

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 1 of 85

- 1- Oath of office given to board members
- 2- Groton changes school calendar to 4-day schedule
- 4- South Dakota 4-H Members Elected to State 4-H Legislature
- 5- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller
- 8- Area COVID-19 Cases
- 9- July 13th COVID-19 UPDATE
- 12- Baseball Schedule
- 12- 2020 Brown County 4-H Public Presentation Day Contest
- 13- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs
- 14- Weather Pages
- 17- Daily Devotional
- 18- 2020 Groton Events
- 19- News from the Associated Press



Business Manager Mike Weber gives the oath of office to Steve Smith and Grant Rix at Monday's school board meeting.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

© 2019 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 2 of 85

2020-2021 Groton Area School District

Adopted 7/13/2020

August 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August	
5 - Faculty Inservice	
6 - Faculty Inservice	
19 - 1st Day of School	
Student Contact: 8; Inservice: 4	

January 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

January	
1 - Christmas Break - NO SCHOOL	
4 - School Resumes	
15 - NCSEC Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL	
Student Contact: 16; Inservice: 4	

September 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

September	
7 - Labor Day - NO SCHOOL	
21 - Homecoming Coronation (7:30)	
25 - Homecoming FB vs. Redfield	
Student Contact: 19; Inservice: 2	

February 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

February	
11 - Parent/Teacher Conferences - (1:30 - 8:30)	
12 - Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL	
Student Contact: 16; Inservice: 4	

October 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

October	
8 - Parent/Teacher Conferences (1:30 - 8:30)	
9 - Lake Region Marching Festival	
9 - Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL	
16 - End of 1st Quarter (36)	
Student Contact: 17; Inservice: 5	

March 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

March	
4 - End of 3rd Quarter (36)	
19 - Spring Break - NO SCHOOL	
Student Contact: 19; Inservice: 3	

November 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

November	
11 - Veterans Day Program	
26-27 - Thanksgiving - NO SCHOOL	
Student Contact: 16; Inservice: 3	

April 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

April	
2 - Good Friday - NO SCHOOL	
11 - Pops Concert (2:00 & 5:00)	
24 - PROM	
29 - Middle School Spring Concert (7:00)	
29 - Faculty Inservice	
Student Contact: 19; Inservice: 2	

December 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

December	
10 - MS/HS Christmas Concert (7:00)	
22 - Elementary Christmas Concert (1:00)	
22 - Early Dismissal (2:00)	
22 - End of 1st Semester (37/73)	
23-31 Christmas Break - NO SCHOOL	
Student Contact: 13; Inservice: 3	

May 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

May	
4 - Elementary Spring Concert (7:00)	
6 - End of 2nd Semester (38/74)	
6 - HS Concert/Awards Night (7:00)	
16 - Graduation (2:00)	
31 - Memorial Day	
Student Contact: 4; Inservice: 0	

All missed instructional days will need to be made up either during the year or at the end of the year.

- Faculty Inservice
- No School
- Important Dates
- End of Quarter/Semester
- Early Dismissal
- Instructional Planning Days

Groton changes school calendar to 4-day schedule

The Groton Area Board of Education voted Monday night to change the school calendar, switching to a four-day week with the first day of school being August 19th and the proposed final day being May 6th. The one major hiccup with this calendar is that every day missed will need to be made up at the end of the school year, or adjustments made later in the school year where some of the Fridays could be make-up days.

The four-day week will allow the teaching staff to have Fridays as a prep day so teachers can prep for hybrid education with in-person and E-learning.

If the school has to shut down for 24 hours due to a case, that day would be flipped with Friday. So if school was called off on Tuesday, Tuesday would be the teacher prep day and instruction would be held on Friday that week. Schwan said he is normally opposed to a four-day school calendar due to the limitations of the number of contact hours. However, with the situation the way it is, everyone was in favor of going with the four-day school week.

An adjustment was made as February 15th would be off for President's Day and February 19 would be in session.

Free meals will be available to all students through August 31. The national policy stands through the

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 3 of 85

end of August. No forms need to be signed for the free meals.

Fall athletics meeting and school open house are not good ideas and will not be held this fall.

Face coverings will be required on the buses. Schwan said he would encourage parents to bring in their children to school instead of putting them on the bus because of the close quarters. The school can provide masks if a family does not have one. As far as the classroom, masks are optional at this point, but it will be strongly recommended.

Schwan warned that anyone who is infected with COVID-19, will have to be out for two weeks; however, even those who are considered to be in close contact with someone with COVID-19 will also need to be out of school for 14 days.

The substitute teacher pool across South Dakota is mostly elderly people and they are considered high risk and Schwan said there will be a shortage of substitute teachers.

Board member Deb Gengerke said the staff is by far at higher risk than the children, and while it is the children we are protecting, the staff is at higher risk for COVID-19.

Also please note that decisions made today could be changed by the time school starts, based on the COVID-19 situation.

Board Member Marty Weismantel said this is not an ideal situation, "but it's what we are facing. We need to do the best, step up to the plate and make it work."

Schwan said it would be possible if there is a COVID-19 situation in one building, that it would be possible to keep school going in the other building.

Busses were inspected and just two had a couple of minor issues.

Kevin Nehls from Allied Climate Professionals proposed the installation of HVAC ionization system. The board will do more research on the proposal.

Steve Smith was voted back in as the school board president as the new school board reorganized. The oath of office was read to Steve Smith and Grant Rix. Marty Weismantel was re-elected as the Vice President.

Carleen Johnson was approved as a volunteer girls soccer coach, Carla Tracy was approved as a volunteer assistant volleyball coach, and Jasmine Schinkel was approved as a co-cheer advisor, all for the upcoming school year.

Substitute teacher pay was tabled to the next meeting. Substitute bus drivers rate remains at \$65 a day. The school lunch prices and activity admission prices will remain unchanged. Also, no change in the OST rate for the upcoming school year.

Broton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 4 of 85

South Dakota 4-H Members Elected to State 4-H Legislature

BROOKINGS, S.D. - The SDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program has launched the first-ever South Dakota 4-H Legislature, a state-level civic and governmental education program created to provide South Dakota 4-H members with a better understanding of how our state government operates while strengthening youth voice opportunities.

In order to provide youth with the opportunity to learn more about how the state legislative process works, many aspects of the new program will mimic how the legislative branch of South Dakota state government is conducted through two main roles: candidates/legislators and constituents. Legislative candidates include senior age division 4-H members interested in the program's civic engagement and leadership opportunities. Those candidates collected petition signatures, ran a campaign to represent their county and encouraged fellow 4-Hers to cast their vote in the election. All enrolled South Dakota 4-H members serve as constituents to the program, with duties including signing petitions, voting, voicing their concerns to their elected legislators and observing the legislative process.

The young leaders elected as South Dakota 4-H Representatives will bring forth the issues that affect their 4-H communities by writing bills and connecting with their 4-H constituents. Throughout the remainder of the summer, these elected leaders will meet virtually to learn about the ins and outs of crafting bills to improve South Dakota 4-H policy. On October 3, they will travel to Pierre to participate in their mock legislative session, which will feature most of the elements of the real South Dakota legislature, including mock committee meetings, caucus gatherings, public testimony and floor debate in the South Dakota House Chamber.

Hundreds of South Dakota 4-H members made their voices heard by voting on the candidates they wanted to represent them during the elections held June 15-19, 2020. South Dakota 4-H would like to congratulate the following individuals on being elected as South Dakota 4-H Representatives, who will now represent their communities and the state:

Turner County: Representative Shane Rist
Tripp County: Representative Meagan Blare
Sanborn County: Representative Bailey Feistner
Pennington County: Representative Kaitlynn Wellman
McCook County: Representative Kayle Lauck
Marshall County: Representative Taylor Storbakken
Jones County: Representative Brianna Smith
Hutchinson County: Representative Aaron Baumiller
Hanson County: Representative Quinton Berg
Faulk County: Representative Teigen Hadrick
Fall River County: Representative Zikia Fleming
Davison County: Representative Logan Tlam
Clay County: Representative Nicholas Havermann
Buffalo/Jerauld: Representative Carissa Scheel
Brule County: Representative Isabelle Mairose
Brown County: Representative Tessa Erdmann
Brookings County: Representative Emily Robbins
Aurora County: Representative Cally Faulhaber
At Large: Representative Grace DiGiovanni, Turner County
At Large: Representative Ryan Sell, Tripp County
At Large: Representative Kendall Dehn, Pennington County
At Large: Representative Hadley Stiefvater, McCook County
At Large: Representative Carter Effling, Marshall County
At Large: Representative Amber Potter, Faulk County
At Large: Representative Harlee Heim, Buffalo/Jerauld Counties

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 5 of 85

#141 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

One of these days, I'm going to drop in with excellent news, but it won't be tonight. We're in a fair amount of trouble here. 63,500 new cases today, not a record, but our second-worst day. And now the last 14 days are our worst 14 days. In a row. Hard to know what to say about that because I don't see any indication it's going to get better any time soon. We now have 3,378,800 reported cases in the US, a 1.9% increase from yesterday's total. Forty-two states are showing increases in rolling average over the past two weeks; only two show declines. Cases are rising fastest in Hawaii, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Michigan, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Puerto Rico.

