplify his message through mass gatherings is perilous.

"The president sees the need to electrify his base," Kedrowski said. "But what happens to the president if two weeks from now rally attendees are becoming sick and spreading the virus in their communities?"

During the event, Trump, who had stirred up controversy by using the racist phrase "kung flu" to describe COVID-19, was reflecting on the many names he's heard the coronavirus called.

When he heard the pejorative yelled from the crowd, Trump smiled and said it, too. The audience roared in approval.

Biden surrogates, including vice presidential contender Sen. Tammy Duckworth, called out Trump for it. Still, Biden is being careful not to get dragged into a culture war.

"We have not let Donald Trump's antics distract us from our message," Sanders said. "At the same time, we're not going to sit back and allow him to disparage large swaths of the electorate."

Madhani reported from Chicago.

Seawater seeping into decaying oil tanker off Yemen coast

By MAGGIE MICHAEL Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The United Nations said an abandoned oil tanker moored off the coast of Yemen loaded with more than 1 million barrels of crude oil is at risk of rupture or exploding, causing massive environmental damage to Red Sea marine life, desalination factories and international shipping routes.

Meanwhile, Houthi rebels who control the area where the ship is moored have denied U.N. inspectors access to the vessel. Internal documents obtained by The Associated Press shows that seawater has entered the engine compartment of the tanker, which hasn't been maintained for over five years, causing damage to the pipelines and increasing the risk of sinking. Rust has covered parts of the tanker and the inert gas that prevents the tanks from gathering inflammable gases, has leaked out. Experts say maintenance is no longer possible because the damage to the ship is irreversible.

For years, the U.N. has been trying to send inspectors to assess the damage aboard the vessel known as the FSO Safer and look for ways to secure the tanker by unloading the oil and pulling the ship to safety.

But one European diplomat, a Yemeni government official and the tanker's company owner said that Houthi rebels have resisted. The diplomat said the rebels are treating the vessel as a "deterrent like having a nuclear weapon." All three individuals spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

"They do say that openly to the U.N., 'We like to have this as something to hold against the international community if attacked,'" the diplomat said. "Houthis are definitely responsible for failure of the U.N. to look at the ship."

Money is also an issue, the diplomat said, adding that the Houthis initially were demanding millions of dollars in return for the oil stored in the tanker. The U.N. is trying to reach an arrangement where money could be used to pay workers and employees at Yemen's Red Sea ports, the diplomat added.

Some experts, however, criticize both the Houthis and the U.N. for failing to fully understand the magnitude of the crisis with the abandoned ship.

Ian Ralby, founder of I.R. Consilium, who specializes in maritime and resource security, told the AP that U.N.'s efforts to send a team to assess the ship is "futile." What the vessel needs is a salvage team, he said.

"It's real shame that they wasted so much money and time in this futile operation," said Ralby. "If you are taking these years to get a simple team to assess, we will not have a second chance to salvage," he added.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 35 of 82

Ralby, who has written extensively about the tanker, told the AP that amid declining oil prices the cost spent on cleaning up the environmental damage from an explosion or leakage will be much more than the millions worth of oil on the ship.

But the Houthis have refused to back down from their demands.

Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, the rebel group's leader, blamed the U.S. and Saudis for not letting the rebels sell the oil, saying in a June 18 Twitter post that any "disastrous consequences ... God forbid," that could result from the collapse of the vessel will be the responsibility of these two countries.

The Iranian-backed Houthi rebels are in control of the western Red Sea ports, including Ras Issa, 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) from where the FSO Safer tanker has been moored since the 1980s. They are at war with the internationally recognized government, which is backed by a Saudi-led coalition and the United States. President Abed Rabbu Mansour Hadi is in exile in Saudi Arabia and his government in disarray.

The floating tanker is a Japanese-made vessel built in the 1970s and sold to the Yemeni government in 1980s to store for export up to 3 million barrels pumped from oil fields in Marib, a province in eastern Yemen. The ship is 36 meters (118 feet) long with 34 storage tanks.

A senior official at the state-owned oil company in charge of the tanker, said because of a shrinking operational budget, which used to be around 20 million dollars a year before the war, the company could no longer afford to purchase fuel needed to run the boilers on the ship. The boilers are needed to power generators that, among other things, keep an inert gas that prevents explosions flowing. The tanker needs 11,000 tons of the fuel, which cost about 8 million dollars each year.

"After the stoppage of the boilers the strong majority of the equipment and the machines of the tanker stopped because they all depend on steam power," the company official said. That includes the machines that power the ventilation system, which reduces humidity and prevents corrosion, he said.

Since 2015, annual maintenance on the ship has come to a complete halt and most crew members, except for 10 people, were pulled off the vessel after the Saudi-led coalition imposed a land, sea, and air embargo before waging an extensive air campaign to dislodge the Houthi rebels from areas they seized including the capital Sanaa.

The civil war in Yemen has caused massive destruction in most of the areas under Houthis control. Because of the proximity of the tanker to the contested Hodeida port, fears have grown that a stray shell or bullet could hit the tanker causing massive explosion or oil leak into the Red Sea.

Hodeida was at the center of Yemen's civil war in 2018 when coalition forces made major advances to take over the vital port, which is considered the life-line of most of northern Yemen, where most of Yemenis live and where the Houthis enjoy full control. A U.N.-brokered peace deal put an end to the offensive but failed to achieve peace or loosen Houthis' grip over the ports.

Over the past two years, the Yemeni government in exile, the U.N., and western diplomats have been sounding the alarm and putting pressure on Houthis to secure the tanker. The rebels initially agreed to let inspectors examine the tanker but later backtracked.

Top Houthi leaders often expressed cynicism toward the international community warnings.

"The life of the shrimps is more precious than the life of Yemeni citizen to the U.S. and its allies. Is this because they care about their naval ships or the Israeli presence in the Red Sea?" wrote Mohammed Ali al-Houthi in a May 25 Twitter post. "Why is Safer more dangerous than the siege and the assault of the American, British, Saudi, Emirati and their allies on the people?" he added in reference to the US-backed, Saudi-led coalition targeting the rebels in Yemen.

Yahia Sharaf Eddin, the deputy head of Yemen Red Sea Ports Corporation, defended the Houthi rebels and told the AP that the group had instructed port authorities to assist U.N. inspectors. He said it was the Saudi-led coalition that refused to give the U.N. a green light to board the decaying tanker.

The more delays in reaching a solution to the vessel, the more dangers it poses, Sharaf Eddin said.

A recent internal government memo obtained by the AP shows that earlier this month a diving team was dispatched by the state-run oil company that owns the tanker to seal holes in the ship that have allowed seawater to leak into the engine room.

The divers were able to make repairs, but it remain unclear if the work will hold, according to the July

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 36 of 82

13 report.

"We believe that the plugs/seals that were installed to prevent the entry of seawater into the engine room space will not withstand/hold long," the report read.

An earlier letter dated Oct. 2019 sent by the Yemeni minister of oil — who is affiliated with the Saudi-backed government — to the prime minister, and seen by the AP, found other problems with the tanker.

"Rust has covered some parts of the tanker along with equipment, fire distinguishing system stopped working, and what is more dangerous is that the gas which was covering the oil inside the tanks has leaked out. It was used to protect the tankers from exploding," the letter read.

The oil minister's letter recommended three different approaches to deal with the tanker: make repairs, pump the oil to another ship, or to pull the tanker away and safely unload it in another port.

The minister wrote that because of the "collapsing condition" of the vessel, the best solution is to pull it away to another port.

"We are notifying you about this dangerous situation to do your best and to get Yemen and the region out from such environmental dangers," he wrote.

The letter came months after the U.N.'s projects arm, known as UNOPS, put out a tender to hire an international agency to inspect the vessel after an initial agreement with Houthis.

The U.N. hired a team of experts and had them standing by in Djibouti. The AP obtained a copy of the tender letter and documents showing the experts' proposed inspection program and a list of equipment needed, including gas detector and oil sampling kits.

But the Houthis backed out of the agreement before the repair crew could be sent to Yemen.

Mark Lowcock, the U.N. humanitarian chief, told the U.N. Security Council last year that the U.N. assessment team was ready to be deployed but "the necessary permits remain pending with the Ansar Allah authorities" in reference to Houthis.

"I would just like to note that this is additionally frustrating when one recalls that the same authorities wrote to the United Nations early last year requesting assistance with the tanker and promising to facilitate our work," he added.

Sharaf Eddin, the Yemeni ports official, accused the U.N of siding with the Saudi-coalition and misleading the public by blaming Houthis for the delays.

"This is the same U.N. which is exploiting Yemen tragedy to collect donations then spend it on its own employees," he said, echoing Houthis' widely held anti-U.N. sentiment. He added that the coalition in 2017 refused to give access to a fuel vessel to head to the Safer tanker to run the power generators. "What is Houthis' interest in preventing a disaster? Any spark could cause massive explosion," he acknowledged.

He provided letters sent by Houthi-appointed government officials last summer, including one from the foreign minister, approving the visit by the U.N. But the European diplomat said the Houthis revoked their initial approval and put new conditions on U.N. activities.

The U.N. has repeatedly warned that delays in taking action to fix the FSO Safer could lead to a man-made environmental disaster in the Red Sea four times greater than the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

The Exxon Valdez disaster in 1989 was one of the largest oil spills in U.S. history. The tanker spewed nearly 300,000 barrels of thick, toxic crude oil into Alaska's pristine Prince William Sound. Scores of herring, sea otters and birds were soaked in oil, and hundreds of miles of shoreline polluted. The spill destroyed the livelihoods of hundreds of commercial fishermen in the area.

The senior official at the state-owned company in charge of the tanker issued an appeal for help to the international community saying that a similar oil spill off the coast of Yemen could accelerate Yemen's worsening humanitarian disaster.

"The disaster could happen at any second," he said, "Rescue Yemen from a terrible, imminent disaster that will add to Yemen's burdens for tens of years and deprive thousands from their source of living, and kill marine life in the Red Sea."

India's social inequalities reflected in coronavirus care

By EMILY SCHMALL Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — When Pradeep Kumar's wife was admitted to a government-run hospital in India's capital for treatment of COVID-19, it took two days before she was able to see a doctor.

"There are six other women in her room and everyone is frustrated," he said outside New Delhi's LNJP Hospital. "They're behaving like they're leprosy patients."

Kumar's wife had just given birth when she found out she had the virus. She was told she would have to change hospitals and be admitted at one set up to handle coronavirus patients, an exhausting process that took hours.

Though India's leaders have promised coronavirus testing and care for all who need it, regardless of income, treatment options are as stratified and unequal as the country itself. Care ranges from crowded wards at public hospitals that some worry will make them sicker than if they stayed home to spacious suites at private hospitals that only the wealthy can afford.

Under India's health care system, everyone should be able to receive either free or highly subsidized care at those public hospitals depending on their income. But the system has been chronically underfunded, meaning government hospitals are overburdened and patients often face dayslong waits for even basic treatments.

World Health Organization data shows that India's government spent \$63 per person on health care for its 1.3 billion people in 2016. By comparison, China spent \$398 for each of its 1.4 billion people in 2016, according to the WHO.

Though India has managed to halve its poverty rate over the past 15 years, some 176 million people still live on less than \$1.90 a day, and experts say the pandemic is shining a spotlight on the country's vast inequalities in everything from employment rights to health care.

"Epidemics usually are good mirrors of society and country," said Pratik Chakrabarti, a history of science professor at the University of Manchester, adding that this one "has exposed how precarious people's lives are" in India.

With more than 490,000 recorded coronavirus infections nationwide — and the actual numbers believed to be far higher — India's health care system is facing one of its biggest tests. So far hospitals still have the capacity to handle all of the virus cases — though if that changes there are backup plans that include treating patients in repurposed train carriages.

But shortcomings are also on display.

At RML Hospital in New Delhi, a government-run facility that offers free COVID-19 tests, dozens of people waiting on a recent day to be registered for a test stood in line or lay on metal benches shaded by a green tarp in scorching summer heat. A small indoor emergency triage area had been converted into a crowded waiting room for confirmed COVID-19 cases.

A personal trainer who fears he has the coronavirus, Manoj Kumar was lined up outside another public hospital just waiting to get in. He said he saw some people give the guards money in order to skip the line.

"The rich people get their work done pretty easily," he said. "People who don't have money for the guards have to stand in line for multiple hours."

At New Delhi's AIIMS Hospital, another public facility, more than 600 staff have been infected with the virus, which union leader Dr. Srinivas Rajkumar T. blamed on poor hygiene and sanitation protocols, including "biohazard handling, reuse of face masks and face shields."

Private hospitals generally uphold higher standards of care, but most people can't afford it.

At Max, one of India's biggest private hospital chains, daily rates for coronavirus treatment range from about 25,000 rupees (\$333) for a bed in the general ward to 72,000 rupees (\$960) for a bed in the ICU with a ventilator.

Delhi state's own health minister, Satyendar Jain, checked into a government-run hospital earlier this month after testing positive for COVID-19, but he transferred to a Max hospital when his condition became critical.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 38 of 82

Other private health providers are selling home care packages for people with mild or moderate symptoms that for about \$25 a day include twice-daily remote monitoring by a nurse, medicine deliveries and a guaranteed ambulance should the need arise.

For those in need of isolation — say the spouse of a virus patient — the Delhi state government has ordered a slew of hotels to convert rooms for the job. Room prices, which include daily care, cost about 10,000 rupees (\$132) a night — again, a sum out of reach for most people.

Dr. V.K. Paul, the head of a government committee on medical emergency preparedness, said that the perception of private hospitals as better was an “overgeneralization.”

“Some of our best COVID care facilities are in the public sector,” he said, adding that it was “not possible to meet this challenge” without both public and private hospitals.

The two-tiered hospital system is having an impact even beyond the coronavirus.

Vishnu Singh’s 14-year-old daughter has had a fever and fallen unconscious every night for a month. But given the current situation at public hospitals, he wouldn’t dare take her to one.

“The public hospitals are full of people with the virus,” he said. “You could get infected just standing in line.”

Instead he’s spent 10,000 rupees (\$132) — two-thirds of his monthly income as an office manager — to have exams and tests done at private hospitals and labs. It’s still not clear what’s causing his daughter’s sickness.

The pandemic has hit India’s poor the hardest, from the disease itself to the economic and social impact of a recently lifted nationwide lockdown, said Ramanan Laxminarayan, an epidemiologist and economist who directs the Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics and Policy in Washington.

“The lockdown primarily protected the rich because they could afford to stay home. The poor couldn’t so bore the brunt of the disease,” he said. “This is just a grossly unfair situation.”

Associated Press journalists Aniruddha Ghosal, Rishabh R. Jain and Shonal Ganguly contributed to this report. Follow Emily Schmall at twitter.com/emilyschmall

Rayshard Brooks struggled in system but didn’t hide his past

By SUDHIN THANAWALA and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Rayshard Brooks didn’t hide his history.

About five months before he was killed by Atlanta police in a Wendy’s parking lot — before his name and case would become the latest rallying point in a massive call for racial justice and equality nationwide — Brooks gave an interview to an advocacy group about his years of struggle in the criminal justice system. He described an agonizing cycle of job rejection and public shame over his record and association with a system that takes millions of Americans, many of them Black like him, away from their families and treats them more like animals than individuals.

“That’s a hard feeling to stomach,” he told the group Reconnect, as he lamented the lack of support, both in prison and once released. “Once you get in there, you know, you’re just in debt. ... I’m out now, and I have to try to fend for myself ... clueless of everything that’s been going on, I don’t know, I’m trying to adapt back to society.”

When he died June 12, Brooks seemed to finally be gaining firmer footing, family members and friends say. He was working to support his wife, three daughters and stepson. He planned eventually to move to Ohio, where he’d recently spent months getting to know his father and was an energetic and supportive co-worker at a construction company. Those close to him described him as always happy and smiling, ready to do anything — a silly dance or a cook-off — to make people laugh or defuse any tense situation.

He was a full-time carpenter and was regaining his kids’ trust, even starting to answer their questions about his time incarcerated, he said in the February Reconnect video.

“I feel good about myself,” he said, smiling and rocking in his chair, eager to share his story.

Family was a constant in his life. In 2014, he sent a plaintive, handwritten letter to a Georgia judge plead-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 39 of 82

ing to be freed from jail to care for his loved ones. Without his income from working full time in trucking, his wife was struggling with a new job and care of their kids, and she had to borrow money from a friend to get by, Brooks explained.

"Before I was arrested," he wrote, "my job and home were the only things I was about, trying to feed my family. The kids are starting school back this upcoming August, and they're going to need things to start back with such as uniforms, color pencils, line paper, notepads. ... So I'm asking by chance if you could grant me some probation if possible, and I promise that you will never have to worry about me coming before you ever again for anything."

In the years that followed, though, he remained tangled in "the system," as he called it in the Reconnect video. By the time he was killed, he had fallen behind on court payments, been sentenced to more time behind bars, and been required to wear an ankle monitor.

The weekend he died, Brooks, 27, had planned to take his oldest daughter skating for her birthday. Instead, wearing a bright shirt with the words "Rainbows, Unicorns, Weekends," 8-year-old Blessen joined relatives at a news conference.

Gymaco Brooks recalled laughing over drinks with his cousin a week and a half before he died. Rayshard Brooks reassured him he was staying out of trouble. The family had grown up close, Gymaco Brooks said: "We could argue. We could fight. We could sleep 10 to one bed growing up, with feet and heads and arms across each other. ... We didn't have a lot of anything, but we had a whole lot of love for each other."

His mother-in-law, Rochelle Gooden, recalled how he cared for his relatives and loved her like a mother. The two would have barbecue challenges — one time, she said, Brooks ate some lamb, but she insisted, "You know what, I don't eat lamb." As he finished, he teased her: "Baaaa!"

In his 2014 letter to the judge, Brooks described how family helped him focus.

"When I'm down, my wife makes me happy. I feel invincible when we are together," he wrote. He and Tomika Miller were married June 14, 2013, three days after Blessen's first birthday: "Truly I can say that was the loveliest day of all the twenty one years I have been breathing."

At the public viewing the day before Brooks' funeral, Miller wore a white dress with a photo of the two of them printed across it.

"It's going to be a long time before I heal. It's going to be a long time before this family heals," she told reporters after his death, her voice cracking and one of her young daughters in her arms.

In 2018, Brooks traveled to Toledo, Ohio, and met his father for the first time. Brooks stayed with him and his sister when he arrived.

"He loved it up here," Brooks' father, Larry Barbine, said in a telephone interview. "He was like, 'This is the life I want to live. This is where I want to be.'"

Within a few months, Brooks made that happen: He moved to Toledo, though he knew almost no one there, having grown up in Georgia. He found work with a construction company and got his own apartment. He didn't have a background in the industry but quickly picked up whatever was thrown his way, said Ambrea Mikolajczyk, who owns ARK Restoration & Construction with her husband.