Twenty states and Puerto Rico set records in the last week for seven-day rolling new case average, some increasing by more than 40% in a week. Hawaii, Alaska, Minnesota, Missouri, Rhode Island, West Virginia, and Virginia all saw increases between 41 and 55 percent. Montana, Colorado, North Dakota, Kentucky, the District of Columbia, and the US Virgin Islands increased by more than 60%. Some of these states, for example, Montana and North Dakota, started out from a very low baseline, so even a few extra cases increases the total by a pretty impressive percentage; nonetheless, these kinds of numbers are worrying.

Florida posted its second-highest new case total thus far after yesterday's huge number. Average daily cases are up to near 11,000, a large jump from last week. At the height of its outbreak, New York had 595 cases per million; Florida is right now at 712. Test positivity rate is close to 15%, and in some areas is over 25%. These are crazy-high numbers. Oregon's looking at rises in cases, especially in the more rural areas, most fueled by large church gatherings, funerals, graduation parties, and infections at food-processing facilities; and they're expecting another influx from the Fourth of July. They are unfortunately placed between two hot-spot states, Washington and California, and of course, this virus doesn't stop at state borders. They're also expecting more trouble as the harvest begins and seasonal workers move in to help in the fields. California has rolled back much of its reopening, and public health experts are urging Texas to do the same; the increases are sharper in Texas. In two months their deaths have quadrupled and the case total has grown by more than 800%.

Tennessee set a single-day record today for new cases; so did Washington. Kansas too, but it's difficult to evaluate reports from Kansas because they've decided to update their statistics only three times a week, and today was a reporting day. New York City is seeing a sharp rise in infections in young adults from 20-29 and a lesser one in the 30-39 age group. This is a pattern we've been seeing in southern states as well.

Deaths are at 135,398 in the US. There were 455 new deaths reported today, a 0.3% increase. This represents a rise over the past couple of weeks, lagging new cases and threatening to turn into the wrong kind of trend.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's point person on this pandemic was interviewed by the Dean of the Stanford University School of Medicine recently, and he was pretty clear about what we're seeing here. "We did not shut down entirely. And that's the reason why—when we went up, we started to come down, and then we plateaued at a level that was really quite high, about 20,000 infections a day. Then, as we started to reopen, we're seeing the surges that we're seeing today as we speak." He added that "we can't stay shut down forever," but that states need to roll back now because they did not meet the benchmarks for reopening before doing so. We've had this conversation already, so I'll leave it there.

I read an interview with Dr. David J. De La Zerda, the director of medical intensive care at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, the city in Florida that's been hardest hit. It is concerning that he reports his patients are younger now than in the past and without any significant co-morbidities, even including obesity. He said, "Most of them are pretty young and healthy patients." He gives an average age between 25 and 45 years, and given that they're now sick enough to land in an ICU, this is disturbing news. He also says these patients are sicker than those he was seeing a couple of months ago.

He reports these patients are needing more oxygen and more blood pressure support than before. "Mortality has not been a major issue because they are younger patients. But I think as the days go on, we might also see a change in our mortality."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 6 of 85

Late last week, the CDC reported its demographic analysis of Covid-19 deaths. Looking at around 52,000 deaths occurring between the middle of February and the middle of April, these figures are three months old; but there is a number of interesting findings. As expected, most deaths occurred in people over 65 years of age with underlying medical conditions. The data from different states were not uniformly comprehensive, but there was race and ethnicity information for roughly one-fifth of these, most of them from New York, New Jersey, and Washington, which are the states having the largest number of deaths in that period.

We've been noting disparities between racial and ethnic groups, but we have some numbers for that from this report. The median age at death for white people was 81; for Hispanic and non-white, non-Hispanic people, that age drops ten years. Not only were they younger, the percentage of deaths in the two minority groups was vastly greater than their proportion in the population. Much of this may be their greater representation in essential jobs which do not permit working from home; the greater prevalence of living in multigenerational family units likely also plays a role. Experts believe social and structural inequities cause increased vulnerability to serious disease in many ways besides occupational exposure.

Co-morbidities also were associated with deaths. Nearly half of deaths in those under 65 years were in people with diabetes. People with underlying medical conditions overall were six times as likely to be hospitalized and twelve times as likely to die as otherwise healthy people. A fair proportion of deaths in those under 65 took place at home or in an emergency department, which may be an indication that people did not have access to health care or were delayed in being diagnosed or receiving care.

As people venture out from home more often, something I am not necessarily endorsing, an issue which come up in the questions I receive is use of public bathrooms. After all, if you're just making a quick run to the store, this probably doesn't arise; but if you're spending longer times away from home, at some point, you're going to need a bathroom. Most of us are accustomed to viewing bathrooms with some suspicion—sort of as germ factories; but now our awareness about disease spread is certainly heightened. Additionally, you might have read the recent spate of articles about toilet plumes—those droplets that shoot up in a cloud from a flushing toilet. So what's the story?

Mostly, it is that the toilet plume is not your biggest worry. Although flushing toilets have been a good way to aerosolize all kinds of bacteria and viruses forever, no one's been able to establish urine or stool as a source for Covid-19. Fragments of virus have rarely been found in these specimens, but we're not sure this is viable virus and there are no cases on record of transmission by this means. Your biggest concern in the public restroom is the people in there. These tend to be small, windowless spaces with less than great ventilation, and there's your concern, especially if there are a lot of people in there.

So if you're going to use a public restroom, wear a mask. Check the place out, and if it's crowded, wait until that eases. If the crowd is unremitting—or you can't wait—then try to keep your distance. Larger rooms are safer, both for avoiding other people and for avoiding toilet plumes. Skip the seat covers; you're probably going to pick up more contamination laying one of these down than you avoid by using it. If you must, carry a package of wipes in with you, and use one of those to wipe down the seat.

If the toilet has a lid, close it before flushing. If, as is usual, it doesn't, then exit as quickly as you can after flushing. If the sinks are crowded, try to stand back until there is a clear space for you. There has been a lot of talk about how the forced-air hand dryers will spread virus in the air; but you can probably make the case that in a crowded, poorly-ventilated space, generating some air movement is a net good. Then, if you have to grab a door handle to exit the restroom, consider the number of people who skip the handwashing, and think about using some hand sanitizer after you leave.

If you can avoid public restrooms, that's the smart thing to do. If you can't avoid them, then pay attention to minimizing your exposure. And for the record, if you're staying home most of the time, you avoid the issue entirely.

As long as we're on the subject of going places, how do you minimize your chance of exposure when you do go out? First thing is this: It's still smart to stay home as much as possible. I know you need food and will have to go to the grocery store; but that sort of low-risk activity cannot really be equated to hanging

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 7 of 85

out in your favorite bar with your buddies for a few hours. This is still not the time to plan an afternoon of shopping at the mall or a leisurely dinner out. If we're ever going to wrestle this virus into submission, it's going to take all of us making a concerted effort to deny it opportunities for transmission. The very best way to do that is to be at home away from others to or from whom it can be transmitted.

When you go out, wear a mask. I don't want to have another long conversation about people suffocating in masks or some hokey stuff from a fake OSHA expert or a pretend pulmonologist or some such. Just wear one. It protects other people around you, and refusing to wear one is a jerk move.

Avoid small, crowded, or poorly-ventilated indoor spaces. If you must enter a place like this, plan your visit carefully: Get in and get out. Because infection is dose-dependent and, the longer the exposure, the greater the dose, you want to spend as little time as possible in close proximity to others or in a space where the virus might be lingering. Face away from people when you talk or move your head off-center from theirs to keep out of the "line of fire," if you will. If you avoid making eye contact, you will find this easier to do. While under normal circumstances, making eye contact signals your interest and attention, you have better things to worry about than signals at this time. Wear your mask properly—covering your mouth and nose, fitting snugly to your face, and all of the time you are in the setting.

If the air is moving, either from open windows or a good ventilation system, your risk is lowered. If your people are moving rather than standing around, your risk is lowered. If you keep moving and limit your time in a setting, your risk is lowered. Air currents dilute aerosols, and moving along limits the dose and duration of exposure.

Stay out of places where people are eating or drinking; there's no way to do that with a mask on, and remember, it's other people's masks that protect you. Likewise, try to limit your visits to places that require masks for all. Avoid places where people are speaking loudly or singing. Yes, church too. Especially church. I am not anti-faith, and I am not an emissary from Satan; I'm just a person who's trying to help you stay alive. Inside a church is still not a great place to be. Neither is choir practice—secular as well as religious.

If you're getting together with a friend, stay six feet apart, more if possible. It's nice out these days: Meet outdoors. Someone's deck or lawn is perfect. Bring your own food and drinks, and have a lovely, socially-distanced evening. Just go home before you need to use the bathroom.

In the early days of this pandemic in the US, face masks were hard to come by. Most places were sold out, or they were charging extortionate prices to those who were desperate. Masks were on back-order, with shipping dates sometimes weeks out. Then notes started popping up on social media: There was a company offering free masks to anyone who wanted one; you didn't even have to pay shipping. It was no scam either; if you sent for one, one was shipped.