"It didn't matter if he was cleaning something or learning how to tile or paint; he brought that same energy, always cheerful and bright," she said. "People fed off his energy."

He made his new friends at work laugh by dancing to the country rap song "Old Town Road." He rode his bike to work, no matter the weather, once stopping to walk with a co-worker whose car had broken down. "That's the type of man Ray was," said Mikolajczyk, who traveled to Georgia for his funeral.

Brooks thrived in Ohio. His father said he taught him how to fish and took him sledding for the first time.

In January, Georgia authorities brought Brooks back to the state on a fugitive warrant alleging he failed to notify them of his address and complete a theft prevention class as his probation required.

It traced back to 2014, when he pleaded guilty to domestic violence, theft and other charges. Prosecutors said he twisted the wrist of his wife. In his letter to the judge, Brooks called it a "minor disagreement." His wife couldn't visit him in jail because she was the victim, but they talked on the phone and she sent him food, he said. The kids gave her a hard time in his absence, he wrote.

But Brooks was the "primary aggressor" in another incident, this one witnessed by a child, leading to

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 40 of 82

a child cruelty charge, according to a grand jury report. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to a year behind bars and six years of probation.

And in 2016, he pleaded guilty to credit card theft, for another yearlong sentence.

When officials brought him back to Georgia, he owed \$219.21 in court payments and spent 19 days in jail before he was released on probation, court records show.

He'd been out for nearly six months when officers approached him at Wendy's, where he was asleep inside a car blocking the drive-thru lane. Body-camera video showed Brooks and officers having a calm, cooperative conversation for more than 40 minutes. A struggle erupted when police tried to handcuff Brooks for being intoxicated behind the wheel.

Brooks said he didn't want to be "in violation of anybody" and told the officers he could walk home. He told officers he'd been with a girlfriend named Natalie White that night. White would later be charged with arson in the fire that engulfed the Wendy's as protesters outraged by Brooks' death gathered there. White's lawyer has declined to comment on their relationship, saying only that they were close.

Officer Garrett Rolfe, 27, fatally shot Brooks after he grabbed one of the police Tasers and fired it at Rolfe as he ran away. Rolfe is charged with murder. A second officer, Devin Brosnan, 26, is charged with aggravated assault. Lawyers for the men, both white, say their clients' actions were justified.

In Ohio, family and co-workers were heartbroken. Brooks had stayed in touch with ARK Restoration and talked of returning there for work once he could move to Toledo with his family, Mikolajczyk said. Upon seeing the headlines, one stunned client called her, asking: "Is this our Ray?"

Brooks' father celebrates their time together but grieves for a stolen future.

"Life was short for us," he said. "Life was very short for us, getting to know each other."

Seewer reported from Toledo, Ohio. Associated Press writer Kate Brumback in Atlanta and researcher Jennifer Farrar in New York contributed.

'A problem that we need to solve': Harris takes on policing

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — When pressed to take a position on tough issues during the Democratic presidential primary, Kamala Harris often replied with a variation of "we need to have that conversation." But as the U.S. is roiled by police killings of Black men and women, the California senator is done hedging.

As one of two Black Democrats in the Senate, Harris took a lead role this week in blocking Republican-backed legislation to overhaul policing. In an interview with The Associated Press, Harris said she wouldn't be "played" by GOP leaders seeking to move the bill without input from Democrats and called on Americans to do more to acknowledge racial injustice in policing.

"There is a problem that we need to solve," she said. "And the problem is that we have American lives that have ended at the hands of excessive force and police brutality."

Seven months after ending her presidential bid, Harris is at another crossroads moment in her political career. She's a leading contender to become presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden's running mate at a time when many Americans are reflecting on the country's legacy of systemic racism.

If she's selected, Harris will likely face scrutiny over her tenure as San Francisco's district attorney and, later, as California's attorney general. Some progressives argue that work supported a system that perpetuates injustice against Black people.

But Harris' backers say she's approaching the moment with a clarity that could help ease those concerns.

"Sen. Harris has just been able to truly get an intimate vantage point of the criminal justice system since the beginning of her career," said Deidre DeJear, Harris' former Iowa campaign chair and Iowa's first Black nominee of a major party for statewide office. "When you have that type of value, you definitely want to embrace it."

Harris wouldn't comment on her vice presidential prospects, saying her top priority is for Biden to pick someone who will help defeat President Donald Trump. Biden is widely believed to be considering several

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 41 of 82

other Black women, including Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, Florida Rep. Val Demings and former Obama administration official Susan Rice.

He's expected to announce his choice around Aug. 1.

A Harris pick would likely revive questions about her political skills. During the primary, she struggled to land on a message and ultimately left the race in December — nearly two months before voting began.

Brian Brokaw, who managed her 2010 campaign for attorney general, said it's easier for Harris to be herself outside the scrutiny of a presidential campaign. Today's conversations around systemic racism and policing capture Harris' "life's work" in a way the primary did not, he said.

Harris co-sponsored the Justice in Policing Act this month that would ban police from using chokeholds and no-knock warrants, set a national use-of-force standard and create a national police misconduct registry, among other things. It would also reform the qualified immunity system that shields officers from liability.

The list includes practices Harris did not vocally fight to reform while leading California's Department of Justice. Although she required DOJ officers to wear body cameras, she did not support legislation mandating it statewide. And while she now wants independent investigations of police shootings, she didn't support a 2015 California bill that would have required her office to take on such cases.

"We made progress, but clearly we are not at the place yet as a country where we need to be and California is no exception," she said. But the national focus on racial injustice now shows "there's no reason that we have to continue to wait."

She's been a staple in recent weeks on cable news programs as well as in online conversations with prominent Black activists.

She's twice joined conversations with the Rev. Ben McBride of Oakland, whom she appointed in 2016 to a new state board overseeing the collection of racial data on police stops. He said that while Harris doesn't have a "perfect record," she's tried innovative approaches to reform.

"We need people who are going to be in these offices that will be true champions for the causes of the oppressed," McBride said of Harris' vice presidential prospects. "We've seen her do that in times past. We've seen her miss opportunities to do that."

McBride said he's happy to see Harris aligning herself with young protesters — she's joined protests in Washington and has regularly praised the Black Lives Matter movement. And he acknowledged the unique challenges she faced as a Black woman in her presidential run.

"I have no doubt the impact of the loss of Black life is something she feels very, very deeply," he said. "She's out there speaking her heart and her mind maybe without the restraints of having to play some of the political game."

Zach Norris, executive director of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, said it would be a risk for Biden to choose anyone with a law enforcement background if he wants to motivate young, progressive voters of color. Those voters, Norris said, are looking for a nominee with a record of pushing for "transformative" change, and while race and gender are important in Biden's selection, they are not essential.

He suggested Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who is white, would be a better vice presidential nominee.

"I think the way we have thought about criminal justice reform has been too narrow, and that (Harris) has at times positively invoked the same kind of ethos that has led to mass incarceration as a prosecutor," he said.

But DeJear, Harris' Iowa campaign chairwoman, said the vice presidency could provide an opportunity for Harris to drill down on reforming the criminal justice system. She said the country is now getting a full view of who Harris is in a way they didn't during the primary.

"We are so quick as a country to get to a punch line rather than watch things play out," DeJear said. "She's showing America who she is, and she was always going to do that. It was just a matter of when America was ready to listen."

House passes sweeping police overhaul after Floyd's death

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House has approved a far-reaching police overhaul from Democrats in a vote heavy with emotion and symbolism as a divided Congress struggles to address the global outcry over the deaths of George Floyd and other Black Americans.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi gathered with members of the Congressional Black Caucus on the Capitol steps, challenging opponents not to allow the deaths to have been in vain or the outpouring of public support for changes to go unmatched. But the collapse of a Senate Republican bill leaves final legislation in doubt.

"Exactly one month ago, George Floyd spoke his final words — 'I can't breathe' — and changed the course of history," Pelosi said.

She said the Senate faces a choice "to honor George Floyd's life or to do nothing."

The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act is perhaps the most ambitious set of proposed changes to police procedures and accountability in decades. Backed by the nation's leading civil rights groups, it aims to match the moment of demonstrations that filled streets across the nation. It has almost zero chance of becoming law.

On the eve of the Thursday vote, President Donald Trump's administration said he would veto the bill. And Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has also said it would not pass the Republican-held chamber.

After the GOP policing bill stalled this week, blocked by Democrats, Trump shrugged.

"If nothing happens with it, it's one of those things," Trump said. "We have different philosophies."

Congress is now at a familiar impasse despite protests outside their door and polling that shows Americans overwhelmingly want changes after the deaths of Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others in interactions with law enforcement. The two parties are instead appealing to voters ahead of the fall election, which will determine control of the House, Senate and White House.

"We hear you. We see you. We are you," said Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., during the debate.

It has been a month since Floyd's May 25 death sparked a global reckoning over police tactics and racial injustice. Since then, funeral services were held for Rayshard Brooks, a Black man shot and killed by police in Atlanta. Thursday is also what would have been the 18th birthday of Tamir Rice, a Black boy killed in Ohio in 2014.

Lawmakers who have been working from home during the COVID-19 crisis were summoned to the Capitol for an emotional, hours-long debate. Dozens voted by proxy under new pandemic rules.

During the day, several Democratic lawmakers read the names of those killed, shared experiences of racial bias and echoed support of Black Lives Matter activists.

Rep. Karen Bass, D-Calif., the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, said hundreds of thousands of people "in every state in the union" are marching in the streets to make sure Floyd "will not be just another Black man dead at the hands of the police."

Republican lawmakers countered the bill goes too far and failed to include GOP input. "All lives matter," said Rep. Debbie Lesko, R-Ariz. New York Rep. Pete King said it's time to stand with law enforcement, the "men and women in blue." House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy decried the "mob" of demonstrators.

At one point Rep. Barry Loudermilk, R-Ga., stood up to say he just didn't understand what was happening in the country — from Floyd's death to the protests that followed. Several Black Democratic lawmakers rose to encourage him to pick up a U.S. history book or watch some of the many films now streaming about the Black experience in America.

Later, Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., noting the legacy of Emmett Till, asked others to "walk in my shoes."

In the stalemate over the policing overhaul, the parties are settled into their political zones, almost ensuring no legislation will become law. While there may be shared outrage over Floyd's death, the lawmakers remain far apart on the broader debate over racial bias in policing and other institutions. The 236-181 House vote was largely on party lines. Three Republicans joined Democrats in favor of passage and no Democrats were opposed.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 43 of 82

Both bills share common elements that could be grounds for a compromise. Central to both would be the creation of a national database of use-of-force incidents, which is viewed as a way to provide transparency on officers' records if they transfer from one agency to another. The bills would restrict police chokeholds and set up new training procedures, including beefing up the use of body cameras.

The Democratic bill goes much further, mandating many of those changes, while also revising the federal statute for police misconduct and holding officers personally liable for damages in lawsuits. It also would halt the practice of sending military equipment to local law enforcement agencies.

Neither bill goes as far as some activists want with calls to defund the police and shift resources to other community services.

Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, the only Black Republican senator, who drafted the GOP package, said the bill is now "closer to the trash can than it's ever been."

"I'm frustrated," he said on Fox News Channel.

Scott insisted he was open to amending his bill with changes proposed by Democrats. But Democrats doubted McConnell would allow a thorough debate, and instead blocked the GOP bill.

Senate Democrats believe Senate Republicans will face mounting public pressure to open negotiations and act. But ahead of the November election, that appears uncertain.

Associated Press writers Laurie Kellman, Andrew Taylor, Darlene Superville and Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

Venezuelans take extraordinary steps to beat water shortage

By SCOTT SMITH Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuela's economic collapse has left most homes without reliable running water, so Caracas resident Iraima Moscoso saw water pooling inside an abandoned construction site as the end of suffering for thousands of her poor neighbors.

Workers had long ago stopped building a nearby highway tunnel through the mountain above them. Yet, spring water continued to collect inside the viaduct and then stream past their homes, wasted. The construction firm had also left behind coils of tube.

Moscoso, 59, rallied her neighbors to salvage the materials and build their own system, tapping into the tunnel's vast lagoon and running the waterline to their homes. Today, they're free of the city's crumbling service and enjoy what many in Venezuela consider a luxury.

"Everybody here has water," said Moscoso, seated on the stairs of her hillside neighborhood of cinder block homes. "We all benefit."

Venezuela's water crisis is nothing new, but it's started driving residents to extraordinary measures — banding together to rig their own water systems and even hand dig shallow wells at home. Water today is even more important as a way to protect against the pandemic.

Critics of the socialist government blame chronic infrastructure failures on years of corruption and mismanagement that have also left the electrical grid fragile and destroyed Venezuela's once-thriving oil industry.

An estimated 86% of Venezuelans reported unreliable water service, including 11% who have none at all, according to an April survey of 4,500 residents by the non-profit Venezuelan Observatory of Public Services.

María Eugenia Gil, of the Caracas-based non-profit Clear Water Foundation, said residents have no other choice than to hunt for water, breaking a nationwide quarantine that was imposed to slow the spread of the new coronavirus. They're exposing themselves to illness or possibly spreading the virus to others, she said.

"They don't have an alternative," Gil said. "You can't stay at home locked inside if you don't have water."

President Nicolás Maduro's government has accused political foes of sabotaging pump stations, and recently celebrated the purchase of a fleet of 1,000 "super tanker" trucks from China to deliver water to residents.

That's no solution for Arcangel Medina, 66, who recruited young men in his neighborhood to dig for five days, striking water at a depth of four meters (13 feet). He bought \$200 worth of pipes and an electric

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 44 of 82

pump so he can share the water with other homes.

"We went four months without running water," said Medina, complaining that when city lines used to flow every two weeks, dirty water spewed from his faucets.

"It's a blessing," said Medina, one of a dozen residents in his sector who took the drastic measure. He next had to figure out how to get rid of the dirt pile on the street in front of his home.

Moscoso, who proudly organized her neighbors to build their own system, estimates that 5,000 people in her neighborhood now have water. It started flowing in May, said Moscoso, who works at the mayor's office.

Their above-ground water line starts at the abandoned tunnel's mouth and runs 1,000 meters (3,200 feet) - under a highway, strung from power poles over a city street and down to their homes.

Four other neighborhoods have run similar lines from the tunnel.

Moscoso said the water is perfectly safe, drinking down a glass as proof. She declined to say how much it cost them after salvaging the abandoned pipes, claiming she hasn't had time to add up the expenses.

"For me it's priceless," Moscoso said.

Scott Smith on Twitter: @ScottSmithAP

Governors who quickly reopened backpedal as virus surges

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — When Texas began lifting coronavirus restrictions, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott didn't wear a mask. He wouldn't let mayors enact extra precautions during one of America's swiftest efforts to reopen. He pointed out that the White House backed his plan and gave assurances there were safe ways to go out again.

Two months later, a sharp reversal is unfolding as infections surge.

The backpedaling is not just in Texas, where Abbott abruptly halted the push to loosen more restrictions and is now urgently telling people to stay home. Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey, also a Republican, did the same, declaring the state "on pause" as hospitals accelerate toward capacity.

As an alarming coronavirus resurgence sets records for confirmed cases and hospitalizations across the U.S. South and West, governors are retreating to measures they once resisted and striking a more urgent tone.

"I think they're going to have to," said Dr. Mark McClellan, former head of the Food and Drug Administration. "It doesn't take most people in a community getting sick to overwhelm health care systems."

Critics bristle that the actions are too little, or worse, possibly too late as patients fill up intensive-care beds and the U.S. closes in on hitting all-time highs for daily confirmed cases.

And governors are not entirely bending in their resolve: Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who until recently had rarely worn a face covering, has said he won't impose statewide mask orders or delay reopening. And Abbott says shutting down the Texas economy again is a last resort.

The escalating crisis is testing governors — many of them Republicans who aggressively reopened before most of the U.S. — as pressure mounts from their biggest cities, health experts and even friendly business groups. Any move backward could land them at odds with President Donald Trump, who has sought to move on from the virus and return to the campaign stage, all while refusing to wear a mask in public.

A June survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research says many Americans never fully embraced the reopening effort now underway in many states. A majority of Americans still have concerns about contracting COVID-19, and significant shares still support the kinds of public health restrictions that states have rolled back.

The most widespread about-face in GOP states is a sudden openness to letting local authorities mandate masks — a concession that cities including Phoenix and Little Rock, Arkansas, quickly put into action but is increasingly criticized as insufficient as the outbreaks rage.

In Florida, which has reported over 5,000 new cases in each of the past two days, DeSantis has resisted calls to mandate masks, leaving that decision to local leaders. The Republican contends that areas not as

severely affected should not have to bear the same burdens.

Add to that the political optics of reimposing restrictions less than two months before Republicans descend on the state in late August to renominate Trump. The Republican National Committee awarded Jacksonville the convention. Trump got in a tiff with North Carolina's Democratic governor over social distancing restrictions that threatened to dampen his celebration.

The number of cases in Duval County, which is home to Jacksonville, has shot up along with statewide numbers.

"It's not political. You're in a situation where the whole reason the mitigation was done was to flatten the curve so the hospitals weren't overwhelmed," DeSantis said last weekend. "We didn't 100 percent know what was going to happen."

U.S. Rep. Donna Shalala of Florida, a former secretary of Health and Human Services during the Clinton administration, called on DeSantis to make a course correction.

"He followed the president's leadership, and people have died because of it," she said. "He can pivot and take very strong steps."

In Arkansas, Gov. Asa Hutchinson has urged people to cover their faces and even begins his daily briefings by showing off his mask. But the Republican governor has resisted calls to require them, arguing that it would be difficult to enforce in a rural state.

Hutchinson also says he's concerned such a mandate could spark a backlash, with people refusing to wear masks. Some cities have acted on their own, and he says he won't get in their way.

"How do you encourage people to wear a mask?" Hutchinson said this week. "I think we're taking it by providing the guidelines."

In Arizona, Ducey resisted pressure to close restaurants as the virus first spread in March, saying the state wasn't seeing explosive growth like New York and didn't need to act so aggressively. The Democratic mayors of Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff and elsewhere imposed their own restrictions.

The governor responded with an executive order closing restaurants in counties with known coronavirus infections but also defining some businesses cities couldn't restrict, such as golf courses.

Last week, Ducey changed his mind. Under extreme pressure to act as COVID-19 cases soar, Ducey gave local leaders the power to require masks, while avoiding making it a statewide mandate.

The numbers "continue to go in the wrong direction," Ducey said Thursday.

Associated Press writers Andrew DeMillo in Little Rock, Arkansas; Bobby Caina Calvin in Tallahassee, Florida; and Jonathan J. Cooper in Phoenix contributed to this report.

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

Kop joy: Liverpool fans flood Anfield, 1st title in 30 years

By ROB HARRIS AP Global Soccer Writer

LIVERPOOL, England (AP) — The sun had just set over Anfield — and on a 30-year wait to be champions of England again — when the fireworks started to explode into the twilight.

A signal went out across Merseyside. The drought was finally over for Liverpool.

At first there were just a dozen supporters who watching on phones and listening on radios outside this hallowed stadium. They were soon surrounded by a sea of thousands snaking from the entrance to the Kop past the The Albert Pub to the Hillsborough memorial.

And as darkness eventually engulfed Liverpool's home on this mid-summer's evening, a red haze of smoke began to light the skies.

Waving flares and flags, Liverpool's faithful found a way to share this moment together on Thursday, even in a pandemic. It's hard to stay apart when a three-decade mission has been accomplished, even though the crowning moment came without Liverpool players being on the field.

The squad had to watch on television, just like the fans, as second-place Manchester City lost 2-1 at

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 46 of 82

Chelsea and left Liverpool 23 points in front. With seven games to go, Liverpool cannot be caught.

"This is bliss," 61-year-old fan Francis Murphy said as fans clambered onto the Main Stand behind him. "I have supported them all my life and to go 30 years without winning the league really hurts. But we are back, and Liverpool will stay back."

Jürgen Klopp, the German manager who has restored a winning mentality to Liverpool with his brand of "heavy metal" football, already led the club its sixth European club title last year.

"If I tried to start talking about it again I will start crying again and that doesn't work really well," Klopp said. "I am completely overwhelmed. I don't know, it's a mix of everything. I am relieved, I am happy, I am proud."

The twice-weekly COVID-19 testing that allowed the Premier League to resume last week after a 100-day suspension enabled Klopp to join his squad and staff for a viewing of the game from Stamford Bridge.

"We thought maybe not compulsory," Klopp said. "I know who will stay at home and watch it alone will regret it for the rest of his life. So we came here together. It is our bubble."

Liverpool became England's earliest and latest champion: clinched with the most games to spare and by the latest calendar date.

This title had hardly been in doubt since December. A fluid, attacking style of play earned 28 wins and two draws in 31 games with a loss at Watford.

"The world has watched the fierce determination of this club on the field for every single match," said John Henry, Liverpool's American owner, "the preparation, the resolve and the talent of those who put together perhaps the greatest league performance ever in any country's history."

The club was 25 points clear when the league was abruptly halted by the coronavirus in March.

"Null and void" became the dreaded term in the red half of Liverpool, amid fears the season could be canceled completely. When Liverpool returned on Sunday, a 0-0 draw at Everton delayed the crowning moment. The team rediscovered its scintillating attacking form as it swept aside Crystal Palace 4-0 on Wednesday inside an empty Anfield.

Fans couldn't go to pubs, which have been shut since March.

"We are not going to complain and make a fuss," said 21-year-old defender Trent Alexander-Arnold, a lifelong fan. "It's something we've always dreamed of."

But the police adopted a relaxed approach to allow the outpouring of emotion outside Anfield. Thousands filled the streets long after midnight singing club anthems old and new — from "You'll Never Walk Alone" to "Allez, Allez, Allez."

"You want to be amongst it," said 23-year-old supporter Libby Stevens, who wasn't alive when Liverpool last won the league.

In 1990, the top tier was still called the First Division and the Liverpool held the English record with 18 titles. But the inception of the Premier League in 1992 transformed the landscape of the English game.

Liverpool faded and Manchester United won 13 Premier League titles in 21 seasons. United manager Alex Ferguson succeeded in his mission of knocking Liverpool "off their perch" by helping the Mancunians become 20-time English champions and one of the wealthiest teams in the world.

There was one United fan at the Anfield celebrations — John Restall, who was accompanying Liverpool-supporting partner Christine Banks

"It's not been nice, him winding me up all the time," she said, "and now it's my turn."

Henry's experiment of bringing back 1990-title winning manager Kenny Dalglish was short-lived: an eighth-place finish in 2012 was the club's lowest in 18 years.

Brendan Rodgers's finished two points shy of champion Manchester City in 2014 — after captain Steven Gerrard slipped on the field and gave away a goal is a critical loss to Chelsea.

Klopp arrived in October 2015 and Liverpool finished eighth again that season.

A slump in form saw Rodgers fired in 2015, which ushered in the arrival of Klopp. Money from the sale of Philippe Coutinho two years ago helped build an entertaining team led by Mo Salah and Roberto Firmino, bolstered defensively by the additions of goalkeeper Alisson and center back Virgil van Dijk for then-world record transfer fees.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 47 of 82

Liverpool finished just one point behind winner Man City last season. There was no stopping Klopp's team this time.

"We had a magnificent season last year, but we came in second and so this is especially gratifying for us," Liverpool chairman Tom Werner told The Associated Press after watching the game on Cape Cod, in Massachusetts. "We share our joy with your game and our team. They really did play magnificently all year. Yesterday's game was another example of how talented the team is. And I'm just happy for all of our supporters in Liverpool and around the world."

But any thoughts of a victory parade will have to wait until the pandemic regulations are eased further.

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

Some states pause reopening as virus cases near record high

By JENNIFER PELTZ and CARLA K. JOHNSON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The coronavirus crisis deepened in Arizona on Thursday, and the governor of Texas began to backtrack after making one of the most aggressive pushes in the nation to reopen, as the daily number of confirmed cases across the U.S. closed in on the peak reached during the dark days of late April.

While greatly expanded testing probably accounts for some of the increase, experts say other measures indicate the virus is making a comeback. Daily deaths, hospitalizations and the percentage of tests that are coming back positive also have been rising over the past few weeks in parts of the country, mostly in the South and West.

In Arizona, 23% of tests conducted over the past seven days have been positive, nearly triple the national average, and a record 415 patients were on ventilators. Mississippi saw its daily count of confirmed cases reach record highs twice this week.

"It's not a joke. Really bad things are going to happen," said Dr. Thomas Dobbs, Mississippi's health officer.

Republican Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas put off lifting any more restrictions and reimposed a ban on elective surgeries in some places to preserve hospital space after the number of patients statewide more than doubled in two weeks. Republican Gov. Doug Ducey of Arizona also said further efforts to reopen are on hold as cases surge. Sandwiched between the two, New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, a Democrat, worried about rising numbers and the risks posed by her neighbors, declaring, "We're on hold."

"The last thing we want to do as a state is go backwards and close down businesses," Abbott said.

The U.S. reported 34,500 COVID-19 cases Wednesday, slightly fewer than the day before but still near the high of 36,400 reached April 24, according to a count kept by Johns Hopkins University. The daily average has climbed by more than 50% over the past two weeks, an Associated Press analysis found. The true numbers are probably much higher because of limited testing and other factors.

Whether the rise in cases translates into an equally dire surge in deaths across the U.S. will depend on a number of factors, experts said, most crucially whether government officials make the right decisions. Deaths per day nationwide are around 600 after peaking at about 2,200 in mid-April.

"It is possible, if we play our cards badly and make a lot of mistakes, to get back to that level. But if we are smart, there's no reason to get to 2,200 deaths a day," said Dr. Ashish Jha, director of Harvard's Global Health Institute.

The nation's daily death toll has actually dropped markedly over the past few weeks even as cases climbed, a phenomenon experts said may reflect the advent of treatments, better efforts to prevent infections at nursing homes and a rising proportion of cases among younger people, who are more likely than their elders to survive a bout with COVID-19.

"This is still serious," said Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, but "we're in a different situation today than we were in March or April."

Several states set single-day case records this week, including Arizona, California, Nevada, Texas and Oklahoma. Florida reported over 5,000 new cases for a second day in a row.

Mississippi's Dobbs blamed a failure to wear masks and observe other social-distancing practices.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 48 of 82

"I'm afraid it's going to take some kind of catastrophe for people to pay attention," he said. "We are giving away those hard-fought gains for silly stuff."

Tom Rohlk, a 62-year-old grocery store worker from Overland Park, Kansas, complained that young people sometimes act as if they don't care: "It seems like it's time to party."

The U.S. has greatly ramped up testing in the past few months, and it is now presumably finding many less-serious cases that would have gone undetected earlier in the outbreak, when testing was limited and often focused on sicker people.

But there are other more clear-cut warning signs, including a rising number of deaths per day in states such as Arizona and Alabama.

The numbers "continue to go in the wrong direction," Ducey said. "We can expect our numbers will be worse next week and the week after."

The number of confirmed infections, in itself, is a poor measure of the outbreak. CDC officials, relying on blood tests, estimated Thursday that 20 million Americans have been infected. That is about 6% percent of the population and roughly 10 times the 2.3 million confirmed cases.

Officials have long known that many cases have been missed because of testing gaps and a lack of symptoms in some infected people.

Worldwide, over 9.5 million people have been confirmed infected, and nearly a half-million have died, including over 124,000 in the U.S., the world's highest toll, by Johns Hopkins' count.

While some states impose new restrictions or pause their reopenings, some businesses also are backing off. Disney delayed its mid-July reopening of Disneyland.

As politicians try to strike a balance between public health and the economy, the government reported that the number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits last week declined slightly to 1.48 million, indicating layoffs are slowing but still painfully high.

Elsewhere around the world, Paris' Eiffel Tower reopened to visitors after its longest peacetime closure: 104 days.

With hospitals overwhelmed in New Delhi, Indian troops provided care in railroad cars converted to medical wards.

Johnson reported from Washington state. Associated Press journalists around the world contributed to this report.

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

Despite pandemic, Trump administration urges end to ACA

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, the Trump administration on Thursday urged the Supreme Court to overturn the Affordable Care Act.

The administration's latest high court filing came the same day the government reported that close to half a million people who lost their health insurance amid the economic shutdown to slow the spread of COVID-19 have gotten coverage through HealthCare.gov.

The administration's legal brief makes no mention of the virus.

Some 20 million Americans could lose their health coverage and protections for people with preexisting health conditions also would be put at risk if the court agrees with the administration in a case that won't be heard before the fall.

In the case before the Supreme Court, Texas and other conservative-led states argue that the ACA was essentially rendered unconstitutional after Congress passed tax legislation in 2017 that eliminated the law's unpopular fines for not having health insurance, but left in place its requirement that virtually all Americans have coverage.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 49 of 82

After failing to repeal "Obamacare" in 2017 when Republicans fully controlled Congress, President Donald Trump has put the weight of his administration behind the legal challenge.

If the health insurance requirement is invalidated, "then it necessarily follows that the rest of the ACA must also fall," Solicitor General Noel Francisco wrote Thursday.

The Trump administration's views on what parts of the ACA might be kept or replaced if the law is overturned have shifted over time. But in legal arguments, it has always supported getting rid of "Obamacare" provisions that prohibit insurance companies from discriminating against people on account of their medical history.

Nonetheless, Trump has repeatedly assured Americans that people with preexisting conditions would still be protected. Neither the White House nor congressional Republicans have specified how.

The new sign-ups for health coverage come from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The figures are partial because they don't include sign-ups from states that run their own health insurance marketplaces. Major states like California and New York are not counted in the federal statistics.

An estimated 27 million people may have lost job-based coverage due to layoffs, and it's unclear what — if anything — they're turning to as a fallback. People who lose employer health care are eligible for a special sign-up period for subsidized plans under the Obama-era law. Many may also qualify for Medicaid.

The Trump administration has been criticized for not doing as much as states like California to publicize these readily available backups. In response, administration officials say they have updated the HealthCare.gov website to make it easier for consumers to find information on special sign-up periods.

Thursday's report from the government showed that about 487,000 people signed up with HealthCare.gov after losing their workplace coverage this year. That's an increase of 46% from the same time period last year.

House passes sweeping police overhaul after Floyd's death

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House approved a far-reaching police overhaul from Democrats on Thursday, a vote heavy with emotion and symbolism as a divided Congress struggles to address the global outcry over the deaths of George Floyd and other Black Americans.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi gathered with members of the Congressional Black Caucus on the Capitol steps, challenging opponents not to allow the deaths to have been in vain or the outpouring of public support for changes to go unmatched. But the collapse of a Senate Republican bill leaves final legislation in doubt.

"Exactly one month ago, George Floyd spoke his final words — 'I can't breathe' — and changed the course of history," Pelosi said.

She said the Senate faces a choice "to honor George Floyd's life or to do nothing."

The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act is perhaps the most ambitious set of proposed changes to police procedures and accountability in decades. Backed by the nation's leading civil rights groups, it aims to match the moment of demonstrations that filled streets across the nation. It has almost zero chance of becoming law.

On the eve of the vote, President Donald Trump's administration said he would veto the bill. And Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has also said it would not pass the Republican-held chamber.

After the GOP policing bill stalled this week, blocked by Democrats, Trump shrugged.

"If nothing happens with it, it's one of those things," Trump said. "We have different philosophies."

Congress is now at a familiar impasse despite protests outside their door and polling that shows Americans overwhelmingly want changes after the deaths of Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others in interactions with law enforcement. The two parties are instead appealing to voters ahead of the fall election, which will determine control of the House, Senate and White House.

"We hear you. We see you. We are you," said Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., during the debate.

It has been a month since Floyd's May 25 death sparked a global reckoning over police tactics and

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 50 of 82

racial injustice. Since then, funeral services were held for Rayshard Brooks, a Black man shot and killed by police in Atlanta. Thursday is also what would have been the 18th birthday of Tamir Rice, a Black boy killed in Ohio in 2014.

Lawmakers who have been working from home during the COVID-19 crisis were summoned to the Capitol for an emotional, hours-long debate. Dozens voted by proxy under new pandemic rules.

During the day, several Democratic lawmakers read the names of those killed, shared experiences of racial bias and echoed support of Black Lives Matter activists.

Rep. Karen Bass, D-Calif., the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, said hundreds of thousands of people "in every state in the union" are marching in the streets to make sure Floyd "will not be just another Black man dead at the hands of the police."

Republican lawmakers countered the bill goes too far and failed to include GOP input. "All lives matter," said Rep. Debbie Lesko, R-Ariz. New York Rep. Pete King said it's time to stand with law enforcement, the "men and women in blue." House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy decried the "mob" of demonstrators.

At one point Rep. Barry Loudermilk, R-Ga., stood up to say he just didn't understand what was happening in the country — from Floyd's death to the protests that followed. Several Black Democratic lawmakers rose to encourage him to pick up a U.S. history book or watch some of the many films now streaming about the Black experience in America.

Later, Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., noting the legacy of Emmett Till, asked others to "walk in my shoes."

In the stalemate over the policing overhaul, the parties are settled into their political zones, almost ensuring no legislation will become law. While there may be shared outrage over Floyd's death, the lawmakers remain far apart on the broader debate over racial bias in policing and other institutions. The 236-181 House vote was largely on party lines. Three Republicans joined Democrats in favor of passage and no Democrats were opposed.

Both bills share common elements that could be grounds for a compromise. Central to both would be the creation of a national database of use-of-force incidents, which is viewed as a way to provide transparency on officers' records if they transfer from one agency to another. The bills would restrict police chokeholds and set up new training procedures, including beefing up the use of body cameras.

The Democratic bill goes much further, mandating many of those changes, while also revising the federal statute for police misconduct and holding officers personally liable for damages in lawsuits. It also would halt the practice of sending military equipment to local law enforcement agencies.

Neither bill goes as far as some activists want with calls to defund the police and shift resources to other community services.

Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, the only Black Republican senator, who drafted the GOP package, said the bill is now "closer to the trash can than it's ever been."

"I'm frustrated," he said on Fox News Channel.

Scott insisted he was open to amending his bill with changes proposed by Democrats. But Democrats doubted McConnell would allow a thorough debate, and instead blocked the GOP bill.

Senate Democrats believe Senate Republicans will face mounting public pressure to open negotiations and act. But ahead of the November election, that appears uncertain.

Associated Press writers Laurie Kellman, Andrew Taylor, Darlene Superville and Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

Dueling Trump-Biden events offer contrasting virus responses

By WILL WEISSERT and MARC LEVY Associated Press

LANCASTER, Pa. (AP) — A presidential campaign that has largely been frozen for several months because of the coronavirus took on a degree of normalcy on Thursday when President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden swung through critical battleground states presenting starkly different

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 51 of 82

visions for a post-pandemic America.

Touring a shipyard in Marinette, Wisconsin, Trump insisted the economy is "coming back at a level nobody ever imagined possible." But in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Biden warned that "no miracles are coming" and slammed Trump's handling of the virus.

"Amazingly, he hasn't grasped the most basic fact of this crisis: To fix the economy we have to get control over the virus," Biden said. "He's like a child who can't believe this has happened to him. His whining and self-pity."

With just over four months remaining until the election, the contrasting styles of Trump and Biden are increasingly on display. The president is itching to move past an outbreak that has dashed the economy and killed more than 125,000 people. Biden, meanwhile, is seeking to present himself as a competent and calming leader ready to level with the nation about the hardships that may be required to emerge from the current turmoil.

Beyond knocking Trump's leadership, Biden spent much of Thursday defending the Obama administration's signature health care law and decrying what he said was a White House-led effort to dismantle it via a court challenge. It was part of a larger Democratic effort to refocus the 2020 election on health care, an issue that helped the party retake the House last cycle and one it hopes will resonate with even more voters amid the pandemic.

Trump, for his part, repeatedly took aim at Biden throughout his day in Wisconsin. During a Fox News town hall taped in Green Bay, Trump questioned Biden's acuity and charged that the more liberal wing of the Democratic Party would be running the show in a Biden administration.

"He's a candidate that will destroy this country," Trump said. "And he may not do it himself. He will be run by a radical fringe group of lunatics that will destroy our country."

Narrow 2016 victories in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania were vital in sending Trump to the White House. That he would build his travel around trying to do that again — and that Biden would respond with trips meant to flip the states back to Democratic — wouldn't usually be a surprise. But the coronavirus has upended normal campaign travel since March.

After long campaigning virtually from his Delaware home, Biden has in recent weeks begun visiting Pennsylvania, allowing him to target a swing state without venturing far. Lancaster is about an hour and 15 minutes by car from Biden's house, and yet it is the farthest he's traveled lately, aside from a trip to Houston to meet with the family of George Floyd, whose death in police custody sparked protests around the nation.

Trump, by contrast, staged a rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, last weekend and spoke at an Arizona megachurch on Tuesday. On Thursday, he visited a rural Wisconsin shipyard and taped a town hall for later broadcast by Fox News Channel from an airport in Green Bay. Vice President Mike Pence also hit another key state, Ohio.

Biden's team has organized small events and enforced social distancing. Trump has refused to wear a mask in public, and his campaign says Biden is using a cautious approach to hide the fact that he can't draw large, enthusiastic crowds.

"I know, as Americans, it's not something we're used to. But it matters," Biden said of wearing a mask, noting he wears one "everywhere I go."

Biden donned his mask while meeting in an outdoor courtyard with three mothers and two children who told of benefiting from the health care law. Beyond the police cordon, a group of Trump supporters could be heard chanting "four more years" and "USA."