The company is an Oregon sports apparel manufacturer called DHVANI. When the co-founder, Kanayochukwu Onwuama, learned about the shortage of masks from his mother, a nurse at a hospital in Queens, he looked at his company and said, "We're experts in making apparel. We know how to cut and sew. We know fabric. We have the warehouse and staff and supply chain. We can make and ship out masks." And he decided to do just that. For free, so anyone could have one.

So he created a nonprofit arm, launched a GoFundMe to pay for supplies and shipping, and went to work. They've now shipped more than 50,000 masks. Some have gone to individuals; some have gone to organizations—nursing homes, homeless organizations, the Hopi Nation, medical centers. Operating on donations, the goal is to send a mask to anyone in the United States who requests one. They're also selling masks to those who can afford them and plowing that income back into the nonprofit as well.

Here's another case of someone who saw a need and arranged to meet it. This is a huge effort with huge effects. We don't have to do that. We just have to see a small need and meet that one. One thing. One day. You know you can do that. Go ahead. I'll wait here for you. Let me know how it goes.

And stay safe. We'll talk again.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 8 of 85

Area COVID-19 Cases

	July 1	July 2	July 3	July 4	July 5	July 6	July 7
Minnesota	36,303	36,716	37,210	37,624	No Update+	38,136	38,569
Nebraska	19,177	19,310	19,452	19,660	19,827	19,929	20,046
Montana	967	1016	1083	1,128	1167	1,212	1249
Colorado	32,715	33,029	33,352	33,612	33,866	34,065	34,257
Wyoming	1184	1203	1233	1267	1289	1312	1349
North Dakota	3576	3615	3657	3722	3779	3816	3849
South Dakota	6764	6826	6893	6978	7028	7063	7105
United States	2,629,372	2,686,587	2,739,879	2,795,163	2,839,917	2,888,729	2,938,624
US Deaths	127,322	128,062	128,740	129,437	129,676	129,947	130,306

Minnesota	+442	+413	+494	+414		+512	+433
Nebraska	+135	+133	+142	+208	+167	+102	+117
Montana	+48	+49	+67	+45	+39	+45	+37
Colorado	+204	+314	+323	+260	+254	+199	+192
Wyoming	+33	+19	+30	+34	+22	+23	+37
North Dakota	+37	+39	+42	+65	+57	+37	+33
South Dakota	+48	+62	+67	+85	+50	+35	+42
United States	+46,475	+57,215	+53,292	+55,284	+44,754	+48,812	+49,895
US Deaths	+1149	+740	+678	+697	+239	+271	+359

	July 8	July 9	July 10	July 11	July 12	July 13	July 14
Minnesota	39,133	39,589	40,163	40,767	41,571	42,281	42,772
Nebraska	20,201	20,425	20,623	20,777	20,998	21,172	21,399
Montana	1,327	1,371	1466	1,593	1,677	1,758	1,843
Colorado	34,664	35,116	35,525	36,191	36,591	36,913	37,242
Wyoming	1,378	1,404	1428	1,445	1,488	1,506	1,545
North Dakota	3898	3971	4070	4154	4243	4334	4442
South Dakota	7,163	7242	7336	7401	7454	7499	7524
United States	2,994,776	3,055,144	3,118,168	3,187,270	3,247,782	3,304,942	3,363,056
US Deaths	131,626	132,309	133,291	134,117	134,815	135,205	135,605

Minnesota	+564	+456	+574	+604	+804	+710	+491
Nebraska	+155	+224	+198	+154	+221	+174	+227
Montana	+78	+44	+95	+127	+84	+81	+85
Colorado	+407	+452	+409	+666	+400	+322	+329
Wyoming	+29	+26	+24	+17	+43	+18	+39
North Dakota	+49	+73	+99	+84	+99	+91	+108
South Dakota	+58	+79	+94	+65	+55	+45	+25
United States	+56,152	+60,368	+63,024	69,102	+60,512	+57,160	+58,114
US Deaths	+1,320	+683	+982	+826	+698	+390	+400

+ The Minnesota Department of Health took July 4th off so there is no update available.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 9 of 85

July 13th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent
from State Health Lab Reports

Numbers are really low today with the active cases going up by four today in South Dakota. Brown County's active case went up by one. Hot spots, if you want to call it that, are Lake County with six positive cases and Pennington with six. No one died in the Dakotas from COVID-19.

Brown County:

Active Cases: +1 (19)
Recovered: 0 (338)
Total Positive: +1 (359)
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (18)
Deaths: 2
Negative Tests: +27 (3375)
Percent Recovered: 94.2% (-.2)

South Dakota:

Positive: +25 (7524 total)
Negative: +745 (83,854 total)
Hospitalized: +4 (742 total). 63 currently hospitalized (Up 10 from yesterday)
Deaths: +0 (109 total)
Recovered: +21 (6543 total)
Active Cases: +4 (872)
Percent Recovered: 87.0 +0.0

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Harding 42, Potter +2 (199), unassigned +436 (3102).

Fully recovered from positive cases (Gained Stanley): Campbell 1-1, Haakon 1-1, Hyde 3-3, Sanborn 12-12, Stanley 14-14, Sully 1-1.

With such few number of cases and recoveries today, we stayed with the full list today.

Aurora: 1 active case

Beadle: +2 recovered (48 active cases)
Bennett: 1 active case
Bon Homme: 2 active cases
Brookings: 19 active cases
Brown: +1 positive (21 active cases)
Brule: +1 recovered (8 active cases)
Buffalo: +1 recovered (17 active cases)
Butte: 3 active cases
Campbell: Fully Recovered
Charles Mix: +1 recovered (55 active cases)
Clark: 1 active case
Clay: 10 active cases
Codington: +2 recovered (19 active cases)
Corson: 3 active cases

Custer: +1 positive (2 active cases)
Davison: +1 positive, +1 recovered (16 active cases)
Day: 3 active cases
Deuel: 1 active case
Dewey: +2 positive (36 active cases)
Douglas: +1 recovered (5 active cases)
Edmunds: 1 active case
Fall River: 3 active cases
Faulk: 4 active cases
Grant: 3 active cases
Gregory: 1 active case
Haakon: Fully Recovered
Hamlin: 2 active cases

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 10 of 85

Hand: 1 active case
 Hanson: +1 positive (3 active cases)
 Harding: No infections reported
 Hughes: 12 active cases
 Hutchinson +1 recovered (3 active cases)
 Hyde: Fully Recovered
 Jackson: 5 active cases
 Jerauld: 2 active cases
 Jones: 1 active case
 Kingsbury: 2 active cases
 Lake: +6 positive (15 active cases)
 Lawrence: 1 active case
 Lincoln: +1 positive, +1 recovered (45 active cases)
 Lyman: 22 active cases
 Marshall: 1 active case
 McCook: 6 active cases
 McPherson: 1 active case
 Meade: +1 positive (9 active cases)
 Mellette: 5 active cases
 Miner: 2 active cases
 Minnehaha: +4 positive, +7 recovered (283 active cases)
 Moody: 3 active cases
 Oglala Lakota: +1 recovered (30 active cases)
 Pennington: +6 positive, +1 recovered (166 active cases)
 Perkins: 1 active case
 Potter: No infections reported
 Roberts: +1 positive (11 active cases)
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered
 Spink: 2 active cases
 Stanley: +1 recovered (FULLY RECOVERED)
 Sully: Fully Recovered

Todd: 14 active cases
 Tripp: 2 active cases
 Turner: 5 active cases
 Union: 24 active cases
 Walworth: 5 active cases
 Yankton: 12 active cases
 Ziebach: 2 active cases

The NDDoH & private labs report 4,564 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 108 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 4,442. NDDoH reports no new deaths.

State & private labs have reported 233,097 total completed tests.

3,653 ND patients are recovered.

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian, Non-Hispanic	715	10%
Black, Non-Hispanic	985	13%
Hispanic	1126	15%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	1208	16%
Other	762	10%
White, Non-Hispanic	2728	36%

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	8
Brown	2
Buffalo	3
Faulk	1
Hughes	2
Jackson	1
Jerauld	1
Lake	1
Lincoln	1
Lyman	1
McCook	1
Meade	1
Minnehaha	60
Pennington	21
Todd	2
Union	1
Yankton	2

Broton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 11 of 85

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons
Aurora	34	33	300
Beadle	553	505	1558
Bennett	4	3	443
Bon Homme	14	12	628
Brookings	95	76	1988
Brown	359	338	3375
Brule	34	26	582
Buffalo	86	69	547
Butte	3	0	571
Campbell	1	1	66
Charles Mix	96	41	927
Clark	15	14	343
Clay	93	83	1066
Codington	92	73	2163
Corson	20	17	157
Custer	11	9	627
Davison	56	40	1810
Day	19	16	454
Deuel	5	4	317
Dewey	37	1	1208
Douglas	10	5	348
Edmunds	8	7	326
Fall River	13	10	783
Faulk	24	20	138
Grant	17	14	574
Gregory	5	4	265
Haakon	1	1	248
Hamlin	13	11	515
Hand	7	6	221
Hanson	14	11	148
Harding	0	0	42
Hughes	70	58	1353
Hutchinson	17	14	757