Biden's subsequent speech was behind a placard proclaiming "Protect and Build on the Affordable Care Act." He scoffed at Trump's suggestion during last weekend's rally that he'd asked officials to slow down testing for the coronavirus because it was uncovering more cases.

"He thinks finding out that more Americans are sick will make him look bad. And that's what he's worried about," Biden said. "He's worried about looking bad."

Trump countered during his Wisconsin stop, "If we didn't test, we wouldn't have cases."

Polls in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania show Biden ahead, but nearly every poll had Trump trailing in 2016 before his base came together in the final weeks of the campaign.

Trump predictably went maskless for an event at Fincantieri Marinette Marine shipyard that was outside. Hundreds attended, and some didn't wear masks, despite requirements to do so.

Trump toured vessels under construction, then took credit for a new contract won in April to build Navy frigates at the facility. Trump said it injected economic growth to the community and saved the plant from closure.

Weissert reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Zeke Miller contributed to this report from Marinette, Wis.

Colorado reexamines Elijah McClain's death in police custody

By PATTY NIEBERG and THOMAS PEIPERT Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — The Colorado governor on Thursday ordered prosecutors to reopen the investigation into the death of Elijah McClain, a 23-year-old Black man put into a chokehold by police who stopped him on the street in suburban Denver last year because he was "being suspicious."

Gov. Jared Polis signed an executive order directing state Attorney General Phil Weiser to investigate and possibly prosecute the three white officers previously cleared in McClain's death. McClain's name has become a rallying cry during the national reckoning over racism and police brutality following the deaths of George Floyd and others.

"Elijah McClain should be alive today, and we owe it to his family to take this step and elevate the pursuit of justice in his name to a statewide concern," Polis said in a statement.

He said he had spoken with McClain's mother and was moved by her description of her son as a "responsible and curious child ... who could inspire the darkest soul."

Police in Aurora responded to a call about a suspicious person wearing a ski mask and waving his arms as he walked down a street on Aug. 24. Police body-camera video shows an officer getting out of his car, approaching McClain and saying, "Stop right there. Stop. Stop. ... I have a right to stop you because you're being suspicious."

Police say McClain refused to stop walking and fought back when officers confronted him and tried to take him into custody.

In the video, the officer turns McClain around and repeats, "Stop tensing up." As McClain tries to escape the officer's grip, the officer says, "Relax, or I'm going to have to change this situation."

As other officers join to restrain McClain, he begs them to let go and says, "You guys started to arrest me, and I was stopping my music to listen."

One of the officers put him in a chokehold that cuts off blood to the brain, something that has been banned in several places in the wake of Floyd's death May 25 under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer and the global protests that followed.

In the video, McClain tells officers: "Let go of me. I am an introvert. Please respect the boundaries that I am speaking." Those words have appeared on scores of social media posts demanding justice for McClain.

He was on the ground for 15 minutes as several officers and paramedics stood by. Paramedics gave him 500 milligrams of the sedative ketamine to calm him down, and he suffered cardiac arrest on the way to the hospital. McClain was declared brain dead Aug. 27 and was taken off life support three days later.

A forensic pathologist could not determine what exactly led to his death but said physical exertion during the confrontation likely contributed.

McClain's younger sister, Samara McClain, told The Denver Post shortly after his death that her brother was walking to a corner store to get tea for a cousin and often wore masks when he was outside because he had a blood condition that caused him to get cold easily.

In the video, Elijah McClain sobs as he repeatedly tells officers, "I'm just different." Samara McClain said her brother was a massage therapist who planned to go to college.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 53 of 82

The Police Department put the three officers on leave, but they returned to the force when District Attorney Dave Young said there was insufficient evidence to support charging them.

"Ultimately, while I may share the vast public opinion that Elijah McClain's death could have been avoided, it is not my role to file criminal charges based on opinion, but rather, on the evidence revealed from the investigation and applicable Colorado law," Young said shortly before Polis ordered the investigation re-opened.

Aurora police said interim Police Chief Vanessa Wilson won't comment to avoid interfering with the investigation.

Mari Newman, the McClain family's attorney, said she was pleased with the governor's decision.

"Clearly, Aurora has no intention of taking responsibility for murdering an innocent young man," she said. "Its entire effort is to defend its brutality at all costs, and to lie to the public it is supposed to serve. It is time for a responsible adult to step in."

Colorado's attorney general said in a statement that the investigation will be thorough and "worthy of public trust and confidence in the criminal justice system."

Nieberg is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

NYC judge rejects Trump family effort to halt tell-all book

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A New York City judge on Thursday dismissed a claim by Donald Trump's brother that sought to halt the publication of a tell-all book by the president's niece, saying the court lacked jurisdiction in the case.

Surrogates Court Judge Peter Kelly said the claims were not appropriate for his court, where disputes over estate matters are settled.

The motion filed earlier this week sought an injunction to prevent Mary Trump and the book's publisher, Simon & Schuster, from releasing it, as scheduled, in July.

Mary Trump is the daughter of Fred Trump Jr., the president's elder brother, who died in 1981. An online description of her book, "Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man," says it reveals "a nightmare of traumas, destructive relationships, and a tragic combination of neglect and abuse."

Robert Trump's lawyers filed court papers saying that Mary Trump and others had signed a settlement agreement that would prohibit her from writing the book. They said the deal included a "substantial financial settlement" for Mary Trump.

The settlement nearly two decades ago included a confidentiality clause explicitly saying they would not "publish any account concerning the litigation or their relationship," unless they all agreed, the court papers said.

Published accounts of the book's contents say it contains an "insider's perspective" of "countless holiday meals" and family interactions and family events, along with personal observations by Mary Trump, a psychologist, about her "supposedly toxic family," according to the court papers.

The agreement related to the will of Donald Trump's father, New York real estate developer Fred Trump. In their court papers, lawyers for Robert Trump said the book also has been promoted as containing insight into the "inner workings" of the Trump family and allegations that the late Fred Trump and the president neglected Mary Trump's father, "supposedly contributing to his early death."

Mary Trump's attorney, Ted Boutros Jr., said the court was correct in its decision.

"We hope this decision will end the matter. Democracy thrives on the free exchange of ideas, and neither this court nor any other has authority to violate the Constitution by imposing a prior restraint on core political speech," he said in a statement.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 54 of 82

The White House and lawyers for Robert Trump did not have an immediate comment Thursday. A spokesman for Simon & Schuster said in a statement that the publishing house was "delighted" with the decision.

"We look forward to publishing Mary L. Trump's 'Too Much and Never Enough,' and are confident we will prevail should there be further efforts to stifle this publication," spokesperson Adam Rothberg said.

Associated Press writer Larry Neumeister in New York contributed to this report.

US health officials estimate 20M Americans have had virus

By ZEKE MILLER and MARILYNN MARCHIONE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials estimate that 20 million Americans have been infected with the coronavirus since it first arrived in the United States, meaning that the vast majority of the population remains susceptible.

Thursday's estimate is roughly 10 times as many infections as the 2.3 million cases that have been confirmed. Officials have long known that millions of people were infected without knowing it and that many cases are being missed because of gaps in testing.

The news comes as the Trump administration works to tamp down nationwide concern about the COVID-19 pandemic as about a dozen states are seeing worrisome increases in cases.

The administration also looks to get its scientific experts back before the public more as it tries to allay anxieties about the pandemic while states begin reopening. Since mid-May, when the government began stressing the need to get the economy moving again, the panel's public health experts have been far less visible than in the pandemic's early weeks.

Twenty million infections means that about 6% of the nation's 331 million people have been infected.

"It's clear that many individuals in this nation are still susceptible," Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said on a call with reporters Thursday. "Our best estimate right now is that for every case that was reported, there actually are 10 more infections."

Previously, CDC officials and the nation's top infectious-disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, have said that as many as 25% of infected people might not have symptoms.

"There's an enormous number of people that are still vulnerable," said Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, vice dean at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. "It still remains a potentially lethal disease. It's a roll of the dice for everybody who gets the illness. Also, you're rolling the dice for other people who you may give the virus to."

The new estimate is based on CDC studies of blood samples collected nationwide — some by the CDC and others from blood donations and other sources. Many infections were not caught in early testing, when supplies were limited and federal officials prioritized testing for those with symptoms.

Administration officials are pointing to the new data to allay public anxieties, claiming that while there have been significant spikes, they have the outbreaks well in hand. They maintained they were not trying to minimize a public health crisis, but said the nation is in a markedly different place with the virus now than when the U.S. last saw similar infection numbers in mid-April, when testing infrastructure was weaker. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity late Wednesday to discuss the matter candidly.

"This is still serious," Redfield said on the call with reporters Thursday. "But I'm asking people to recognize that we're in a different situation today than we were in March or April," with more cases today in younger people who are not as likely to develop serious illness or die from infection, he said.

President Donald Trump, who refuses to wear a face mask in public, has tried to play down the risk. He told a crowd in Wisconsin on Thursday that the administration had done an "incredible job" fighting the virus and added that "if we didn't test, we wouldn't have cases," which ignores other indicators of the extent of the problem such as surging hospitalizations in some areas.

Redfield said infection prevalence rates ranged from 1% in some areas of the West Coast to much higher in New York City.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 55 of 82

Several independent experts said the methods and locations of sampling are key to interpreting the numbers.

Dr. Thomas Tsai, a Harvard University health policy researcher, said 20 million seems reasonable, but "most of these estimates exist in a range" and it's important to know how wide that is.

"It's hard to interpret this just from a single number and without the context for it," such as what locations were sampled and whether it was truly a random slice of a population or areas of low or high prevalence, which can skew the results.

Justin Lessler, a researcher at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, said 20 million infected "is about what you'd expect based on the case fatality rate" and the number of deaths that have occurred so far in the U.S.

Despite the phaseout of daily White House coronavirus briefings, the administration has been closely monitoring data on the spread of COVID-19 and has been deploying teams from the CDC to identify and stem outbreaks around the country.

A dozen states in recent weeks have seen a worrisome uptick in new cases, as well as in the more critical measure of the percentage of positive cases discovered in tests performed. Seven states have seen more than 10% of tests come back positive. And troublesome spikes in Sun Belt states have dominated news coverage in recent days, to the consternation of Trump administration officials.

They point instead to more nuanced county-level data, which shows positivity rates exceeding 10% in just 3% of the nation's counties. Yet they acknowledge that some of the areas with the highest transmission rates are generally the most populous, suggesting tens of millions of Americans could be living in areas with spiking infections.

As states reopen, the administration says it is up to governors and local officials to determine how to respond to the spikes. Texas GOP Gov. Greg Abbott, for example, put a hold on any further steps to reopen and reimposed a ban on elective surgeries in some areas to preserve hospital space after the number of patients statewide more than doubled in two weeks.

The CDC teams, officials said, are working to trace new outbreaks and reinforce protective measures like social distancing and mask wearing in hard-hit areas and to remind vulnerable populations to take extreme precautions. The administration says those efforts have helped slow new infections in North Carolina and Alabama, where they were deployed earlier this month.

One of the hard-hit areas is Phoenix, where Trump held an event Tuesday with thousands of young attendees, nearly all of whom were maskless.

The officials say the nature of the outbreak now is different than months ago, when deaths topped more than 1,000 per day for weeks and hospitals were stretched beyond capacity across the country. The new increase in positive cases, they said, is capturing what has long been there. They say it is only now showing up in data because the U.S. has increased testing and surveillance.

Meanwhile, mortality data has steadily declined, as have hospitalizations in all but a few hot spots.

To the administration officials, that reinforces their hypothesis that millions unknowingly had the virus earlier this year. Through early May, federal guidelines prioritized testing for symptomatic people, those exposed to a positive case and those in high-risk environments.

With testing far more widespread now, officials believe 50% of new cases in Florida and Texas are among people ages 35 or younger, and most of them are asymptomatic.

The U.S. is testing about 500,000 patients per day. On a per capita basis, the U.S. rate falls behind several other countries, including Spain, Australia, Russia and Iceland, according to figures from Johns Hopkins University.

There is no scientific consensus on the rate of testing needed to control the virus. But many experts say the U.S. should be testing roughly 1 million to 3 million people daily to catch new cases and prevent flareups. Administration officials said they expect to be able to run 20-40 million tests per month beginning this fall.

Testing is constrained by laboratory supplies needed to run the tests but also lack of demand for tests in some areas.

Marchione reported from Milwaukee. Associated Press writer Matthew Perrone in Washington contributed to this report.

Race relations in Wisconsin capital are a tale of 2 cities

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — In this college town that considers itself a bastion of progressive politics and inclusion, race relations are really a tale of two cities.

Demonstrators who toppled statues of figures with no racist history this week say they went after the sculptures because they wanted to shatter a false narrative that the state and the city support Black people and racial equity.

"The crowd at large was absolutely conscious of the political motivations," protester Micah Le told The Associated Press in a text, referring to the statue of the Civil War abolitionist Hans Christian Heg and another sculpture of a woman with her arm outstretched that honors the state's "Forward" motto.

"People who didn't already know about the racist pro-Columbus, anti-indigenous history of the 'Forward' statue are learning about it now. Since the Heg statue came down, folks are learning that slavery continued after the Civil War in the form of the (prison) system, hence why the statue was meaningless," Le said.

It is also possible that demonstrators were simply looking to join with others across the nation in erasing Confederate figures and did not understand the statues' symbolism. But despite Wisconsin's progressive history — the state fought for the Union during the Civil War and was one of the first to ratify women's suffrage — data suggests racism is as prevalent here as anywhere in America.

Blacks make up only about 6.7% of Wisconsin's population but comprise 42% of prison inmates. The state has the widest achievement gap between Black and white students based on results of a 2019 test known as the nation's report card. A 2014 study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation of 12 key quality-of-life indicators, including education, income and home situation, concluded that Wisconsin was the worst state in the nation for Black children.

The disparities in Madison are stark. The capital city is one of the wealthiest in the state and home to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, one of the country's premier research institutions. The city is a liberal bastion with a history of political activism dating back to the Vietnam War era. The district attorney, Ismael Ozanne, is Black. So are some city council members.

But much of the Black community struggles here.

Nearly three-quarters of Black children in Dane County lived in poverty in 2011, according to a 2013 report by the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. Only about half graduated from high school on time in 2011 and were half as likely as whites to take the ACT college-entrance exam. Standardized tests in 2017-18 showed only 9.8% of Blacks in Madison were proficient or advanced in reading and math compared with 59% of whites.

In 2010, police in Dane County were six times more likely to arrest a young Black person than a white counterpart. Black adults were arrested eight times more often than whites in 2012, twice as often as the statewide Black-to-white arrest ratio.

"Madison is a wonderful place, but it is a tale of two cities," said former Madison Police Chief Noble Wray, who is Black. "There is frustration. Sometimes as a city official, we believe that if no one is complaining or if there is no tension, things are OK. The systems won't allow them to have their redress heard."

Tensions came to a head in 2015, when white officer Matt Kenny shot and killed 19-year-old Tony Robinson. Kenny was responding to reports that Robinson was jumping in and out of traffic. According to Kenny's account, he fired after Robinson attacked him. The district attorney cleared Kenny, leading to protests that blocked streets and the Black Lives Matter movement rising to prominence here.

The anger resurfaced after George Floyd died last month at the hands of Minneapolis police.

Protesters have been demonstrating off and on around the state Capitol, mirroring nationwide protests calling for police reform in the wake of Floyd's death. Most of the protests have been peaceful, although

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 57 of 82

demonstrators clashed with police, and some stores were looted.

Alderman Samba Baldeh, who is Black and running for the state Assembly, called police earlier this month alleging his white opponent, Walter Stewart, drove by his house with two other white men shooting pictures. Baldeh said he confronted Stewart, who said he was taking photos for a campaign ad.

"I said, 'Walter, what is wrong with you? Do you know what is happening in Black America right now?' In this environment it is just scary."

Stewart has said Baldeh has "misstated" the incident, and he didn't mean to disturb him.

On Tuesday, Madison police arrested a Black man who entered a bar armed with a baseball bat and started shouting at patrons through a bullhorn. That night, crowds tore down the two statues and assaulted state Sen. Tim Carpenter. They left him lying injured on the Capitol lawn and tried to break into the Capitol. Someone threw a firebomb into a city-county building.

Questions about why the protesters toppled the two statues still hang over the city.

Heg was a Norwegian immigrant who became an anti-slavery activist and a colonel in the 15th Wisconsin Regiment. He died at the Battle of Chickamauga. The "Forward" statue represented Wisconsin at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Protester Ebony Anderson-Carter told the Wisconsin State Journal that the statues stood for good causes but create a "false representation of what this city is."

Michael Johnson, executive director of the Dane County Boys and Girls Club, is one of the city's leading Black activists. He called toppling the statues a "setback" for the Black rights movement but said there's no denying racial inequities in Madison.

"I love Madison. I think it is a great city," Johnson said. "But people who look like me aren't necessarily thriving in this city. There's just huge disparities across the board."

Follow Todd Richmond on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/trichmond1>.

U.S. officials change virus risk groups, add pregnant women

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The nation's top public health agency on Thursday revamped its list of which Americans are at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness, adding pregnant women and removing age alone as a factor.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also changed the list of underlying conditions that make someone more susceptible to suffering and death. Sickle cell disease joined the list, for example. And the threshold for risky levels of obesity was lowered.

The changes didn't include adding race as a risk factor for serious illness, despite accumulating evidence that Black people, Hispanics and Native Americans have higher rates of infection, hospitalization and death.

Agency officials said the update was prompted by medical studies published since CDC first started listing high-risk groups. They sought to publicize the information before Independence Day weekend, when many people may be tempted to go out and socialize.

"For those at higher risk, we recommend limiting contact with others as much as possible, or restricting contacts to a small number of people who are willing to take measures to reduce the risk of (you) becoming infected," said CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield.

The same advice holds for people who live with or care for people at higher risk, Redfield added.

Previously, the CDC said those at high risk of serious illness included people aged 65 years and older; those who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility; and people with serious heart conditions, obesity, diabetes, liver disease, chronic kidney disease, chronic lung disease, and conditions that leave them with weakened immune systems.

In the changes, CDC created categories of people who are at high risk and people who might be at high risk.

Those who are at high risk include people with chronic kidney disease, chronic inflammatory lung disease, obesity, serious heart conditions, sickle cell disease, Type 2 diabetes, and weakened immune systems

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 58 of 82

because of organ transplants. The threshold for obesity concern was lowered from a body mass index of 40 down to 30.

The CDC said people are at increasing risk as they get older, but it removed people 65 and older as a high risk group.

The list of people who might be at high risk includes pregnant women, smokers and those with asthma, diseases that affect blood flow to the brain, cystic fibrosis, high blood pressure, dementia, liver disease, scarred or damaged lungs, Type 1 diabetes, a rare blood disorder called thalassemia, and people who have weakened immune systems due to HIV or other reasons.