Hyde	3	3	104
Jackson	7	2	370
Jerauld	39	37	246
Jones	1	0	40
Kingsbury	8	6	437
Lake	35	20	720
Lawrence	20	19	1589
Lincoln	397	352	5013
Lyman	82	60	759
Marshall	5	4	324
McCook	17	11	522
McPherson	6	5	178
Meade	54	45	1508
Mellette	9	4	269
Miner	10	8	213
Minnehaha	3760	3477	21685
Moody	23	20	504
Oglala Lakota	112	82	2618
Pennington	641	475	8220
Perkins	1	0	100
Potter	0	0	203
Roberts	58	47	1224
Sanborn	12	12	180
Spink	14	12	937
Stanley	14	14	175
Sully	1	1	55
Todd	66	52	1455
Tripp	19	17	489
Turner	29	24	747
Union	151	127	1546
Walworth	16	11	442
Yankton	85	73	2579
Ziebach	3	1	169
Unassigned****	0	0	3386

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	3639	58
Male	3885	51

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	826	0
20-29 years	1566	1
30-39 years	1569	5
40-49 years	1181	7
50-59 years	1173	12
60-69 years	696	21
70-79 years	275	15
80+ years	238	48

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 12 of 85

Baseball Schedule

Date	Team	Opponent	Location	Time
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	Redfield	Redfield	8:00 (1)
July 16	SBU10/12	Scrimmage	Groton	7:30 (2)
July 20	Jr. Legion	Clark	Clark	6:00 (2)
July 20	Legion	Northville	Groton	6:00 (2)
July 21	Legion	Webster	Groton	6:00 (2)

First Round State VFW Jr. Teener Schedule in Webster

DATE	AWAY TEAM	HOME TEAM	Result/Time
Fri, Jul 17	SDVFW 14U Castlewood	SDVFW 14U Groton	12:00PM CDT
Fri, Jul 17	SDVFW 14U Canova Gang	SDVFW 14U Parker	2:30PM CDT
Fri, Jul 17	SDVFW 14U Mt. Vernon-Plankinton	SDVFW 14U Gregory	5:00PM CDT
Fri, Jul 17	SDVFW 14U FH Hitmen	SDVFW 14U Webster	7:30PM CDT

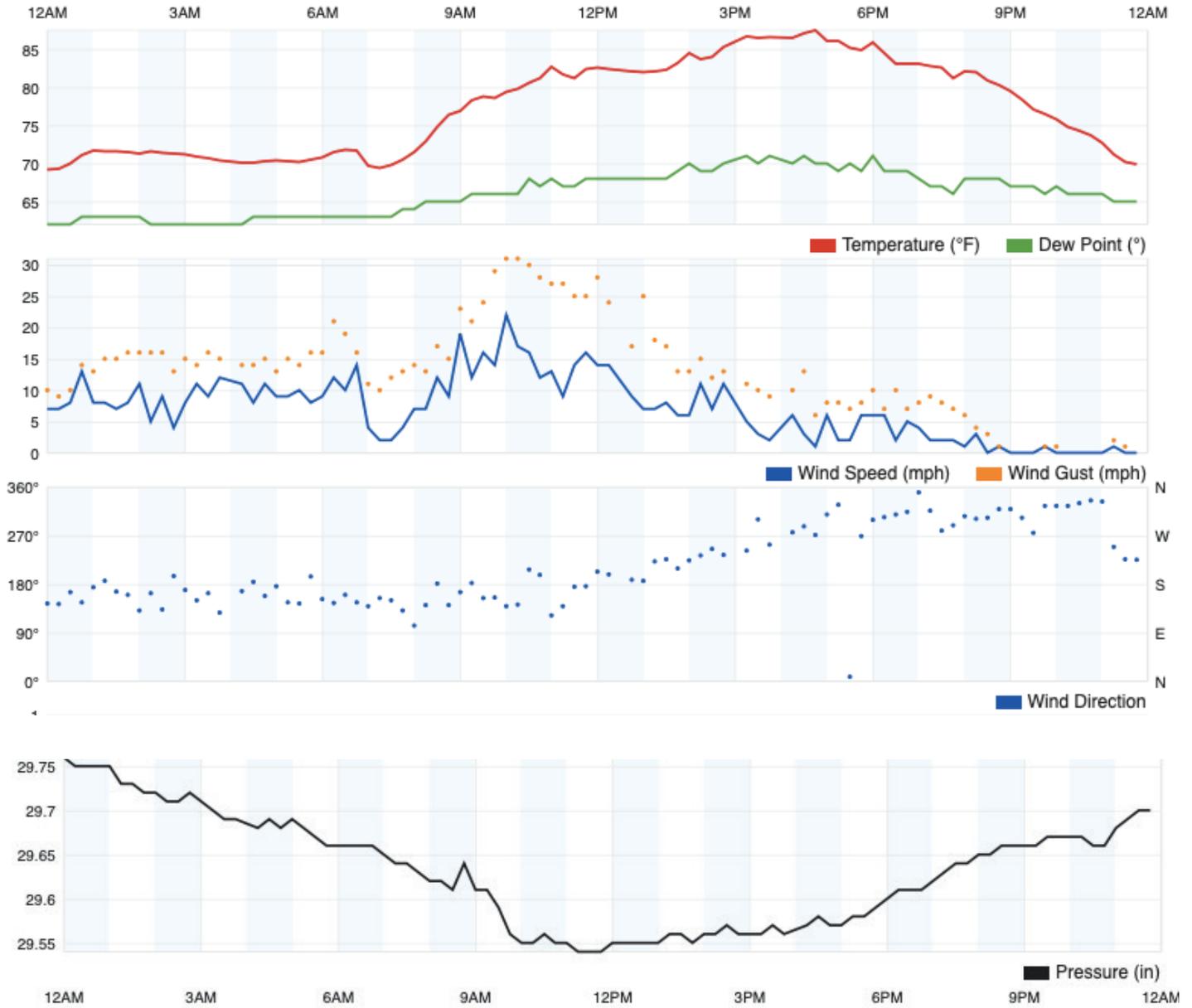
2020 Brown County 4-H Public Presentation Day Contest

Five Brown County 4-H Members participated in our virtual Public Presentation Day Contests. Participants gave demonstrations, illustrated talks, and public speeches, which related to a 4-H project they were enrolled in. Each participant could receive a purple, blue, red and white ribbon placing. Receiving purples were Anna Johnson, Norman Johnson, Alicia Davis, Ashlynn Warrington, and Logan Warrington. They have the option to participate in the South Dakota Public Presentation Contest State Fair over Labor Day weekend.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 13 of 85

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 14 of 85

Today



Showers Likely then Mostly Sunny

High: 78 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 53 °F

Wednesday



Sunny

High: 85 °F

Wednesday Night



Mostly Clear then Slight Chance T-storms

Low: 61 °F

Thursday



Sunny

High: 89 °F

Today:
Showers/tstorms mainly this morning
Highs 70-80°F

Wednesday:
Partly cloudy and warmer
Highs 76-87°F

Thursday:
Partly Sunny with isolated showers/tstorms
Very warm
Highs 81-91°F

Graphic Created
7/14/2020 3:23 AM

Scattered showers and thunderstorms are expected across the area, especially this morning. More showers are possible come Thursday. Wednesday looks mainly dry. Temperatures will gradually climb through Thursday. #sdwx #mnwx

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 15 of 85

Today in Weather History

July 14, 1970: A line of severe thunderstorms raced across southeast South Dakota into northwest Iowa causing extensive damage. The line of storms produced widespread high winds and large hail. The hail averaged quarter to hen egg size although some areas received stones the size of softballs and winds over 70 mph were not uncommon. The most extensive damage from the storms extended from Mitchell through Parker to near Beresford. Spotty areas reported 100% crop damage. In Lincoln County, the hail caused an estimated \$8 million in crop damage and \$2 million in property damage. In the town of Marion, the hail was so large that it punched holes in some roofs.

July 14, 2009: A line of storms moving across north-central South Dakota during the early morning hours on the 14th became heavy rainfall producing thunderstorms for northeastern South Dakota. Rainfall amounts of 2 to 5 inches caused mainly localized flooding. However in Grant County, a 20 foot wide by a 17-foot deep culvert on 468th Avenue in Twin Brooks was washed away by flash flooding. The Grant County Highway Department said fixing the channel would cost more than \$40,000.

1995: On the evening of Friday, July 14th, thunderstorms producing severe weather were occurring over Upper Michigan and adjacent portions of Ontario near Sault Saint Marie. By late evening the storms had evolved into a bowing line just northwest of the Mackinac Bridge. At 10:17 PM EDT, the thunderstorm gust front hit the bridge, and a gust to 90 mph was measured. Sustained winds of 80 mph continued on the bridge for ten more minutes. Thus began the intense "Ontario-Adirondacks Derecho" that would cause hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of damage, several deaths, and many injuries as it raced southeast from the northern Great Lakes to the Atlantic coast.

2006: Tropical Storm Bilis tracks across northern Taiwan before making landfall in southeastern China's Fujian province with maximum sustained winds near 65 mph. The storm causes at least 575 deaths in Fujian, Guangdong, and Hunan provinces and direct economic losses near \$3.3 billion.

1936 - Extreme heat prevailed across the central U.S. as severe drought raged from Texas to the Dakotas. Record high temperatures were established in sixteen states that summer, including readings as high as 120 degrees in the Great Plains Region. On this particular date, afternoon highs for 113 stations across the state of Iowa averaged 108.7 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1957 - Hail, with some stones up to an inch in diameter, covered the ground to a depth of three inches ruining crops in the Bath area of New Hampshire. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Severe thunderstorms in Iowa produced eight inches of golf ball size hail near Grafton, IA, completely stripping corn stalks in the area. Hail caused more than a million dollars damage to crops in Worth County and Mitchell County, and another million dollars damage in Ada County and Crawford County. Unseasonably cool weather prevailed in the Great Plains Region. Eight cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Duluth, MN, with a reading of 37 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Severe thunderstorms produced large hail and damaging winds in the Northern Atlantic Coast Region during the afternoon and evening hours. Thunderstorms also spawned a rather strong tornado near Westtown, NY, and drenched Agawam, MA, with four inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern New Mexico to central Nebraska. One hundred soldiers were injured by flying debris and collapsing tents during a thunderstorm near Trinidad, CO. Thunderstorms in Colorado produced wind gusts to 77 mph at La Junta. Early morning thunderstorms produced torrential rains over parts of Louisiana, with 7.50 inches at Carencro, and 5.85 inches at Morgan City. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2005 - Death Valley had 7 consecutive days (July 14-20) with high temperatures equal to or above 125 degrees.

Groton Daily Independent

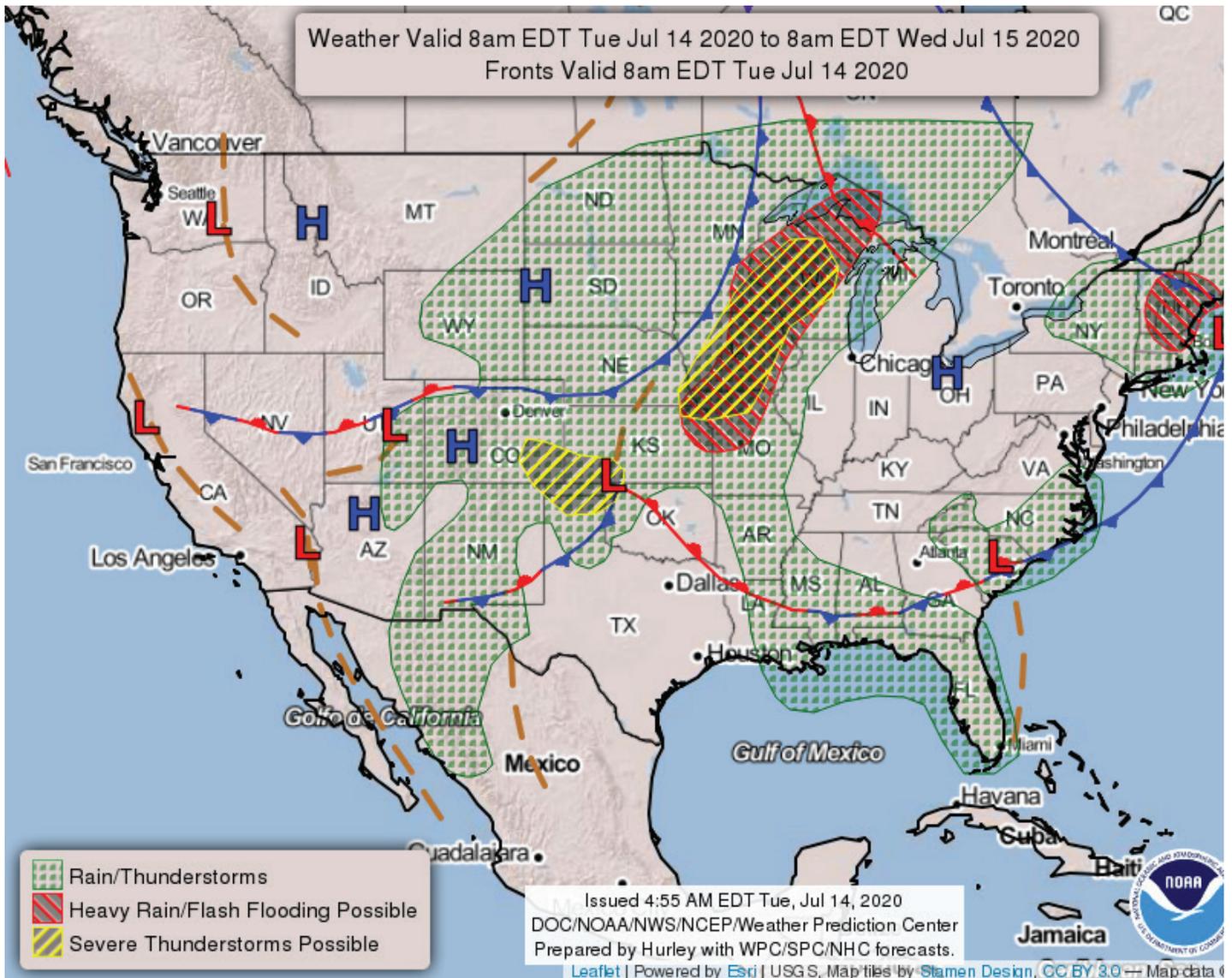
Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 16 of 85

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 88 °F at 4:40 PM
Low Temp: 69 °F at 12:00 AM
Wind: 31 mph at 9:56 AM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 106° in 1931, 1901
Record Low: 42° in 1967
Average High: 84°F
Average Low: 59°F
Average Precip in July.: 1.39
Precip to date in July.: 0.32
Average Precip to date: 12.23
Precip Year to Date: 8.64
Sunset Tonight: 9:19 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:00 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 17 of 85



HELP NEEDED!

One of the great American authors, Alex Haley, had a picture on a wall in his office that attracted much attention. It always aroused the interest of his visitors because no one could understand the significance of the photograph to the writer.

On one occasion, a visitor with a perplexed look on his face asked, "Alex, why do you have a picture of a turtle sitting on the top of a fence post?"

Haley replied, "I try to remember how this turtle - me - got on the top of that post."

Sometimes, perhaps most of the time for some of us, it is difficult to admit that if it were not for the help of others, we would not be where we are. From our earliest moments until this present hour, we are encouraged by nearly everyone to believe that "You can do it by yourself!"

Not so! We all need the help of others. Consider two words of advice from God. Speaking through the prophet Isaiah He said, "Encourage one another with the words, 'Be strong!'"

Each day God brings individuals into our lives who need help, encouragement, inspiration, an act of kindness, words of sympathy, or a look of empathy. He does this so we can help Him do His work in His world. It's easy to encourage others by simply smiling and saying, "Be strong."

Living life as one of Christ's disciples, and doing the will of God, is to become a voice through which He speaks words of encouragement and a hand that He uses to help others.

Blessed is the Christian who enables others to "be strong!"

Prayer: Father, may we take seriously the fact that You expect us to look to You for guidance and then reach out to others in love and mercy to show Your grace. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today : Everyone encourage one another with the words, "Be strong." Isaiah 41:6

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 18 of 85

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

South Dakota reports no surge after Independence Day parties

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials on Monday said they have not seen an uptick in community spread of the coronavirus after thousands of people gathered for Independence Day celebrations in the western part of the state.

Gov. Kristi Noem has encouraged public gatherings in recent weeks, holding an outdoor fireworks celebration without social distancing at Mount Rushmore on July 3 and pushing for a Professional Bull Riders competition that allowed fans into a Sioux Falls arena this weekend. She even appeared at that event on horseback, wielding the American flag.

While other states in the South and Midwest have broken records in the number of daily cases reported, South Dakota's report of 25 cases was one of the lowest since April. There are currently 63 people hospitalized with the virus, a number that Noem has said drives her coronavirus strategy.

The state says 7,524 people have tested positive for the coronavirus. Almost 87% of those people have recovered, but 109 have died.

As the number of hospitalizations declined in recent weeks, the Republican governor has been emboldened to cast doubt on the science behind wearing masks to prevent transmission of the coronavirus. She called it "very mixed" last week.

Noem's Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon lent some support to Noem's doubts on masks while also pointing to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that people wear cloth masks when in public or in close proximity to people outside their household. Near the beginning of the pandemic, officials gave conflicting advice on masks, and the issue has opened up a political divide among many Americans.

"The science is not unequivocal about mask-wearing," Malsam-Rysdon said. "There are differing opinions, but right now the consensus from CDC is that mask-wearing is appropriate in certain circumstances."

A number of scientific studies, experiments and analyses indicate wearing a mask helps block the respiratory droplets that carry coronaviruses, but the current research is missing randomized control trials — considered the gold standard of scientific proof. Those types of experiments are underway in Canada and Denmark, in which masks are tested in randomly assigned groups of nurses and the general public.

Studies have also shown that wide-spread mask-wearing is associated with slowing the spread of COVID-19 infections. An analysis published in a leading medical journal last month reviewed 172 studies and found masks and social distancing can help control the coronavirus but hand washing and other measures are still needed.

When asked about the state's advice on wearing masks, Malsam-Rysdon pointed back to the Department of Health's website for coronavirus information. The website makes it clear that masks are not required but advises people to consider the CDC recommendation to wear them in public. One document from the Department of Health's website says to "wear a mask when feasible" during social activities.