Pregnant women joined the list on the same day a CDC report found they accounted for about 9% of lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases in women of childbearing age. About 5% of women of childbearing age are pregnant at any given time.

The report showed that pregnant women had higher rates of hospitalization, of admission to a hospital intensive care unit and of winding up on a breathing machine vs. young women who weren't pregnant. There was no clear evidence of a higher death rate among pregnant women, however.

It's not completely surprising, said Dr. Denise Jamieson, chair of obstetrics and gynecology at the Emory University School of Medicine. Pregnant women have been found to be at higher risk from other infectious respiratory diseases, likely because the lungs decrease in the volume as the uterus grows, Jamieson said.

What is surprising, she said, is that CDC didn't place pregnant women in the highest risk category.

"To me this is the most compelling evidence to date that pregnant women are at increased risk," said Jamieson, who spent 20 years at CDC as a reproductive health expert.

Earlier this week, CDC officials called on a panel of experts to help them identify groups that should be prioritized for coronavirus vaccinations if one becomes available and supplies are limited.

Pregnant women could be among that group. So could certain racial and ethnic groups.

CDC officials shared data with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices that showed, compared with white Americans, coronavirus hospitalization rates were 4 times higher for Hispanics, 4.5 times higher for Black people, and 5.5 higher for American Indians and Alaska Natives. A recent study in the Atlanta area suggested that being Black was as large a risk for hospitalization as having diabetes, being a smoker or being obese.

"If we fail to address racial and ethnic groups as at high risk for prioritization, whatever comes out of our group will be looked at very suspiciously and with a lot of reservation," said Dr. Jose Romero, chair of the expert panel.

"They are groups that need to be moved to the forefront," he said.

CDC officials say they expect to come out with recommendations for racial and ethnic minority groups soon.

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

Pandemic takes a bite, Chuck E. Cheese files for bankruptcy

By DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writer

Chuck E. Cheese - where kids could be kids while parents nursed headaches - is filing for bankruptcy protection.

The 43-year-old chain, which drew kids with pizza, video games and a singing mouse mascot, was struggling even before the coronavirus pandemic. But it said the prolonged closure of many outlets due to coronavirus restrictions led to Thursday's Chapter 11 filing.

CEC Entertainment Inc. has reopened 266 of its 555 company-operated Chuck E. Cheese and Peter Piper Pizza restaurants as restrictions ease, but it's unclear how willing parents will be to host birthday parties and other gatherings. The Irving, Texas-based company said it will continue to reopen locations and offer carryout and delivery while it negotiates with debt and lease holders.

CEC and its franchisees operate 734 restaurants in 47 states and 16 countries. Franchised locations

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 59 of 82

aren't included in the bankruptcy filing, the company said.

CEC listed nearly \$2 billion in debt and \$1.7 billion in assets in its bankruptcy petition, which was filed with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in southern Texas.

"The Chapter 11 process will allow us to strengthen our financial structure as we recover from what has undoubtedly been the most challenging event in our company's history" said CEO David McKillips in a prepared statement.

The restaurant industry has been devastated by the coronavirus. Transactions at U.S. family dining restaurants plummeted more than 80% in mid-April, the height of the pandemic in the U.S., according to The NPD Group, a data and consulting firm.

Orlando-based FoodFirst Global Restaurants, which owns the Brio Tuscan Grille and Bravo Cucina Italiana Italian restaurant chains, filed for bankruptcy protection in April. BarFly Ventures, which owns HopCat and other bars in the Midwest, filed for bankruptcy earlier this month.

Chuck E. Cheese got its start in 1977, when Atari cofounder Nolan Bushnell opened Chuck E. Cheese's Pizza Time Theatre in San Jose, California. The restaurant featured a cast of animatronic characters led by Chuck E. Cheese, a plucky rat in a bowler hat that was later rebranded as a mouse. "Where a kid can be a kid," the chain promised in its tag line.

But in recent years the chain has struggled. Newer competitors like Dave and Buster's offered bigger venues, while trampoline parks like Launch and AirTime offered party alternatives.

In 2014, CEC was bought by private equity firm Apollo Global Management. Under Apollo, it remodeled stores, introduced updated technology like gaming cards and revamped its menu, adding coffee drinks and premium beer and wine. It also refocused advertising to appeal more directly to parents.

In 2019, the chain's same-store sales - or sales at venues open at least a year - were up 3%. They rose in January of this year but began falling in February and March.

The pandemic was a final straw, hammering restaurants like Chuck E. Cheese that relied on dine-in traffic and weren't set up to do takeout.

At one point, perhaps recognizing its disadvantage, some Chuck E Cheese locations began offering food delivery on apps like Grubhub under the alias "Pasqually's Pizza & Wings."

Kevin Schimpf, a senior manager of industry research for the restaurant consulting firm Technomic, said Chuck E. Cheese is saddled with large stores and an abundance of high-touch surfaces at a time when many people may have mixed emotions about parties.

"Chuck E. Cheese will certainly not be the last pandemic-inflicted bankruptcy, but it will definitely be one of the most interesting to follow," he said.

The Dixie Chicks officially change their name to The Chicks

By KRISTIN M. HALL AP Entertainment Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Grammy-winning country group The Dixie Chicks have dropped the word Dixie from their name, now going by The Chicks.

The band's social media accounts and website were changed on Thursday to the refer to the new name for the band, which is made up of Martie Maguire, Natalie Maines and Emily Strayer. The band also recognized that the name was already in use by a band in New Zealand.

"A sincere and heartfelt thank you goes out to 'The Chicks' of NZ for their gracious gesture in allowing us to share their name. We are honored to co-exist together in the world with these exceptionally talented sisters," the band said in a statement.

The move follows a decision by country group Lady Antebellum to change to Lady A after acknowledging the word's association to slavery. A statement on The Chicks' website said "We want to meet this moment." The term Dixie refers to Southern U.S. states, especially those that belonged to the Confederacy.

The Chicks, who are releasing their first new album in 14 years next month, also released a new video for their new song, "March March" that features videos and images from the recent Black Lives Matter rallies.

Lady A received criticism with their name switch after a Black singer revealed she'd been performing as

Lady A for years.

The Chicks are the best selling female group in America with more than 33 million albums sold in the United States, according to the Recording Industry Association of America. Formed originally in Texas as a bluegrass group, the band hit commercial fame with their breakthrough album "Wide Open Spaces." The band has won 13 Grammys.

The band was shunned by country radio over an incident in 2003 when lead singer Maines criticized then-President George W. Bush because of the Iraq War. They responded to the backlash with their song "Not Ready to Make Nice," and swept the Grammys in 2007 winning three of the top all-genre categories.

'It's gone': What the loss of summer camp means for kids

By SOPHIA ROSENBAUM Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — It wasn't just the leadership opportunities or seeing his best friends or even escaping months stuck at home because of the coronavirus pandemic that had Rory Sederoff thinking 2020 would be one of his best summers ever.

This would have been the Toronto teenager's 15th year at Camp Walden, a sleepaway camp in upstate New York where he has spent every summer since he was 3 months old. He had already started rehearsing the speech he was going to give at the end-of-summer banquet, and imagined the exact tree by the waterfront that he would pick to be named in his honor.

For 14-year-old Rory, whose parents work at Walden, camp is where he feels most like himself — disconnected from screens and open to new opportunities.

"This summer, I would do many things that I won't really be able to do again," he said. "It's a summer filled with opportunities that now won't happen. There's no way to get that back. It's gone."

Camp Walden would have opened this week, but like most overnight camps across the country, it is closed this year because of virus-related state restrictions. For millions of kids, losing camp is another in a list of missed childhood milestones and experiences, big and small, due to the pandemic.

And while some activities can be pushed online or rescheduled, the camp experience has an expiration date. It doesn't translate digitally since it relies on kids being together, outside, stepping out of their regular lives and into new challenges and fun. People who have experienced summer camp often have a "10 for 2" mentality, counting down the months all year until they can spend their cherished eight weeks at their "home away from home."

An estimated 20 million U.S. children attend summer camp each year, and the \$18 billion industry employs over a million seasonal workers, according to the American Camp Association. The association has more than 3,100 camps accredited or seeking accreditation in its network.

Strict policies at most camps limit or ban the use of personal technology, which fosters a sense of community and contributes to the uniqueness of camp.

"They're only looking at each other, eye to eye, heart to heart, head to head," said ACA President Tom Rosenberg.

Rosenberg calls camp the optimal learning environment for social and emotional skills. First-year campers would be learning independence and some basic confidence. Those going into their sixth summer, say, might have been developing leadership and relationship-building skills.

"It literally changes lives," Rosenberg said. "You come home different."

Camp Walden's director, Robyn Spector, doesn't know life without camp. This would have been her 40th summer there, and she has held nearly every role since she started as an 8-year-old camper. Camp is where she "learned how to be good at things. I learned how to be kinder. I met my husband. I brought my kids at 12 weeks old."

Spector does most of the hiring at the camp, which has about 500 campers and 270 staff each summer. She finds joy in "being part of something that is so special to more than 1,000 people each summer."

Rosenberg acknowledged that attending sleepaway camp is a privilege, one that many kids can't experience because of the hefty price tag or because the tradition of camp may be unfamiliar to them. He said

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 61 of 82

outreach to those children is a focus for him and other camp directors.

Annabelle Bridglall, 10, would have been spending her fourth summer this year at Forest Lake Camp in the Adirondacks on a scholarship program started about a decade ago and funded by the camp's alumni. She is one of about 20 campers who received financial assistance to attend Forest Lake this year.

Forest Lake's owners were pushing to keep camp open until New York state announced restrictions June 12 that prevented that. For Annabelle, who lives in the Bronx, the news was devastating.

"I love camp and I feel like I'm missing something," she said.

She says she'll miss standing on the tables cheering after meals. She'll miss Sunday campfires, and activities that she says she'd never have done otherwise: horseback riding, riflery, woodworking. "You have to be there to see the magic" of camp, she said.

Andy Pritikin, owner of Liberty Lake day camp in southern New Jersey, was thinking of kids like Rory and Annabelle when he decided to keep operating this summer, albeit with major changes.

"These kids who go to sleepaway camp, it's like there's been a death in their family," said Pritikin. "They're in grief mode."

Between 500 and 600 kids -- about 80% of a usual summer -- will attend Liberty Lake when it opens in July. Pritikin has doubled his nursing staff, bolstered the maintenance and food staff, built hand-washing stations and purchased the state-required personal protective equipment.

He said he'll probably lose money this summer because of all the health and safety requirements, but as long as the state was allowing day camps, it was his way to help.

"This is a summer for kids to regain their childhood," he said. "These kids are in a situation that they don't even realize. It's like Groundhog Day."

Pritikin has recently taken more than 100 families on tours of the camp, he says. Usually, parents have probing questions about the camp's programs and what makes it special. This year, he says, parents are interested in just three things: getting their children outdoors, away from screens and interacting with other kids.

On one recent tour, a young boy looked longingly at one of the camp's giant playgrounds; in past years, kids on tours would have just run over to it and start playing. This time, the boy stayed where he was and looked at his parents. "Mommy, we can't go on the playground, right?"

Pritikin said the moment was heartbreaking.

"These kids remind me of a soldier coming back from two years of active duty. They are shell-shocked," he said. "They're going to love every aspect of what we do here -- even a watered-down, COVID-19 version of camp."

US job market's modest improvement may be stalling

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of laid-off workers seeking U.S. unemployment aid barely fell last week, and the reopening of small businesses has leveled off — evidence that the job market's gains may have stalled just as a surge in coronavirus cases is endangering an economic recovery.

The government also reported Thursday that the economy contracted at a 5% annual rate in the first three months of the year, a further sign of the damage being inflicted by the viral pandemic. The economy is expected to shrink at a roughly 30% rate in the current quarter. That would be the worst quarterly contraction, by far, since record-keeping began in 1948. Economists do expect a snap-back in the second half of the year, though not enough to reverse all the damage.

Last week, the number of people applying for jobless benefits declined slightly to 1.48 million. It was the 12th straight weekly drop. An additional 700,000 people applied through a 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.

Combining those figures, overall applications for jobless aid have edged down just 3% in the past two weeks — a much slower pace than in late April and May.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 62 of 82

"There has been no real decline in weekly claims the past two weeks," said Julia Pollak, a labor economist at ZipRecruiter. "There has also been no real increase in job openings. What seemed like encouraging signs of recovery in May largely stalled in June."

A separate government report Thursday said orders for durable goods unexpectedly jumped nearly 16% in May, reflecting a rebound in some business activity. Still, the pace of orders and shipments remains far below pre-pandemic levels. And excluding the volatile transportation category, so-called core orders rose only modestly, reflecting still-sluggish business investment.

The virus is once again squeezing companies across the economy.

Disney is postponing the scheduled mid-July reopening of its Southern California theme parks until it receives guidelines from the state. Macy's is cutting nearly 4,000 corporate jobs — roughly 3% of its workforce — in response to financial strain caused by the virus.

Apple announced late Wednesday that it would re-close seven of its stores in the Houston area, which is suffering a spike in cases. Last week, it had said would re-close 11 other stores in four states. And the parent company of Chuck E. Cheese restaurants will seek Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, in part because of the restaurants it has been forced to close as a result of the pandemic.

Larry Kudlow, President Donald Trump's top economic adviser, asserted Thursday on Fox Business that the economy is rebounding quickly.

"I think the strong 'V' recovery is right still there," Kudlow said, referring to the shape of a sharp rebound on a chart.

Most private economists, though, foresee a much more tepid recovery. And the latest economic figures coincide with a sudden resurgence of COVID-19 cases in the United States, especially in the South and West, that is threatening to derail the nascent economic rebound. On Wednesday, the nation set a high for new confirmed coronavirus cases. Many states are establishing their own new peaks for confirmed daily infections, including Arizona, California, Mississippi, Nevada, Texas and Oklahoma. Cases of coronavirus have also jumped in Florida and Georgia.

The number of infections is thought to be far higher still because many people have not been tested, and studies suggest that people can be infected with the virus without feeling sick.

Should the trends continue, states may reimpose some limits on businesses that would likely trigger job cuts. And if not, consumers may choose to shop, eat out, and travel less.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said Thursday that that state will suspend its business reopenings amid a surge in coronavirus infections.

Real time data on small businesses suggests that the job market's improvement slowed in June compared with May, when 2.5 million jobs were unexpectedly added. About 78% of small businesses have reopened as states have lifted shutdown orders, according to data from Homebase, a company that provides scheduling and time-tracking software to small businesses. Yet nationally, that figure has been flat for the past week.

In states that are suffering spikes in COVID-19 cases, small businesses are closing again and cutting some jobs.

Ray Sandza, an executive at Homebase, said the plateau in business reopenings is a worrisome sign that the remaining 20% of small companies could end up closing permanently.

"If you haven't reopened yet, the likelihood of coming back is low," Sandza said.

He noted that most small businesses had just one or two months' of cash on hand when the pandemic intensified three months ago.

In Florida, Texas, and Arizona, the proportion of small businesses that have closed has risen in the past week as a result of the resurgent viral outbreaks. And in Arizona, as of Monday, the number of employees working at small companies was 31% below the pre-pandemic level. That's worse than the previous week, when it was 26.5%.

Homebase's data showed a solid rebound in jobs and hours worked in May that was consistent with the May jobs report, which also showed that the unemployment rate fell to 13.3% from 14.7%. Those are the two highest unemployment rates since the Great Depression.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 63 of 82

Other real-time data is showing similar results. Kronos, which also produces small business scheduling software, said the number of shifts worked is now growing at only half the pace it was in late April and May. And shifts worked have actually fallen in 10 states in the past week, according to Dave Gilbertson, a Kronos official.

Thursday's data on jobless claims included one bright spot: The total number of people receiving unemployment benefits aid fell to 19.5 million from 20.3 million, which suggests that employers are rehiring some workers.

For the unemployed, the federal government has been providing \$600 in weekly benefits, on top of whatever state jobless aid recipients are receiving. This federal money has pumped nearly \$20 billion a week into the economy and enabled many of the unemployed to stay afloat.

It has been a major help to Alexis O'Neill, who was laid off in March from an accounting job at an aviation fuel company. O'Neill, 49, who lives with her mother in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is looking for a job that would allow her to work from home so she could avoid putting her mother at risk of contracting the virus.

She has applied for at least a dozen jobs but has received no responses except an acknowledgement of her application. Many open jobs now seem to offer lower pay than before the pandemic struck. Compounding the dilemma for O'Neill, Michigan is stuck with the nation's second-highest state unemployment rate, 21.2%.

"The job market is terrible," she said. "Everything either pays so badly or doesn't come with benefits."

US job market's modest improvement may be stalling

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of laid-off workers seeking U.S. unemployment aid barely fell last week, and the reopening of small businesses has leveled off — evidence that the job market's gains may have stalled just as a surge in coronavirus cases is endangering an economic recovery.

The government also reported Thursday that the economy contracted at a 5% annual rate in the first three months of the year, a further sign of the damage being inflicted by the viral pandemic. The economy is expected to shrink at a roughly 30% rate in the current quarter. That would be the worst quarterly contraction, by far, since record-keeping began in 1948. Economists do expect a snap-back in the second half of the year, though not enough to reverse all the damage.

Last week, the number of people applying for jobless benefits declined slightly to 1.48 million. It was the 12th straight weekly drop. An additional 700,000 people applied through a 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.

Combining those figures, overall applications for jobless aid have edged down just 3% in the past two weeks — a much slower pace than in late April and May.

"There has been no real decline in weekly claims the past two weeks," said Julia Pollak, a labor economist at ZipRecruiter. "There has also been no real increase in job openings. What seemed like encouraging signs of recovery in May largely stalled in June."

A separate government report Thursday said orders for durable goods unexpectedly jumped nearly 16% in May, reflecting a rebound in some business activity. Still, the pace of orders and shipments remains far below pre-pandemic levels. And excluding the volatile transportation category, so-called core orders rose only modestly, reflecting still-sluggish business investment.

The virus is once again squeezing companies across the economy.

Disney is postponing the scheduled mid-July reopening of its Southern California theme parks until it receives guidelines from the state. Macy's is cutting nearly 4,000 corporate jobs — roughly 3% of its workforce — in response to financial strain caused by the virus.

Apple announced late Wednesday that it would re-close seven of its stores in the Houston area, which is suffering a spike in cases. Last week, it had said would re-close 11 other stores in four states. And the parent company of Chuck E. Cheese restaurants will seek Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, in part be-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 64 of 82

cause of the restaurants it has been forced to close as a result of the pandemic.

Larry Kudlow, President Donald Trump's top economic adviser, asserted Thursday on Fox Business that the economy is rebounding quickly.

"I think the strong 'V' recovery is right still there," Kudlow said, referring to the shape of a sharp rebound on a chart.

Most private economists, though, foresee a much more tepid recovery. And the latest economic figures coincide with a sudden resurgence of COVID-19 cases in the United States, especially in the South and West, that is threatening to derail the nascent economic rebound. On Wednesday, the nation set a high for new confirmed coronavirus cases. Many states are establishing their own new peaks for confirmed daily infections, including Arizona, California, Mississippi, Nevada, Texas and Oklahoma. Cases of coronavirus have also jumped in Florida and Georgia.

The number of infections is thought to be far higher still because many people have not been tested, and studies suggest that people can be infected with the virus without feeling sick.

Should the trends continue, states may reimpose some limits on businesses that would likely trigger job cuts. And if not, consumers may choose to shop, eat out, and travel less.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said Thursday that that state will suspend its business reopenings amid a surge in coronavirus infections.

Real time data on small businesses suggests that the job market's improvement slowed in June compared with May, when 2.5 million jobs were unexpectedly added. About 78% of small businesses have reopened as states have lifted shutdown orders, according to data from Homebase, a company that provides scheduling and time-tracking software to small businesses. Yet nationally, that figure has been flat for the past week.

In states that are suffering spikes in COVID-19 cases, small businesses are closing again and cutting some jobs.

Ray Sandza, an executive at Homebase, said the plateau in business reopenings is a worrisome sign that the remaining 20% of small companies could end up closing permanently.

"If you haven't reopened yet, the likelihood of coming back is low," Sandza said.

He noted that most small businesses had just one or two months' of cash on hand when the pandemic intensified three months ago.

In Florida, Texas, and Arizona, the proportion of small businesses that have closed has risen in the past week as a result of the resurgent viral outbreaks. And in Arizona, as of Monday, the number of employees working at small companies was 31% below the pre-pandemic level. That's worse than the previous week, when it was 26.5%.

Homebase's data showed a solid rebound in jobs and hours worked in May that was consistent with the May jobs report, which also showed that the unemployment rate fell to 13.3% from 14.7%. Those are the two highest unemployment rates since the Great Depression.

Other real-time data is showing similar results. Kronos, which also produces small business scheduling software, said the number of shifts worked is now growing at only half the pace it was in late April and May. And shifts worked have actually fallen in 10 states in the past week, according to Dave Gilbertson, a Kronos official.

Thursday's data on jobless claims included one bright spot: The total number of people receiving unemployment benefits aid fell to 19.5 million from 20.3 million, which suggests that employers are rehiring some workers.

For the unemployed, the federal government has been providing \$600 in weekly benefits, on top of whatever state jobless aid recipients are receiving. This federal money has pumped nearly \$20 billion a week into the economy and enabled many of the unemployed to stay afloat.

It has been a major help to Alexis O'Neill, who was laid off in March from an accounting job at an aviation fuel company. O'Neill, 49, who lives with her mother in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is looking for a job that would allow her to work from home so she could avoid putting her mother at risk of contracting the virus.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 65 of 82

She has applied for at least a dozen jobs but has received no responses except an acknowledgement of her application. Many open jobs now seem to offer lower pay than before the pandemic struck. Compounding the dilemma for O'Neill, Michigan is stuck with the nation's second-highest state unemployment rate, 21.2%.

"The job market is terrible," she said. "Everything either pays so badly or doesn't come with benefits."

Disney changing Splash Mountain, ride tied to Jim Crow film

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Amid calls to change the Splash Mountain theme park ride over its ties to "Song of the South," the 1946 movie many view as racist, Disney officials said Thursday it was recasting the ride based on "The Princess and the Frog," a 2009 Disney film with an African American female lead.

Changes to the ride will be made both at Disneyland in California and the Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World in Florida, the company said in a post.

Disney said the changes had been in the works since last year, but the announcement comes as companies across the U.S. are renaming racially charged, decades-old brands amid worldwide protests for racial justice after the police custody death of George Floyd in Minnesota last month.

"The new concept is inclusive – one that all of our guests can connect with and be inspired by, and it speaks to the diversity of the millions of people who visit our parks each year," the Disney post said.

Splash Mountain first opened as a log-flume ride at Disneyland in the late 1980s.

The revamped ride will follow the contours of the animated movie, "The Princess and the Frog," in which actress Anika Noni Rose voices the role of a 1920s aspiring chef in New Orleans who kisses a prince that has been turned into a frog and becomes one herself.

With racist stereotypes and Old South tropes, "Song of the South" is a mix of live action, cartoons and music featuring an old black plantation laborer named Uncle Remus who enchants a white city boy with fables of talking animals.

Groups including the NAACP protested the film's initial release. The film isn't available to the millions of subscribers of the company's new Disney Plus streaming service, and it hasn't been released in theaters in decades.

"Disney parks should be a home for all to enjoy regardless of race, age, whatever your background may be," said an online petition asking for the ride to be changed. "While the ride is considered a beloved classic, it's history and storyline are steeped in extremely problematic and stereotypical racist tropes from the 1946 film Song of the South."

But Splash Mountain had its supporters. Another online petition asked that the ride remain in its current incarnation.

"Many adults and children ride this attraction because it brings back childhood memories," the "Keep Splash Mountain" petition said. "Disney already took out the racist songs which was a good move on their part."

Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

DeVos issues rule steering more virus aid to private schools

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

The Trump administration on Thursday moved forward with a policy ordering public schools across the U.S. to share coronavirus relief funding with private schools at a higher rate than federal law typically requires.

Under a new rule issued by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, school districts are ordered to set aside a portion of their aid for private schools using a formula based on the total number of private school students in the district.

The policy has been contested by public school officials who say the funding should be shared based on the number of low-income students at local private schools rather than their total enrollments. That's

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 66 of 82

how funding is shared with private schools under other federal rules that Congress referenced in the legislation creating the relief aid.

But DeVos on Thursday said the funding is separate from other federal aid and was meant to support all students.

"There is nothing in the law Congress passed that would allow districts to discriminate against children and teachers based on private school attendance and employment," DeVos said in a call with reporters.

The difference between the two formulas amounts to tens of millions of dollars. In Louisiana, for example, private schools are estimated to get at least 267% more under DeVos' formula. In the state's Orleans Parish, at least 77% of its relief allotment would end up going to private schools.

The Education Department issued the rule through a process that's typically used in emergencies and immediately gives the policy the force of law. DeVos said urgent action was needed after dozens of private schools permanently closed as a result of the pandemic. She called it a "looming crisis" for the nation.

DeVos is a longtime backer of private schools and has championed school choice through her career. Since last year, she's been pushing a plan to provide tax credits for scholarships sending students to private schools or other education options. She and Vice President Mike Pence promoted the plan Tuesday at a school choice event in Wisconsin, but the measure has yet to gain traction in Congress.

The new rule largely mirrors guidance DeVos issued in April telling districts to share relief aid based on the total number of private school students in their areas. The new rule provides one exception, though: Public schools can use the low-income formula if their own relief aid is used entirely on the district's low-income students.

Money that's set aside for private schools must be used to provide "equitable services" to their students, which can include busing, counseling, tutoring and summer programs.

Any private school can request support from its local district, but the new rule urges wealthier schools to reject it. The policy says taxpayer funding shouldn't go to "boarding and day schools with tuition and fees comparable to those charged by the most highly selective postsecondary institutions."

Democrats and public school officials condemned the rule, saying it gives private schools a disproportionate share of the aid. Rep. Bobby Scott, D-Va., chairman of the House education committee, urged DeVos to withdraw it and "follow the law that Congress enacted."

"The department should be providing clear leadership and guidance to help students, parents and school districts cope with the impact of the pandemic. Instead, it has issued another confusing directive that will undermine efforts to maintain access to education during this pandemic," Scott said.

DeVos previously vowed to pursue a federal rule on the issue after some states said they would ignore her guidance. Indiana's education chief said the guidance was no more than a recommendation and decided to divide the funding "according to Congressional intent and a plain reading of the law."

The dispute centers around a single passage in the federal relief bill that allotted \$13 billion for the nation's schools. The legislation said public schools should set aside funding to provide services to private schools "in the same manner as" they do under Title I, a federal funding program for low-income schools.

Public school officials say Congress clearly meant to carry over the low-income distribution formula from the Title I program. Democrats have said that was their intent, and Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., chairman of the Senate education committee, has said that's what most of Congress expected.

But top Education Department officials have questioned the meaning of the phrase "in the same manner as," arguing that if Congress wanted to replicate the Title I formula, it would have used the phrase "according to."

Although the rule takes effect immediately, the Education Department will be opening it for 30 days of public comment to gather feedback.

DeVos has been accused of bending the formula to benefit the private schools she has championed. On Thursday, the School Superintendents Association said the rule represents "an opportunistic money grab, using the pandemic environment to advance the privatization agenda."

But DeVos argued that all types of schools have been hit by the pandemic and deserve relief.

"Now is the time to focus on doing what's right for all students," DeVos said.

Justices boost Trump administration's power in asylum cases

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Thursday strengthened the Trump administration's ability to deport people seeking asylum without allowing them to make their case to a federal judge.

Immigration experts suggested the administration would use sweeping language in the majority opinion to bolster broader efforts to restrict asylum.

The high court's 7-2 ruling applies to people who are picked up at or near the border and who fail their initial asylum screenings, making them eligible for quick deportation, or expedited removal.

Justice Samuel Alito wrote the high-court opinion that reversed a lower-court ruling that said asylum-seekers must have access to the federal courts.

Congress acted properly in creating a system "for weeding out patently meritless claims and expeditiously removing the aliens making such claims from the country," Alito wrote.

He noted that more than three-quarters of people who sought to claim asylum in the past five years passed their initial screening and qualified for full-blown review.

Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer agreed with the outcome in this case, but did not join Alito's opinion.

In dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote, "Today's decision handcuffs the Judiciary's ability to perform its constitutional duty to safeguard individual liberty." She was joined by Justice Elena Kagan.

Lee Gelernt, the American Civil Liberties Union lawyer who argued the case in the Supreme Court, said the outcome will make it hard to question the actions of immigration officials at the U.S. border. "This decision will impact potentially tens of thousands of people at the border who will not be able to seek review of erroneous denials of asylum," Gelernt said.

In practical terms, the impact may be limited. Even after the ruling from federal appeals court in San Francisco that the justices threw out Thursday, only about 30 asylum-seekers whose claims were quickly rejected had sought access to the courts, Gelernt told the justices during arguments in February.

But Cornell University law professor Stephen Yale-Loehr, an immigration expert, said the decision lends support to broader administration action on asylum.

"Justice Alito used sweeping language in his majority opinion upholding Congress's efforts to limit due process for arriving immigrants. While not necessary to the precise holding in the case, the Trump administration is sure to use such language to justify its broader efforts to restrict asylum seekers," Yale-Loehr said.

The administration has made dismantling the asylum system a centerpiece of its immigration agenda, saying it is rife with abuse and overwhelmed by meritless claims. Changes include making asylum-seekers wait in Mexico while their cases wind through U.S. immigration court, denying asylum to anyone on the Mexican border who passes through another country without first seeking protection there, and flying Hondurans and El Salvadorans to Guatemala with an opportunity to seek asylum there instead of the U.S.

On Monday, the Trump administration published sweeping new procedural and substantive rules that would make it much more difficult to get asylum, triggering a 30-day period for public comment before they can take effect.

The United States became the world's top destination for asylum-seekers in 2017, according to UN figures, many of them Mexican and Central American families fleeing endemic violence.

The justices ruled in the case of Vijayakumar Thuraissigam, who said he fled persecution as a member of Sri Lanka's Tamil minority, but failed to persuade immigration officials that he faced harm if he returned to Sri Lanka. The man was arrested soon after he slipped across the U.S. border from Mexico.

He was placed in expedited removal proceedings that prohibit people who fail initial interviews from asking federal courts for much help.

Since 2004, immigration officials have targeted for quick deportation undocumented immigrants who are picked up within 100 miles of the U.S. border and within 14 days of entering the country. The Trump administration is seeking to expand that authority so that people detained anywhere in the U.S. and up to two years after they got here could be quickly deported.

On Tuesday, a federal appeals court threw out a trial judge's ruling that had blocked the expanded policy. Other legal issues remain to be resolved in the case.

Associated Press writer Elliott Spagat in San Diego contributed to this report.

Virus testing, tracking still plagued by reporting delays

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — As part of the plan to restart its season next month, the NBA is preparing to test hundreds of players, coaches and others for the coronavirus each night inside a "basketball bubble" — a space at the Disney complex near Orlando, Florida, with extra protection against the disease.

Test results will be expected back the next morning, before the day's practices and games begin. That sort of rapid turnaround is the gold standard for tracking a highly contagious disease that is on the rise again in parts of the country. Yet an Associated Press survey of selected U.S. states shows the benchmark is rarely met for the general public.

Having access to quick test results will play an important role in resuming sporting events, keeping businesses and factories open, and returning to school in the fall. But the AP survey found it sometimes still takes days for results to be returned, despite an increase in the availability of testing across the country.

The situation is even worse in many hot spots around the world, including South Africa, where results have sometimes taken up to 12 days.

Judy Clinco, owner of Catalina In-Home Services in Tucson, Arizona, has had to test about 30 of her 110 staffers, who provide care and assistance to seniors in their homes. They are not able to visit clients until the results are back, which typically takes a week to 10 days.

As many as seven employees have been sidelined at once, Clinco said.

"During that time, the caregiver is not working. We are subsidizing their wages, and it's a financial burden to the company," she said. "It leaves us with one less caregiver to be on assignment, and that leaves us short-staffed."

Public health experts say testing delays present a major hurdle to reducing infections and tracking those who have been in close contact with a person who is positive for the virus.

That's why researchers are working to develop rapid tests that can be cheaply produced, self-administered and provide immediate, reliable results. For now, most tests to diagnose COVID-19 require laboratory processing, which means a built-in delay.

Guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that states, as they lift final virus restrictions, have a turnaround time of less than two days.

But it's unclear whether states have access to detailed data showing whether they are meeting the CDC standard, including how long it takes to process tests at independent labs. Labs track their own turnaround times, but the CDC said data such as how long it takes for a test to get to a lab and for a provider to receive the result and notify the patient are not tracked. That makes it difficult to determine a "meaningful average" of what patients are experiencing in each state.

In the absence of publicly available federal data, the AP earlier this month surveyed nine states that were experiencing a 14-day uptick in new positive cases, plus New York, which has had the most COVID-19 cases.

The state lab in New York was taking up to three days to report results to patients. California officials said the statewide turnaround time was 48 to 72 hours, depending on the lab. In Utah, anecdotal information suggested that results took 24 to 72 hours.

Most of the 10 states surveyed said they did not have data on turnaround times for commercial labs in their state, creating another information gap. Health experts said this was not unusual, that state health departments have not typically been responsible for tracking individual laboratory turnaround times.

"It's a good question of who should be responsible for tracking this information and providing it back to the public," said Kelly Wroblewski, director of infectious diseases with the Association of Public Health Laboratories.

There are other factors that can cause delays, from the time of day the test is taken to whether a lab

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 69 of 82

shuts down for the evening. Staffing issues and shortages of testing supplies also can slow the process. Even people visiting the same testing location can have widely different experiences.

Earlier this month, Jeff Barnes, a music therapist in metro Atlanta, went to the same drive-thru testing location a week after his wife and two daughters. They were still waiting when he received his results the next day. Theirs wouldn't come for seven days.

Barnes said he was concerned what a similar delay would mean if schools reopen in the fall.

"They are going to have to make it more efficient," Barnes said. "If I knew (my daughter) was in a classroom with 20 kids and 10 of them had results pending, I don't know that I would send her."

Until rapid tests are widely available, health experts say it will continue to take a day or two to get results under the best circumstances. That creates more opportunities for people who might be infected but feel fine to pass the virus along to others.

In late April and May, the state lab in Alabama had trouble acquiring reagents, the chemical substances used to process tests. That led to intermittent delays in reporting results, up to five days from when the lab received the specimen, according to Dr. Karen Landers, assistant state health officer with the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Those problems have since been resolved, and the lab now has a turnaround time between 24 and 72 hours from the time it receives samples.

One of the largest commercial laboratories, Quest Diagnostics, recently reported its average turnaround time as one day for priority patients and two to three days for all other populations. The company said it expects increased demand to result in longer waits of more than three days.

Other countries face similar challenges. Wait times in China vary by city, from as little as one day in Shanghai to four days in Wuhan, where the virus first emerged. In Japan, tests usually yield results within two days. Mandatory tests, such as those at airports, often come out sooner, according to the health ministry.

Results in India initially took around 24 hours. But as infections and testing increased, so did delays. Now results often take two to three days or as long as a week, depending on location.

The nearly two-week wait in South Africa "makes effective treatment nearly impossible," said Marcus Low, editor of the South African health journal *Spotlight*.

By contrast, South Korea won praise for its quick efforts to launch a program that included free drive-thru testing with results usually delivered within 24 hours.

Back in the U.S., Amazon plans to spend at least \$300 million on a worker testing program that includes building its own laboratory. But even with the wealth and influence of the nation's second-largest private employer, results are still expected to take three to five days. Officials said they hope to reduce the turnaround time to between 24 and 48 hours.

"We don't know exactly yet how it's going to shape up," Amazon said in a statement, "but we continue to believe it's worth trying."

Associated Press writers Joseph Pisani and Joyce M. Rosenberg in New York, Tim Reynolds in Miami, Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo, Aniruddha Ghosal in New Delhi and AP researcher Jennifer Farrar in New York contributed to this report.

Law enforcement struggles with policing in reckoning moment

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As calls for police reform swell across America, officers say they feel caught in the middle: vilified by the left as violent racists, fatally ambushed by extremists on the right seeking to sow discord and scapegoated by lawmakers who share responsibility for the state of the criminal justice system.

The Associated Press spoke with more than two dozen officers around the country, Black, white, Hispanic and Asian, who are frustrated by the pressure they say is on them to solve the much larger problem of racism and bias in the United States. They are struggling to do their jobs, even if most agree change is needed following the death of George Floyd, who was Black, at the hands of a white police officer in

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 70 of 82

Minneapolis.

Most of the officers spoke on condition of anonymity because they feared retaliation or firing.

"You know, being a Black man, being a police officer and which I'm proud of being, both very proud — I understand what the community's coming from," said Jeff Maddrey, an NYPD chief in Brooklyn and one of many officers who took a knee as a show of respect for protesters.

All of officers interviewed agreed they'd lost some kind of trust in their communities. For some, the moment is causing a personal reckoning with past arrests. Others distinguish between the Floyd case and their own work, highlighting their lives saved, personal moments when they cried alongside crime victims.

"I have never seen overtly racist actions by my brothers or sisters in my department," wrote white Covington, Kentucky, police specialist Doug Ullrich in an Op-Ed. "In fact, I believe that my department is on the leading edge of 'doing it right.'"

Of course, hardly all police support change. Some are incensed — deriding colleagues as traitors for taking a knee or calling out sick to protest the arrests of some police for their actions amid the protests.