The South Dakota State Medical Association has also urged people to wear a mask when they can't avoid being close to people in public.

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

Madison Daily Leader, July 8

Unemployment fund is good use of money

Gov. Kristi Noem has announced that the state is using a portion of Coronavirus Relief Fund money that came from the federal government to replenish the South Dakota Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund.

The move is an excellent use of coronavirus funds. The money was allocated to each of the states to

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 20 of 85

help with unexpected costs associated with the coronavirus pandemic. There is still widespread vagueness about what the funds can specifically be used for, but the main boundaries are that the expense has to be unbudgeted (unexpected) and occurred so far this year.

Gov. Noem has already indicated she will allocate some of the funds to local governments to help with their unexpected expenses. She is waiting for clarity on other uses.

The state unemployment trust fund is a well-designed program, in our opinion, especially given our long history of low unemployment. It charges a small fee to every South Dakota employer, then pays workers who lose their jobs for a fixed time based on their wage rate. Employers who have a history of laying off employees pay a higher fee.

During good times, the fund is considered full (by a formula) and employers don't need to pay in. When the fund is reduced during recessions, employers are charged again to rebuild the balance.

Replenishing the unemployment fund fits the requirements well, and the amount is only \$45.6 million from a total federal allocation of \$1.2 billion. Employers won't have to face additional fees as the economy recovers.

We're eagerly awaiting to see how the state spends the rest of the coronavirus funds. So far, the decisions are off to a good start.

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, July 9

An oasis of normality

Well, at least the official midpoint of this year from hell found me on familiar ground. That was the Fourth of July in my hometown, and for one of the very few times in 2020, most everything seemed as it should be, or at least as close as it could be.

I can't stress enough just how good it felt, if only for a couple of days.

The Independence Day holiday saw the nights in Menno once again bursting with fireworks and joy. From the baseball field to the neighborhood streets, the explosive evidence of the season was everywhere. (I also heard the first cicadas of the summer screeching on the afternoon of the Fourth — right on time.)

And yes, it DID feel good, because at least it gave me a moment of familiarity before we headed into the second half of a dreary year that has already seemed like it's lasted a decade.

There's no need here to tell you why that's so. We've been living it since late winter as so much of what's normal and expected and planned in our lives has tumbled to the wayside in one manner or another. Even little things like going to a store or greeting a friend face to face have turned into nervous adventures.

People often refer to the "new normal" of these COVID-19 times, and in fact, you DO get used to wearing masks (although I'll never get used to having to debate this practice), scrubbing your hands and staying socially distant. You also start paying particular attention to anyone who's coughing — especially if it's you — and wondering if, for example, it's OK to keep that doctor's appointment that, really, you could just as easily put off until you're SURE the pandemic situation is better. And for kids in school, I imagine they grew used to NOT being in school, where they haven't been physically since mid-March, but they may also be looking forward already to finally getting back into classrooms with their friends and teachers, and getting some smoother structure back into their educational endeavors.

Overall, though, this "new normal" leaves a lot to be desired.

That's why the Fourth of July felt like an oasis of normality for me. I was back in familiar territory. Granted, I wasn't shooting photos of the Yankton fireworks display, which didn't happen, but the Menno display filled in just fine. Apart from that, there was family around and a chance to catch a breath or two after what has seemed like one long work shift since March.

It's the kind of thing each of us needs in these uncertain days: something certain and familiar, a comfortable North Star to help guide us through the night, something we can recognize as old, comfortable and normal.

Of course, this mid-year oasis wasn't completely normal; the pandemic saw to that. Menno's annual celebration was supposed to feature an all-school reunion, but it was canceled. There are usually some familiar faces back home every Fourth, but not so much this year. There was the traditional parade that,

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 21 of 85

this time, tried to promote social distancing — with so-so success — and I was wearing a mask during that event, which was sometimes hot but otherwise bearable.

Still, it was all familiar enough to make me feel slightly saner during this insane year, at least for a while.

However, now comes the second half of 2020, and that momentary normality has vanished. Yankton's usually hectic summer schedule (which tends to slow down a bit in July anyway, a period I refer to at work as the "summer doldrums") has nearly — but not completely — ground to a halt: no Riverboat Days, no Rock 'N' Rumble, no Music at the Meridian, etc., etc., etc. Now, fall events are starting to take hits — the Harvest Halloween Festival and Menno's Octoberfest have already been scratched. And we have no idea what schools will be doing a month from now, when fall practices are supposed to begin and classrooms will be nearly ready to, in theory, open.

We face a lot of questions — and a lot of things that, because of these times, simply are not normal. And the current COVID indicators are suggesting more adventures ahead, unfortunately. (And it's also an election year, which always delivers its own special brand of mind-numbing bedlam.)

That's why I strongly and wearily suspect the energizing memory of this Fourth of July, in all its wonderfully recognizable normality, may have to sustain me for quite a while.

Sioux Falls schools develop plans for returning students

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls schools are finalizing plans for returning students to their classrooms next month with modifications to prevent contracting the coronavirus. The Sioux Falls School Board is to consider the plan and other options at a meeting Monday.

Planners say classes are to begin Aug. 27 with the "full intention" of holding them in person. The board is to hear about teaching plans, personal protective equipment guidelines and other changes in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Argus Leader reports planning members consulted teachers, parents, school administrators, Avera and Sanford pediatric infectious disease doctors and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Four different plans were developed based on the level resurgence of the coronavirus at the time.

The plans include traditional in-person learning and modified on-campus learning with students reporting to school one or two days a week.

Other options are remote learning due to a resurgence of the coronavirus and a virtual learning academy in which students who have concerns about returning to in-person classes can enroll in the academy, where all instruction is online.

North Dakota urges court to halt Dakota Access line shutdown

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — North Dakota is urging a federal appeals court to block a judge's order to shut down the Dakota Access Pipeline.

North Dakota Solicitor General Matt Sagsveen filed a document Monday supporting operator Energy Transfer's efforts to keep the oil line open while the Texas-based company appeals.

Sagsveen argued a shutdown will devastate the oil industry and cost North Dakota billions of dollars in tax revenue, hurting programs and residents.

"These definite consequences vastly outweigh the entirely speculative potential harm of a spill or leak while the (study) proceeds," Sagsveen wrote.

Last week U.S. District Judge James Boasberg ordered the pipeline shut down by Aug. 5 for an additional environmental assessment more than three years after it began pumping oil. Boasberg later rejected a request by Energy Transfer to halt his order to shut down the pipeline during the lengthy environmental review.

Federal officials who approved the pipeline's permit to cross the Missouri River notified the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit that they also plan to oppose the judge's order, The Bismarck Tribune reported.

Boasberg previously ordered the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct an environmental review that

is expected to take more than a year. Department of Justice attorneys representing the Corps notified Boasberg on Monday that the government also plans to appeal his orders.

Energy Transfer plans to appeal. In the meantime, the company is asking the appeals court to allow the pipeline to continue operating. Energy Transfer estimates it would take three months to empty the pipeline of oil and complete steps to preserve it for future use.

The line was the subject of months of protests in 2016 and 2017, sometimes violent, during its construction near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border. The tribe took legal action against the pipeline even after it began carrying oil from North Dakota across South Dakota and Iowa and to a shipping point in Illinois in June 2017.

The \$3.8 billion, 1,172-mile (1,886 kilometer) pipeline crosses beneath the Missouri River, just north of the reservation. The tribe draws its water from the river and has concerns about pollution. The company maintains the line is safe.

UK to exclude Huawei from role in high-speed phone network

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's government on Tuesday backtracked on plans to give Chinese telecommunications company Huawei a limited role in the U.K.'s new high-speed mobile phone network in a decision with broad implications for relations between London and Beijing.

Britain imposed the ban after the U.S. threatened to sever an intelligence-sharing arrangement because of concerns Huawei equipment could allow the Chinese government to infiltrate U.K. networks.

U.K. Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden gave telecoms operators until 2027 to remove Huawei equipment already in Britain's 5G network.

"This has not been an easy decision, but it is the right one," he said.

He said that from the end of this year, telecoms operators mustn't buy any 5G equipment from Huawei.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson was under pressure from rebels in his own Conservative Party who criticized China's new Hong Kong security law and its treatment of ethnic Uighurs, as well as Huawei's links to the Chinese government. Ten Conservative lawmakers sent a letter to Johnson demanding that he remove Huawei from "the UK's critical national infrastructure."

Johnson in January sought to balance economic and security pressures by agreeing to give Huawei a limited role in Britain's so-called 5G network, excluding the company from core components of the system and restricting its involvement to 35% of the overall project.

But the move set up a diplomatic clash with the Americans, who threatened to cut off security cooperation unless Britain dumped Huawei. Amid continued pressure to remove Huawei from communication networks entirely, the U.S. in May imposed new sanctions that will bar companies around the world from using American-made machinery or software to produce chips for the Chinese company.

The back and forth has put Huawei at the vortex of tensions between China and Britain.

Last fall, the U.K. called on China to give the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights free access to the Xinjiang region, where most of the country's Uighur people live.