For Dean Esserman, senior counselor of the National Police Foundation and past police chief of Providence, Rhode Island, and New Haven and Stamford in Connecticut, the result so far has been for communities and police to pull away from one another. That will mean fewer personal connections — and more problems, he said.

"Many police leaders who are saying 'don't call us' when there are emergencies miss the point," he said. "I delivered nine babies in my career, and I never shot anybody. The community isn't part of the job. It IS the job."

It's not the first time that police officers have found themselves caught in the middle. The rise of the Black Lives Matter movement earlier this decade spawned a "blue lives matter" campaign and the belief among many Americans that cops were being unfairly stigmatized over the actions of a few or split-second decisions during tense situations.

But now, Americans are largely united behind the idea that change is necessary: 29% think the criminal justice system needs "a complete overhaul," 40% say it needs "major changes." Just 5% believe no changes are needed, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The long, often dark history of American policing has meant minority communities are treated one way, and white ones another. Floyd's killing cracked open the pain anew, but minorities have long begged for officers to stop seeing them as criminals and to police with equity.

While many activists acknowledge that the problems they're fighting go beyond police departments, they say that doesn't mean individual officers aren't guilty.

"People who try to sell you 'police reform' are trying to sell you the idea that you can (asterisk) train(asterisk) the anti-Black racism out of an institution built upon and upheld by anti-Black racism," activist Adam Smith tweeted.

A culture that allows racism to fester in law enforcement hasn't yet changed because that would take deep structural shifts, new blood and a lot of time, said Sandra Susan Smith, a criminal justice professor at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

"It's not just about the institutional mandate to control and confine, it's also about the views individual officers bring to neighborhoods," she said.

The difference now is top police officials nationwide are increasingly supporting reform. Patrick Yeos, president of the national Fraternal Order of Police, said change must come from the top down — and lawmakers must play their role.

"These issues are not created by officers," he said.

Police don't always have the autonomy their elected leaders claim they do. When NYPD officers were stopping hundreds of thousands of mostly Black and Hispanic men a year, top brass said officers were exercising their judgment — and the stops were necessary. But officers testified at a federal trial over the stop-and-frisk tactic they felt pressured by superiors to show they were cracking down. And those stops rarely resulted in arrest.

Cerelyn Davis, police chief in Durham, North Carolina, and president of the National Organization of Black

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 71 of 82

Law Enforcement Executives, said reform is possible, but there must national accountability standards, and teeth behind them.

"They talk about one bad apple," she said. "In this field we can't afford to have one bad apple. One bad apple can have grave consequences."

As the debate has played out, the tensions have led to violence. Officers are accused of harming protesters. And they're getting hurt and killed, too.

A sheriff's deputy in California was killed and four others officers wounded by an Air Force sergeant with links to a far-right group, officials said. He was also charged with killing a federal security officer outside a courthouse. A 29-year-old police officer was shot in the head during a protest on the Las Vegas Strip and has been left paralyzed from the neck down.

Hundreds of officers have been injured in the protests in New York, Los Angeles and Philadelphia, some critically.

This, too, has happened before. In 2014, after the grand jury declined to bring charges against a cop in the death of Eric Garner, a man angry over the death shot two officers dead in their patrol car. Across the nation, others were targeted.

In New York, where an officer was charged with strangulation Thursday after an apparent chokehold — the same tactic used on Garner — Police Commissioner Dermot Shea said continued reforms are needed and he lauded the push for them.

But, he said: "It's also a moment in time where it's a pretty tough time to be in law enforcement."

Associated Press writers Michael Balsamo and Gary Fields in Silver Spring, Maryland, contributed to this report.

VIRUS DIARY: A film writer goes back to the movies

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

DORMONT, Pa. (AP) — "The Goonies" wouldn't have been my first choice, but options were limited.

It had been 96 days since I had been to a movie theater. That might not be extraordinary for most, but as a film writer it was downright bizarre. Not even maternity leave took me away for that long. And I missed it.

The situation was still rather precarious in Los Angeles. But I had recently escaped for my parents' house outside Pittsburgh with my 6-month-old. Here, movie theaters could open.

Many were still shuttered, though, waiting for the go-ahead from corporate overlords or some reassurances that may never come. Maybe they were just waiting for new movies.

Yet there was one venue with actual showtimes: A 95-year-old single screen theater in a small borough just a few miles outside downtown. Dormont's Hollywood Theater, a local institution known for rowdy screenings of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" (immortalized in "The Perks of Being a Wallflower") had a 5 p.m. showing of "The Goonies" and a 7:45 p.m. of the indie horror "The Wretched" every day for a week.

The math was simple: The baby at home ruled out the later show. And that's how Richard Donner and Steven Spielberg's 1985 adventure became my first post-quarantine theater experience on that Tuesday in June.

It was a particularly bright and hot day in southwestern Pennsylvania — the kind of weather that might normally draw crowds into the air-conditioned respite of the silver screen. But on this day, it was only me, my brother and sister in the lobby where two masked employees stood behind the concessions stand.

I asked if it had been busy.

"No," one said. "That's what happens when there are no new movies."

Across the lobby there was a poster for "Wonder Woman 1984" with Gal Gadot surrounded by an explosion of colors forming jagged Ws. But all I could see was "June 5, 2020." It was a date that had been precisely plotted far in advance, when it seemed reasonable to plan for things like movie releases. It had already come and gone.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 72 of 82

Inside, every other row was taped off. I was most surprised to see two other people in there already. They had staked out seats near the back. I nodded, but it's hard to give friendly social cues behind a mask.

Everything else felt oddly normal, which itself was unnerving. If you let yourself forget about the global pandemic for a moment, you might be able to convince yourself that you're just in a theater under renovation. But the fantasy of normalcy is fleeting.

We positioned ourselves near the front and, tentatively, settled in. Given the riskiness of even being in a theater and the fact that "The Goonies" was available to watch at home for free, we decided beforehand that leaving early was an option, if not an inevitability.

When the lights went down, a trailer for "Black Widow," which was supposed to come out in May, played. Then one for "Wonder Woman 1984." Here, it just said "Summer."

I never considered the possibility that advertisements for a couple of superhero movies were capable of triggering feelings of melancholy and wistfulness, but here were two major movies with female leads and female directors that seemed to represent these lost months.

I'm not sure when we will ever feel care-free, or even comfortable, in a movie theater again. But it was thrilling and emotional to be back in front of the big screen. No matter how nice your television is, there's nothing like it. "The Goonies" was the perfect movie after all. We even stayed through the credits.

Virus Diary, an occasional feature, showcases the coronavirus pandemic through the eyes of Associated Press journalists around the world. See previous entries here. Follow AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/ladbahr>

Pakistan to ground 150 pilots for cheating to get licenses

By MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan's state-run airline said Thursday it will ground 150 pilots, accusing them of obtaining licenses by having others take exams for them, an accusation that followed a probe into last month's crash that killed 97 people in Karachi.

Abdullah Hafeez, a spokesman for Pakistan International Airlines, did not give additional details about the alleged cheating but said a process to fire the pilots had been initiated.

"We will make it sure that such unqualified pilots never fly aircraft again," he told The Associated Press. He said the safety of passengers was the airline's top priority.

Alarmed over the situation, the International Air Transport Association said it was following reports from Pakistan "regarding fake pilot licenses, which are concerning and represent a serious lapse in the licensing and safety oversight by the aviation regulator."

The global airline organization said it was seeking more information.

The move by PIA to ground the pilots comes a day after the country's aviation minister, Ghulam Sarqar Khan, said 262 out of 860 Pakistani pilots had "fake" licenses. He made the revelation while presenting preliminary findings of a probe to parliament into the May 22 Airbus A320 crash.

The announcement stunned lawmakers present in the National Assembly and shocked family members of passengers who died last month when Flight PK8303 went down after departing from the eastern city of Lahore, crashing in a congested residential area in Karachi. The crash killed 97 people, including all the crew members. There were only two survivors on board and a girl died on the ground.

Neither Khan nor Hafeez released additional details about the alleged methods used by the pilots to wrongfully obtain licenses to fly commercial planes. Khan said only that they did not take examinations themselves to get the required certificates, which are issued by the civil aviation authority.

But officials familiar with the process involved in issuing pilot's licenses said an unspecified number of people who had the skills to fly a plane but lacked technical knowledge had in the past bribed qualified persons to take exams for them. They didn't elaborate.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter, said Pakistan International Airlines learned about the scandal two years ago and fired at least four

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 73 of 82

pilots at the time on accusations of falsifying exams to obtain a license from the civil aviation authority.

Hafeez said notices were being issued to all those pilots who he believed had tainted licenses.

Shortly after the May 22 crash, Pakistan announced it would investigate the incident and share its findings.

In presenting preliminary findings of the probe to parliament Wednesday, Khan said the pilot, before making his first failed landing attempt, did not pay attention to warnings from the air control tower when he was told the plane was too high to land. However, he said the pilot and co-pilot were medically fit and qualified to fly.

The crash took place when the plane attempted to land a second time. At that point, air traffic control told the pilot three times that the plane was too low to land but he refused to listen, saying he would manage, Khan said. The minister added that, for its part, air traffic control did not inform the pilots about damage caused to the engines after the plane's first failed landing attempt.

"The engines of the plane were damaged when they scraped the runway but the air traffic control did not inform the pilot," he said.

Where's Markey? Senator misses dozens of votes in pandemic

By STEVE LeBLANC Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — When the U.S. Senate gathered to debate a major, bipartisan bill aimed at spending nearly \$3 billion on conservation projects last week, just two senators failed to cast votes.

One was Sen. Edward Markey, who is locked in a tough re-election primary battle against a fellow Democrat — U.S. Rep. Joseph Kennedy III. Only Markey and Democratic Sen. Patty Murray of Washington state missed the vote.

It was one of many Markey missed during the prior month and a half as the coronavirus pandemic raged and both he and Kennedy struggled to come up with ways to campaign without holding traditional rallies or shaking hands with voters.

Of 42 Senate votes in May and the first half of June, Markey missed 34 or about 80%, according to information from GovTrack, an independent clearinghouse for congressional data.

Of those missed votes, one of the more notable for Markey was last week's vote on the Great American Outdoors Act. Markey has touted his support of environmental efforts during his decades in Congress, including the Green New Deal resolution he introduced last year with New York Democratic U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez.

The bill, which passed on a bipartisan 73-25 vote, would spend \$3 billion on conservation projects, outdoor recreation and maintenance of national parks and other public lands. Supporters say it would be the most significant conservation legislation enacted in nearly half a century.

Giselle Barry, an aide to Markey, said most of the votes he's missed have been for judicial or executive nominations and other measures expected to pass decisively in the Republican-controlled chamber.

"When it matters, he's definitely in town," Barry said, adding that Markey hasn't missed a debate where his vote would have decided the outcome.

She pointed to a close vote in May on an amendment that would have added restrictions to the government's ability to conduct searches of internet browsers and search histories under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. The amendment needed 60 votes but fell short by a single vote. Markey was on hand to vote for the amendment.

Other votes that Markey missed included a confirmation vote on President Donald Trump's appointment of a director of national intelligence, former Republican U.S. Rep. John Ratcliffe. Fellow Massachusetts Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren voted against Ratcliffe, who was confirmed on a partisan 49-44 vote on May 21.

Markey also missed the Senate confirmation vote of Brian Miller, Trump's appointee to become inspector general to oversee the pandemic recovery fund. Miller was also confirmed on a largely partisan vote of 51-to-40 on June 2.

Barry said Markey considers it important to be in the state as much as possible, particularly during the

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 74 of 82

pandemic.

"He believes that the moment and the crises that face Massachusetts requires that he be here," she said. "He is working for Massachusetts in Massachusetts."

An aide to Kennedy said he has been present for all U.S. House votes during the coronavirus pandemic, driving back and forth to Washington multiple times when necessary. The last votes in the House had been on May 28.

"Congressman Kennedy takes his responsibility to be present during the House's COVID response efforts seriously," said Kennedy aide Emily Kaufman.

On May 15, the House voted to allow members to vote by proxy on floor votes without traveling to Washington.

Both Kennedy and Markey say they will be in Washington this week to vote on policing legislation as Congress grapples with the nationwide protests over the deaths of George Floyd and others.

Markey typically has a much lower voting absentee record.

In all of 2019, Markey missed just 19 of 428 votes — or less than 5%. During the same year, Kennedy missed 14 of about 700 votes — or less than 2%.

Markey wasn't the only senator to miss votes in the first part of the year. Warren also missed about half of votes in the Senate during the first three months of the year.

And during the last three months of 2019 — a critical stretch in the Democratic presidential primary when she was still a candidate — Warren missed virtually all Senate votes, 113 out of 115.

Both candidates have also recently found themselves wrapped up in the issue of race at a time of protests sparked by the deaths of Black people during encounters with police.

Markey's digital communications director Paul Bologna said on Twitter that he was "embarrassed and ashamed" for liking a tweet that he said promoted a racist trope, while Kennedy said in a post on Facebook last week that he had formally disaffiliated from Kappa Alpha, a fraternity he belonged to at Stanford University.

Kennedy said that while the Stanford chapter of the fraternity was "an incredibly diverse and eclectic group," the national organization has "racist roots and a record of racist actions to this day."

Markey, 73, has served in Congress for decades — first in the House and later in the Senate. The 39-year-old Kennedy, who currently represents the state's 4th Congressional District, is a grandson of the late Robert F. Kennedy.

The primary is Sept. 1.

'Antebellum' brings racial justice call to reopened theaters

By AARON MORRISON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Back in March, filmmakers Gerard Bush and Christopher Renz gathered their artist friends and a few journalists at Manhattan's members-only social club, Soho House, for a screening of their first feature-length project, "Antebellum."

They wanted a constructively critical reaction ahead of the planned spring release of the film — a psychological thriller about a Black woman who finds herself trapped in a pre-abolition past. Bush, who is Black, and Renz, who is white, hoped the project would contribute to a national reckoning over the legacy of slavery and white supremacy in the U.S.

"To witness how truly moved they were by the film, some even to tears, was the very first time we realized the potential impact 'Antebellum' will have on society and the long-deferred conversations that need to be had on race in America," said the filmmakers, who wrote, directed and produced the project.

Then, the coronavirus pandemic exploded internationally.

Once the virus seized up the economy, forcing the closure of movie theaters and all but pushing Hollywood film studios into a mad dash to salvage elaborate release plans, Bush and Renz pulled their film. They said they didn't want what was intended to be a big theatrical film relegated to a streaming platform, as several movie studios did last spring.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 75 of 82

For Bush and Renz, patience may have proven to be a virtue.

As many movie theaters reopen in the coming weeks, "Antebellum," set to be released Aug. 21 by Lionsgate, will debut during the height of a reckoning in America when people are increasingly showing a hunger for works that light a path toward racial justice. Driven in part by nationwide protests over the recent deaths of Black people at the hands of police and vigilantes, it's a moment that positions "Antebellum" as the only summer release that speaks both to the moment and to the broader movement to defend Black lives from entrenched, systemic racism.

"We've always believed that 2020 would usher in a brand new era that would require a new type of filmmaking. ... We had no idea just how prescient that would prove to be," Bush and Renz told The Associated Press in a series of interviews and emails since the March screening.

"Antebellum," starring singer and actress Janelle Monáe, plucks the legacy of American slavery out of the past and places it squarely in the present — in a politically divided nation where Confederate nostalgia and white supremacist violence wreak havoc on Black life. The film follows successful Black book author Veronica Henley, played by Monáe, on a quest to destroy the vestiges of that legacy.

If that sounds eerily similar to present-day America, it is mere coincidence, Bush and Renz said. Over the last month, protests sparked by the death of George Floyd, a Black man who died May 25 after a white Minneapolis officer held a knee to his neck, have given way to the removal of Confederate monuments, building name changes at public and private schools, and the shedding of racist caricatures from food packaging.

Everyday Americans, Black and non-Black, are in the streets demanding seismic policy shifts in policing and the criminal justice system. It's a consequence of having never reckoned with America's original sin, Bush said.

"We intend to wake people up from the daydream that a superhero is coming to save us," he said. "Only we, meaning humanity, can save us from ourselves."

Monáe played a supporting role in last year's "Harriet," a biopic about the abolitionist Harriet Tubman, and she won critical acclaim for her role in the Academy Award-winning film "Moonlight." In "Antebellum," Monáe gives moviegoers a modern Black heroine who takes charge of her own liberation without a male-dominated cavalry.

"I knew that it was something that I needed to do, not just for myself, but for my ancestors and for all of the many Black women I considered to be modern-day superheroes," Monáe told the AP.

"I hope that (the film) causes those with privilege in this country to have conversations amongst each other, because the topics in this film ... are not for Black people to try to fix," she added.

Monáe had never worked with Bush and Renz prior to "Antebellum," only learning of them because of their work on visuals that accompanied hip hop mogul Jay-Z's 4:44 album in 2017. The duo started out more than a decade ago as heads of a creative marketing and advertising firm with luxury brand clients such as Moët, Harry Winston and Porsche.

After the 2012 killing of Trayvon Martin, the filmmakers found themselves wondering if they were "just gonna sell champagne for the next 20 or 30 years," Renz said.

That period of self-reflection led to partnerships with social justice organizations such as Harry Belafonte's Sankofa.org. In 2016, Bush and Renz directed "Against The Wall," a star-studded video campaign to draw attention to racial profiling in law enforcement featuring actors Michael B. Jordan, who starred in the 2013 police brutality drama "Fruitvale Station," and Michael K. Williams, of HBO's "The Wire," as well as activist and CNN commentator Van Jones.

The video shows Black men and women assuming the position, as though they were being stopped and frisked by police, while dispatcher recordings of actual officers describe suspects in racially discriminatory terms. It also included a recording of George Zimmerman's voice from the day he called police to report Trayvon Martin as a suspected burglar before shooting and killing the Florida teen.

That project was followed by others featuring music releases from artists such as Ty Dolla \$ign, Raphael Saadiq and Mali Music on Jay-Z's TIDAL streaming service. Their path to feature-length films with a racial

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 76 of 82

justice message has been a long time coming, Bush and Renz said.

At times, "Antebellum" uses graphically violent depictions of the inhumane treatment of enslaved people, which in recent films has elicited disapproval from some critics and Black moviegoers who were weary of unimaginative Hollywood slavery films.

Bush and Renz said they want audiences to trust that they have done something entirely different.

"Some within today's culture are triggered by art, when that is precisely what art is meant to do. We would much prefer you be triggered in a theater and activated to take meaningful, positive action — than all of us continuing to live in an open-air shooting gallery every time we leave our homes," Bush said.

Even as they anticipate finding box office success with "Antebellum," Bush and Renz are already at work on their second feature-length script, under a newly formed production company, Gloaming Pictures.

"Not since the '60s has the call for an artistic revolution been so urgent," Bush said. "The work is only just beginning."