More recently, Johnson's government has criticized China's decision to impose a sweeping new national security law on Hong Kong. Britain accused the Beijing government of a serious breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration under which the U.K. returned control of Hong Kong to China in 1997, and announced it would open a special route to citizenship for up to 3 million eligible residents of the city.

China's ambassador to Britain, Liu Xiaoming, last week decried what he described as "gross interference" in Chinese affairs.

"Britain can only be great," he said, when it has an independent foreign policy, adding that it sets a bad precedent to "make your policy in the morning and change it in evening."

"It also sends out a very bad message to the China business community," Liu said, suggesting Chinese companies might think twice about investing in Britain. "They are all watching how you handle Huawei."

Rana Mitter, an Oxford University history professor specializing in China, said that the security law —

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 23 of 85

combined with broader resentment about the way China handled information about the coronavirus — created increased wariness among Britain's politicians and the public.

But for China, it is the way Britain has handled the Huawei issue that is the major problem. Even if Britain decides that buying Huawei isn't a good idea, this could have been done more discreetly, Mitter said.

"There is a sense, I suspect, in Beijing that the Huawei row has made China lose face," he said. "And this is one of the things that clearly does not go down well with China, which is, of course, a proud country, the world's second biggest economy with the capacity to use that economic power when it wants to, and also a country which in general feels on the back foot at the moment because of the COVID pandemic and the world's reaction to that."

Before the decision, Huawei announced that its U.K. chairman would step down early. John Browne's term was due to end in March but ex-boss of energy company BP is now expected to depart in September.

Quarantine loopholes bring fresh efforts to fight outbreaks

By DENNIS PASSA and ELAINE KURTENBACH Associated Press

BRISBANE, Australia (AP) — An Australian state is toughening its punishments for anyone caught violating coronavirus quarantines, including jailing rule breakers for up to six months — a warning that follows rising virus cases worldwide and violations of restrictions that are now being further tightened.

The current set of fines for breaking a mandatory 14-day hotel quarantine for some visitors or lying about their whereabouts "appears not to be enough" in some cases, Queensland state Deputy Premier Steven Miles said.

With higher fines and a threat of six months' imprisonment, "I hope that will demonstrate to the public just how serious we are about enforcing these measures," Miles said.

Queensland shut its state borders to successfully contain the coronavirus outbreak, but reopened to all but residents of Victoria, Australia's worst affected region, two weeks ago.

The city of Melbourne in Victoria recorded 270 new coronavirus infections overnight, with more than 4,000 cases now active across the state. Melbourne is one week into a six-week lockdown in an attempt to stop a spike in new cases there.

Health experts have warned that outbreaks that had been brought under control with shutdowns and other forms of social distancing were likely to flare again as precautions were relaxed.

Disney officials announced that Hong Kong Disneyland Park is closing Wednesday until further notice following the city's decision to ban public gatherings of more than four people to combat newly spreading infections.

Hong Kong's leader, Carrie Lam, announced new coronavirus-related restrictions on Monday after 41 out of 52 newly reported infections were locally transmitted cases. Hong Kong has reported 250 new cases since July 6. Lam urged the private sector to put in place work-from-home arrangements for employees.

In Thailand, where there have been no reports of locally transmitted cases for seven weeks, authorities have revised rules governing visitors from abroad after a breakdown in screening led to two infected foreigners posing a possible risk to public health.

The government said Tuesday that diplomats will be asked to stay in state-supervised quarantine for 14 days, instead of self-isolating. And it is postponing the recently allowed entry of some foreign visitors so procedures can be changed.

"I am angry because this shouldn't happen. They should have been quarantined, same as Thais who travel back have to be quarantined for 14 days. Why should this group of people get the privilege to skip quarantine?" said Panpen Sakulkru, a company manager who was among hundreds who lined up for virus tests in the Thai city of Rayong on Tuesday.

The cases that caused concern involved a member of an Egyptian military group and the young daughter of a foreign diplomat whose family returned from Sudan. Thai authorities revoked landing permission for eight Egyptian flights, and some schools and a mall were closed in the eastern province where the Egyptian man may have had contacts.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 24 of 85

The new coronavirus first found in China late last year has infected 13.1 million people worldwide and killed more than 573,000, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. The actual numbers are thought to be much higher due to limited testing and the number of people who don't show symptoms.

India, which has the third-most cases after the U.S. and Brazil, was rapidly nearing 1 million cases with a jump of more than 28,000 reported Tuesday. It now has more than 906,000 and accumulated more than 100,000 in just four days.

Its nationwide lockdown has largely ended, but the recent spikes have prompted several big cities to reimpose partial lockdowns. A 10-day lockdown that began Tuesday in the southern city of Pune will allow only essential businesses such as milk shops, pharmacies, clinics and emergency services to open.

The ebb and flow of the pandemic has governments scrambling to quash new outbreaks while attempting to salvage economies from the devastation of long shutdowns and travel restrictions.

South Africa imposed tighter restrictions including a ban on alcohol sales, mandatory face masks in public places and an overnight curfew, as a surge in new infections pushed it into the 10 worst-affected countries with nearly 300,000 confirmed cases, according to the Johns Hopkins tally.

In the U.S., flaring outbreaks have led officials in some areas to mandate mask wearing and close down bars and some other businesses to once again try to bring the pandemic under control.

Hawaii's governor pushed back by another month plans to waive a 14-day quarantine requirement for out-of-state travelers who test negative for COVID-19.

"I know that this increases the burden on businesses here in the islands, especially small businesses. But we do believe that it is time to continue to protect the health and safety of our community," Gov. David Ige told reporters. He cited rising numbers of local cases, "uncontrolled" outbreaks in several U.S. mainland states and a shortage of testing supplies.

The state has one of the lowest infection rates in the U.S., with 1,243 cases. Its quarantine requirement has virtually shut down tourism since it took effect in late March, pushing the unemployment rate in the islands to 22.6%, the second highest in the U.S.

Associated Press reporters from around the world contributed.

Kurtenbach reported from Mito, Japan.

UK demands the public wear face coverings in shops

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's government will demand people wear face coverings in shops as it seeks to clarify its message after weeks of prevarication amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock is expected to tell the House of Commons on Tuesday that anyone failing to comply with the order could face a fine of up to 100 pounds (\$125). The order comes into effect on July 24, giving shops and the police time to prepare.

Many European nations, including Germany, Spain, Italy and Greece, already require masks to be worn in enclosed spaces.

Britain, which has reported one of the world's highest numbers of coronavirus cases and deaths, had taken a more relaxed attitude, recommending masks but not requiring them — at least until now.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who in the spring spent a week in the hospital being treated for COVID-19, had not been seen in public in a mask until last week. On Monday morning, he urged people to wear them. Monday evening, his government announced it would be compulsory.

The authorities are hoping the public will simply comply. London Mayor Sadiq Khan told the BBC he believed that "Londoners by and large will follow the rules," without too much need for the police.

"The problem is not the issue of enforcement, the problem is the mixed messages and the confused communications," Khan said.

Environment Secretary George Eustice also did not rule out the possibility that mandatory face coverings

would become compulsory in offices and other workplaces in the future. He told the BBC on Tuesday that the government was taking "one step at a time and we've taken the view in this next step that we should make it mandatory in retail environments."

The new requirement only applies to in England. Scotland has already made masks mandatory in stores.

A growing body of evidence suggests wearing face coverings brings some benefit in preventing the spread of the virus.

China accuses US of sowing discord in South China Sea

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — The Trump administration's rejection of broad Chinese claims to much of the South China Sea came across in Asia as an election-year political move, with some appealing for calm amid fears of greater tensions.

China accused the U.S. on Tuesday of trying to sow discord between China and the Southeast Asian countries with which it has long-standing territorial disputes in waters that are both a vital international shipping lane and home to valuable fisheries.

"The United States is not a country directly involved in the disputes. However, it has kept interfering in the issue," the Chinese Embassy in Washington said on its website. "Under the pretext of preserving stability, it is flexing muscles, stirring up tension and inciting confrontation in the region."

Other governments avoided direct comment on the U.S. announcement. The Philippine presidential spokesperson, Harry Roque, noted that the two powers would woo his country as they escalate their rivalry, but "what is important now is to prioritize the implementation and crafting of a code of conduct to prevent tension in that area."

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, in a statement released Monday, said the U.S. now regards virtually all Chinese maritime claims outside its internationally recognized waters to be illegitimate. The new position does not cover land features above sea level, which are considered to be "territorial" in nature.

Previously, the U.S. had only insisted that maritime disputes between China and its smaller neighbors be resolved peacefully through U.N.-backed arbitration.

Pompeo's statement was a major shift in America's South China Sea policy, said Zhu Feng, the director of a South China Sea studies center at Nanjing University. He said other countries challenging China's claims may take a more aggressive stance because of America's openly stated support.

"The U.S. didn't use to comment on the sovereignty issue in the South China Sea, because it itself is not a claimant," Zhu said. "But this time it has made itself into a judge or arbiter. It will bring new instability and tension."

He advised against a strong response from China, saying that current U.S. policy is being driven in a significant way by President Donald Trump's reelection considerations.