Morrison attended an early screening of the film in March and is a member of the AP's Race and Ethnicity team. Follow him on Twitter at <https://www.twitter.com/aaronlmorrison>.

Mail-in ballots thrust Postal Service into presidential race

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Postal Service's famous motto — "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers" — is being tested like never before, by challenges that go well beyond the weather.

The coronavirus has devastated its finances. The Trump administration may attach big strings to bailouts.

The agency's responsibilities, meanwhile, are mounting. A dramatic shift in many states to voting by mail is intended to protect voters from spreading the virus at polling places. But it's also making more work for post offices and contributing to delays in determining election winners.

Election results have been delayed this week in Kentucky and New York because both states were overwhelmed by huge increases in mail ballots.

"What we don't need is more chaos in the chaos," said Wendy Fields, executive director of the voting rights advocacy group The Democracy Initiative.

President Donald Trump opposes expanding voting by mail, asserting it will trigger fraud, even though there's no evidence that will happen. Trump and many of his administration's leading voices frequently vote absentee themselves.

The president has also called the Postal Service "a joke" and says package shipping rates should be at least four times higher for heavy users such as Amazon. But shipping packages is a main revenue generator, and critics say Trump is merely looking to punish Amazon founder Jeff Bezos in retaliation for unflattering coverage in The Washington Post, which the billionaire owns.

Trump has acknowledged larger political calculations are at work, tweeting that expanding vote by mail will "LEAD TO THE END OF OUR GREAT REPUBLICAN PARTY." His Democratic rival, Joe Biden, has suggested that Trump's opposition to absentee voting and criticism of the Postal Service may help the incumbent "steal" the election.

Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, which represents 200,000-plus employees, said the administration is "shamefully trying to use the crisis to carry out an agenda" of privatization, which would ultimately "break up the Postal Service and sell it."

Vermont Secretary of State Jim Condos, a Democrat, said "our democracy depends on a reliable post office."

"Midelection year is not the time to see changes in the dependability of the Postal Service, especially during a year when our country is experiencing a pandemic and health crisis, which will dramatically increase the necessity of voting by mail," he said.

The Postal Service predates the United States. It was created by the Second Continental Congress in

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 77 of 82

July 1775, and Benjamin Franklin was the first postmaster general.

Unlike its private competitors, the Postal Service cannot refuse to make costly deliveries to especially hard-to-reach addresses. Still, much of its budgetary concerns stem from a 2006 law requiring the agency to fully fund retiree health benefits for the next 75 years.

It normally operates without taxpayer funds. During the pandemic, however, it lost \$4.5 billion in the 2020 budget year's second quarter. Congress approved a \$10 billion line of credit for the agency as part of an economic rescue package in March. Since then, though, the Postal Service and the Treasury Department have had discussions about requirements to extend those loans.

Neither side will say publicly what's being negotiated, but Trump has made his feelings clear. A 2018 Treasury task force also recommended the Postal Service increase package rates and cut labor costs. A second coronavirus aid package passed in May by the Democratic-controlled House includes \$25 billion in direct aid for the Postal Service, but the GOP-majority Senate hasn't approved its own version.

More than 3,420 of the Postal Service's 630,00-plus employees have tested positive for COVID-19, and some have died. While package deliveries have increased as Americans stay home, mail volumes plummeted — as much as 30%, according to the American Postal Workers Union.

In April, then-Postmaster General Megan Brennan said the agency could be out of money by Sept. 30. Louis DeJoy, a North Carolina businessman and GOP fundraiser who's donated to Trump, recently succeeded Brennan.

Postal Service spokesperson David Partenheimer said more recent trends "indicate that our 2020 financial performance will be better than our early scenarios predicted," though he said much remains uncertain.

"Our current financial condition is not going to impact our ability to deliver election and political mail this year," Partenheimer said.

But Condos, who was president of the National Association of Secretaries of State from July 2018 to July 2019, fears keeping such a promise could force the Postal Service to cut back on routine services, which may see voting materials prioritized over regular mail. The pressure is also on because absentee ballots for overseas military members are sent 45 days before Election Day — or Sept. 18, which is less than three months away.

"This whole idea that we have until November to decide, we really don't," Condos said.

The Postal Service consistently ranks as the nation's favorite federal agency. Pew Research Center polling in March found that 91% of Americans said they had a favorable view of it. Congressional Democrats are clamoring to "save the post office," and Sens. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., are among those proposing boosting Postal Service profits by having it expand into banking services, which it provided for decades until the 1960s.

Rural Republicans such as Rep. Don Young, R-Alaska, have also called for defending the agency. Still, some conservatives say tying its funding to Election Day jitters is a partisan ploy.

"It's just casting seeds of doubt on the legitimacy of the outcome," said Republican Tom Ridge, a former Pennsylvania governor who heads VoteSafe, a bipartisan group working with state and local officials to expand and strengthen vote-by-mail options. "It's very sad, it's very disappointing, it's very troubling."

Associated Press writer Alexandra Jaffe contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show Condos is a past president of the National Association of Secretaries of State, not the current one, and that Alaska Rep. Young's first name is Don, not Dan.

Who hasn't heard of COVID-19 by now? More than you think

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — A half-year into the most momentous pandemic in decades, it's hard to imagine that anyone, anywhere has not heard of the coronavirus. But scores of migrants arriving in Somalia tell United Nations workers every day that they are unaware of COVID-19.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 78 of 82

Monitors for the International Organization for Migration, the U.N. migration agency, interview people at the border in Somalia, a crossroads on one of the world's most dangerous migration routes: across the Red Sea with traffickers, through war-ravaged Yemen and into rich Gulf countries.

The questions for migrants are simple. Origin? Destination? Why are you going? But after the first infections were confirmed in Somalia, a new one was added: How many people in your group are aware of the coronavirus?

In the week ending June 20, just over half — 51% — of the 3,471 people tracked said they had never heard of COVID-19.

"The first time I saw this I was also very shocked," Celeste Sanchez Bean, a program manager with the U.N. agency based in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, told The Associated Press.

The findings, little more than a line in the agency's reports, are a reminder of the huge challenges in reaching everyone in the world with information about the pandemic, much less getting them to wear face masks.

The migrants are often young men from rural parts of neighboring Ethiopia. Most have no education, and some are from communities where internet access is low, Bean said. She doubted that anything had been lost in translation.

"We've been interviewing migrants for many years," she said.

In past interviews, many migrants were not even aware that a war was being waged in Yemen, the next step on their journey, she said.

With that in mind, "I'm not super shocked that levels of awareness of the coronavirus are still very low."

Instead, she's heartened that the number of those unaware of COVID-19 has been dropping over the dozen weeks that the question has been asked, down from 88% at the start.

Anyone who is unaware of the coronavirus is given a short explanation of the pandemic, including how the virus is contracted and descriptions of the symptoms and preventative measures.

What worries Bean now are the findings of a new project mapping the migrant route through Somalia, a country destabilized by decades of conflict, and merging it with epidemiological data showing coronavirus infections.

"It's very clear to us that migrants are transiting areas with confirmed cases," she said. "When you have migrants with such levels of unawareness, combined with this ... I don't want to say dangerous, but the migrants are putting themselves at risk."

Possibly others, too. Migrants already face stigma in cities like Bosaso, where boats set off for Yemen, as some residents blame them for bringing the virus, the U.N. migration agency has said.

Now with the pandemic hurting the local economy, many migrants cannot find the work that allows them to save money for their onward journey, Bean said. "So they are struggling even more than ever before."

Lack of awareness about COVID-19 isn't limited to the migrants.

"I've heard of something that sounds like that name, but we don't have it here," Fatima Moalin, a resident of Sakow town in southern Somalia, told the AP when reached by phone. "Muslims don't contract such a thing."

Others in rural Somalia, especially in areas held by the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab extremist group, have been dismissive of the virus. Somali authorities cite limited internet access, limited awareness campaigns and even extremists' restrictions on communications with the outside world.

A recent assessment by the U.N. migration agency of displaced people in Somalia's breakaway region of Somaliland found "very high" levels of misunderstanding, with some people confusing COVID-19 with a mosquito-borne disease or thinking a key symptom of the respiratory disease was diarrhea.

But most respondents were aware of the pandemic, thanks largely to radio broadcasts, word of mouth and messages played by mobile phone services while waiting for someone to pick up — a common approach in many countries in Africa.

"Slowly, slowly the information is getting there," Bean said.

The virus is, too. Somalia, with one of the world's weakest health systems, now has more than 2,800

cases.

Associated Press writer Abdi Guled in Nairobi, Kenya, contributed to this report.

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

2 Koreas mark war anniversary after pause in rising tensions

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North and South Korea on Thursday separately marked the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War with largely subdued commemorations amid the coronavirus pandemic, a day after the North abruptly halted a pressure campaign against the South.

South Korea issued a joint statement with the United States, which fought alongside it during the 1950-53 war triggered by a surprise North Korean invasion. The U.S. still stations about 28,500 soldiers in South Korea in what North Korea views as a military threat.

In the statement, South Korean Defense Minister Jeong Kyeong-doo and U.S. Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper said they "commit to strengthening and adapting the alliance to meet present and future challenges" and urged North Korea to implement past disarmament pledges.

Jeong and other South Korean military leaders later paid their respects at a national cemetery in Seoul, where about 130,000 war-related dead, mostly South Korean soldiers, are buried or honored.

They were given special permission to enter Seoul National Cemetery, which has imposed entry restrictions amid a resurgence of the coronavirus in recent weeks. The cemetery received about 530,000 visitors in June last year but only about 61,000 this month, according to cemetery officials.

A war museum in Seoul, normally a popular place to visit on the war's anniversary or on Memorial Day on June 6, remained shut Thursday.

In the evening, South Korea held a ceremony with 300 war veterans, bereaved relatives and government officials at a military airport near Seoul. It was far less than the 4,000 people who attended last year, according to Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs.

During the ceremony, President Moon Jae-in said he hopes North Korea will "boldly embark on an endeavor to end the most sorrowful war in world history." He said the two Koreas must achieve peace first before being able to see the path to reunification.

North Korea marked the anniversary with visits to monuments to late soldiers and with anti-U.S. rhetoric and newspaper editorials praising its fighting in "the Fatherland Liberation War."

An institute run by the North's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that "we will continue to build up our strength to overwhelm the persistent nuclear threats that the U.S. has launched at us."

The main newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, said in an editorial that, "The spirit of defending the country in the 1950s which brought about a victory after defeating the aggressors is valuable mental heritage to be glorified forever, generation after generation."

Seoul's Unification Ministry, which handles relations with North Korea, said there were no signs that North Korea had organized mass public events commemorating the anniversary.

North Korea considers July 27, the day when the war's armistice was signed in 1953, a bigger anniversary because it views it as the day of its war victory. But the North held a mass public rally in Pyongyang, its capital, on the 65th anniversary of the war's start in 2015, the Unification Ministry said.

Seventy years after the war's beginning, the Korean Peninsula remains technically in a state of war because the armistice that ended the fighting has yet to be replaced with a peace treaty. Animosity has deepened recently as North Korea resumed aggressive rhetoric toward South Korea, blew up a Seoul-built liaison office on its territory and threatened to take steps to nullify 2018 tension-reduction deals.

"Seventy years have passed but nothing has changed ... and we're tired of that," Kim Young-man, the son of a South Korean soldier killed during the war, said at the Seoul cemetery.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 80 of 82

Observers believe North Korea is trying to wrest concessions from Seoul and Washington amid stalled nuclear talks. Japanese Defense Minister Taro Kono told reporters Thursday that he believes North Korea might have attempted to divert public attention away from problems such as the coronavirus.

North Korea has steadfastly claimed it hasn't recorded a single virus case, but foreign experts are highly skeptical. They believe the pandemic worsened economic troubles in North Korea because it has closed its border with China, its biggest trading partner and economic pipeline.

On Wednesday, North Korea said leader Kim Jong Un put off planned steps to end the 2018 deals after he and other senior ruling party officials in charge of military affairs "took stock of the prevailing situation."

Experts say North Korea may be trying to leave room for South Korean concessions or may be worried about a stronger response from Seoul, whose help it may need again when it wants to reach out to the United States for future talks.

The Korean War left millions of people dead, injured or missing and destroyed much of the two Koreas. About 36,000 U.S. soldiers were also killed.

During the military airport event, Moon reviewed an honor guard ceremony for the arrival from the United States of the remains of 147 South Korean soldiers killed during the war. North Korea earlier sent the remains to the U.S., where forensic reviews found they were South Korean. Moon said the return of "these valiant warriors" makes "us feel sad but proud" and that "we will engrave their names in our history."

Associated Press journalists Chang Yong Jun in Seoul and Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo contributed to this report.

Man runs 218 miles to virus-stricken 'Nana's' nursing home

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

SCRANTON, Pa. (AP) — Endurance athlete Corey Cappelloni once ran six days through the Sahara Desert in what's considered the most grueling foot race on Earth. But a 218-mile run to grandma after she was sickened with COVID-19 turned out to be the longest, toughest and most rewarding of his life.

Cappelloni spent seven days covering the distance from his home in Washington, D.C., to the nursing home where 98-year-old Ruth Andres, lives in his hometown of Scranton, Pennsylvania, arriving June 19 to cheers, flags and purple balloons, her favorite color.

Dozens of workers at the Allied Services Skilled Nursing & Rehab Center applauded as he crossed the finish line. Out of breath but smiling, he pointed to "Nana's" fourth-floor room, where she peered through the window. A sign hung outside read, "I Love You Corey."

"Nana, you're a strong person," Cappelloni said into a cellphone and microphone, as a nurse held up the other end of the line to Andres. "You're going on 99, and you still have many more miles."

Unable to visit in person out of safety concerns for residents, he promised to give her a long-awaited hug soon.

Cappelloni's "Run for Ruth" has raised more than \$24,000 so far for smartphones and tablets to help older adults isolated due to the pandemic communicate with loved ones.

It also aimed to raise awareness about residents and caregivers in such facilities, many of which have been hit hard by the coronavirus, and to honor the lives lost, including Cappelloni's great-uncle Charles Gloman, who died May 11.

Andres was diagnosed in early June. She began running a high fever, was too weak to talk some days and had to get supplemental oxygen. Cappelloni, who was calling daily, noticed she was becoming more and more afraid.

"She was no longer able to have family, visitors, friends visit her," he said. "And she became a little depressed, so I knew that I had to do something to try to uplift her spirits."

At first he sent photo books from his travels around the world. Then his girlfriend, Susan Kamenar, had an idea: What if he ran to her?

So he set out northward along trails and streets, through forests and residential neighborhoods. Kamenar

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 81 of 82

followed behind in an RV the couple rented to better maintain social distancing while eating and sleeping.

Cappelloni had been training for an ultramarathon scheduled for mid-March, but he pulled out because of the pandemic. He ran an ultramarathon in Peru in December, and was still in good shape.

But even though he'd previously finished races like the more than 150-mile (251-kilometer) Marathon des Sables in Morocco, he wasn't sure he could endure the equivalent of seven ultramarathons of 31.2 miles (50.2 kilometers), longer than a standard 26.2-mile (42.2-kilometer) marathon, in as many days.

He started strong and was posting good daily times, but on day six he hit the wall. Exhausted and hurting, he slowed to a walk. Then came a text message and a huge mental lift: Nana had made a full recovery.

"She had some very rough days," Cappelloni said that day in a video he posted online. "But you know, she fought through them, and that's what I'm doing today."

Cappelloni said Andres was there when he took his first steps and he often refers to her as his second mother.

"Why I decided to do this was to show my grandmother that I'm here for her and that I really care for her, Cappelloni said, "because she has always been there for me from when I was born."

Associated Press video journalist Jessie Wardarski contributed to this report.

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>

Congo announces end to 2nd deadliest Ebola outbreak ever

By AL-HADJI KUDRA MALIRO and KRISTA LARSON Associated Press

BENI, Congo (AP) — Eastern Congo marked an official end Thursday to the second deadliest Ebola outbreak in history, which killed 2,280 people over nearly two years, as armed rebels and community mistrust undermined the promise of new vaccines.

Thursday's milestone was overshadowed, though, by the enormous health challenges still facing Congo: the world's largest measles epidemic, the rising threat of COVID-19 and another new Ebola outbreak in the north.

"We are extremely proud to have been able to be victorious over an epidemic that lasted such a long time," said Dr. Jean-Jacques Muyembe, who coordinated the national Ebola response and whose team also developed a new treatment for the once incurable hemorrhagic disease.

The announcement initially was set for April but another case emerged just three days before the Ebola-free declaration was expected. That restarted the 42-day waiting period required before such a proclamation can be made.

The epidemic, which began in August 2018, presented an unprecedented challenge for the World Health Organization, Congo's Health Ministry and international aid groups because it was the first Ebola epidemic in a conflict zone. Armed groups posed such a risk that vaccinations sometimes could only be carried out by small teams arriving by helicopter.

But much of the risk to hospitals and health workers came from the communities, often angered by the presence of outsiders and the amount of money being spent on Ebola as far more people died of perennial killers like malaria. Some suspected the epidemic was a political scheme, a theory that grew after then President Joseph Kabila canceled the national elections in Ebola-affected areas.

Only a few years earlier, West Africa's Ebola epidemic killed more than 11,000, as at that time there was no licensed vaccine or treatment. By the time of the eastern Congo outbreak there was not one but two new experimental vaccines to ward off the disease that kills about half its victims.

After more than a quarter century of conflict, though, distrust of government health workers and other outsiders was exceptionally high in eastern Congo. Many residents initially outright refused the vaccine, fearing it would harm them.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 26, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 349 ~ 82 of 82

New treatment options also offered promise, and the aid group ALIMA even developed a way for patients to feel less isolated. A transparent enclosure for individual patients allowed visitors to still see their loved ones who were undergoing treatment. Yet fear of dying alone still kept many people from going to medical facilities until it was too late.

Ultimately two different experimental vaccines were made available in eastern Congo on a compassionate use basis — one manufactured by Merck, the other by Johnson & Johnson. Those vaccines later received regulatory approval and now are expected to be used again in Congo's northern Equateur province where a new outbreak already has claimed 11 lives. That area also had an outbreak in 2018 that killed 33 people before it was brought under control within months.

And with the arrival of COVID-19, health teams in eastern Congo are once again trying to persuade people that a virus they've never heard of before could still kill them. The COVID-19 outbreak in the region has been minimal so far, but the challenges of Ebola underscore how fraught it could be to test and treat those in areas under the control of armed rebels.

Some, though, are hopeful the region can weather coronavirus — people here already know how to social distance. Schools, churches and mosques are already armed with hand-washing kits.

"Ebola has changed our culture," said Esaie Ngalya, whose grandmother died from the virus. "Now I go to see my uncle but we don't shake hands. In our culture that is considered disrespectful but now we have no choice because health comes first."

Larson reported from Dakar, Senegal. Associated Press writer Jean-Yves Kamale in Kinshasa, Congo contributed.