"Trump's current China policy is insane," Zhu said. "He is making the China issue the most important topic for his election to cover his failure in preventing the epidemic and to divert public attention. I have no idea how far he will go in fully utilizing the China issue."

An Indonesian analyst agreed that the announcement was a political one to divert attention from Trump's weaknesses at home. A.A. Banyu Perwita, an international relations professor at President University, predicted it would focus more attention on the Indo-Pacific corridor but not have dramatic consequences.

"It will be not more than a political diplomatic statement," he said, adding that "we need to make the atmosphere calm now. The best position for all now is the current status quo."

James Chin, head of the Asia Institute at the University of Tasmania in Australia, said the U.S. stance was nothing new because it has always rejected China's "nine-dash line," as its claim to the South China Sea is known.

"What is new is that Trump has sort of made the South China Sea a new focus point for his confrontation with China," he said.

Both Indonesia and the Philippines joined Pompeo in calling on China to abide by an international arbi-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 26 of 85

tration court ruling in 2016 that disqualified many of China's claims.

Malaysia's foreign ministry declined to comment.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian reiterated China's position that it has had effective jurisdiction over the islands, reefs and waters of the South China Sea for more than 1,000 years.

He said at a daily briefing Tuesday that China is not seeking to build a maritime empire.

China's emergence as a military power and its ambitions to extend its offshore reach have come into conflict with the U.S., which has been the dominant naval power in the western Pacific in the post-World War II period.

Two U.S. aircraft carriers drilled together in the South China Sea last week in a show of force.

Zhao, in a lengthy response to Pompeo's statement, criticized America's frequent dispatch of "large-scale advanced military vessels and aircraft" to the waters.

"The U.S. is indeed a troublemaker that undermines regional peace and stability," he said.

Associated Press researcher Yu Bing in Beijing and writers Jim Gomez in Manila, Philippines, Edna Tarigan in Jakarta, Indonesia, and Eileen Ng in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, contributed to this report.

5 things to know 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. **DEATH PENALTY GETS GREEN LIGHT** The Trump administration was moving ahead early Tuesday with the execution of the first federal prison inmate in 17 years after a divided Supreme Court reversed lower courts and ruled federal executions could proceed.

2. **FINDING A JOB CAN BE HARD WORK** A new White House-backed ad campaign aims to encourage people who are unemployed or unhappy in their jobs or careers to go out and "find something new."

3. **STRAINED DIPLOMACY IN SOUTH CHINA SEA** China is accusing the U.S. of attempting to sow discord between Beijing and the Southeast Asian countries with which it has territorial disputes.

4. **LIBERAL CALIFORNIA CITY'S POLICE REFORM** Berkeley is considering a proposal to shift traffic enforcement from armed police to unarmed city workers in a bid to curb racial profiling and reduce law enforcement encounters that can turn deadly, especially for Black drivers.

5. **MONIKER MODIFICATIONS** Now that the Washington Redskins have dropped their nickname, the spotlight has moved to other sports franchises, like the Cleveland Indians, to make changes amid a nationwide movement calling for racial justice.

Small businesses worldwide fight for survival amid pandemic

By ADAM GELLER AP National Writer

Hour after hour in the dark, Chander Shekhar's mind raced ahead to morning.

More than three months had dragged by since the coronavirus forced Shekhar to shut down his business — a narrow, second-floor shop racked with vibrantly colored saris, on a block in New York's Jackson Heights neighborhood once thronged with South Asian immigrant shoppers. Today, finally, he and other merchants were allowed to reopen their doors.

But they were returning to an area where COVID-19 had killed hundreds, leaving sidewalks desolate and storefronts to gather dust. Now fears were fading. But no one knew what lay ahead on this late-June Monday as owners raised the gates at jewelry stores, tandoori restaurants and bridal shops clustered near Roosevelt Avenue's elevated train line. Overnight, the stress had woken Shekhar nine times.

"You cannot tell everybody it's safe to come and buy from us. This is an invisible enemy that nobody can see," said Shekhar, a father of two anxious about the shop's \$6,000 monthly rent. "This is my baby," he said, of the store, Shopno Fashion. "I have worked hard for this for more than 20 years, then I got my shop. It's not easy to leave it."

Amid the deaths of friends and customers, Shekhar is reluctant to complain. And he knows he is not

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 27 of 85

alone. As economies around the world reopen, legions of small businesses that help define and sustain neighborhoods are struggling. The stakes for their survival are high: The U.N. estimates that businesses with fewer than 250 workers account for two-thirds of employment worldwide.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Small businesses around the world are fighting for survival amid the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic. Whether they make it will affect not just local economies but the fabric of communities. Associated Press journalists tell their stories in the series "Small Business Struggles."

In New Orleans, the owner of a gallery and lounge that launched just before the pandemic hit reopened it as a takeout eatery, with himself as the lone employee. In Tokyo, a florist grabbed a lifeline from shut-in customers who bought blossoms to keep their spirits up. In Minneapolis, a dentist who refitted his office to protect patients from infection is starting over after it was destroyed in riots.

All acknowledge that reopening is just the beginning. But it is a critical milestone, nonetheless, a testament to their grit, creativity and no small amount of desperation. It's about finding whatever works, because for now, there is no such thing as business as usual.

Over the years, Stephanie Skoglund invested countless hours of sweat equity renovating what was once Tenino, Washington's general store -- replacing the floors, wiring chandeliers, adding a kitchen. Everything to upgrade the old sandstone building in this long-ago frontier town for use as a wedding hall.

With this year's wedding season approaching, 40 celebrations were already on the calendar at The Vault and its sister facility. Then the coronavirus shut them down.

"We're basically wiped out," Skoglund said.

Skoglund turned off the electric circuits and water lines at both venues. She sold a dance floor for \$1,000 and a large party tent for \$2,600, to help cover her family's bills. Her husband works for her business, so his income is gone, too.

Skoglund was approved for \$3,200 of the nearly \$25,000 she sought from the federal Payroll Protection Program before learning even that wouldn't be coming. Then Washington state halted her unemployment payments as it scrambled to sort out hundreds of millions of dollars in fraudulent claims.

Reopening, if you can call it that, has proved just as tough.

In June, Skoglund started getting calls from people looking to rent tables, chairs and tents for outdoor events, her only revenue so far. She'll host her first wedding in late July, one of three events that remain on the calendar. The hall can seat 299, so with 80 guests expected social distancing rules should not be an issue.

Of 20 couples who had booked weddings through October, eight rescheduled for next year and a dozen canceled. Skoglund wrote letters to say she hopes to refund them eventually; it wouldn't feel right to keep deposits, regardless of language in the contracts.

Once events restart, Skoglund's older children, aged 16 to 25, will pitch in as her staff. She's hoping business solidifies by October. But she and her husband have talked about selling their home and businesses and starting over, if it doesn't.

"I have to start thinking about how to save what I do have and not put myself in a financial position where I lose it," she said. "Just making that decision: what's my next step? That's what keeps me up at night."

--By Gene Johnson in Tenino, Washington

After Beirut went into lockdown in March, Walid Ataya returned to his bakery, pizzeria and wine room each morning, perching on a stool at the sidewalk bar to maintain an outpost of commerce and consider his next moves.

Before the pandemic, Lebanon faced an economic crisis rooted in years of government mismanagement and corruption that had sparked nationwide protests. Ataya, who fled when Israel invaded in the mid-1980s, had no intention of leaving again.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 28 of 85

"Over here in Lebanon, we can deal with crises," said Ataya, whose Bread Republic presides over a busy intersection fronting the swanky Furn al-Hayek neighborhood. "We have been through wars and turmoil. ... So the pandemic came and for us it is just another crisis to overcome."

Bakeries were exempted from closure, so Ataya's expanded beyond bread to sell fresh pasta. He also kept up a limited flower business, only delivering orders and selling bouquets at the bakery.

Ataya kept on 10 of his 40 employees, sending others home at half-pay. Eventually, he let 10 go, recalling the rest at full wages. He negotiated a rent reduction and cut ties with some suppliers when an 85 percent drop in the nation's currency left many accepting only dollars.

When rules were eased in May, he reopened the wine bar and pizzeria, albeit at 30 percent of capacity. At first, no one sat indoors and staff circulated among the tables, spraying disinfectant. Police still fined Ataya for overcrowding at his outdoor tables. He is contesting it in court.

Finally, in early June, restrictions were reduced enough for Ataya to reopen his restaurant across the street from the bakery and pizzeria. Protests had resumed and he had his hands full dealing with government paperwork. Then masked men broke into his office and carried out a safe holding thousands of dollars.

In recent days, though, customers filled the tables outside his businesses.

"We are in the stage of surviving day to day now," Ataya said. "You cannot sit and do nothing. You have to take your chances."

--By Sarah El Deeb in Beirut

When Japanese officials asked people to stay home in March, Shinichiro Hirano cut the hours at Sun Flower Shop, but stayed open.

The blossom-filled store, in a central Tokyo neighborhood bordered by the Sumida River, quickly lost its business making arrangements for restaurant openings and job promotions. Tourists disappeared. The area, adjacent to the Athletes Village built for the Tokyo Olympics, had been expecting a boom, only to see it fizzle when the games were postponed.

Hirano placed colored tape on the floor to encourage social distancing. As pandemic fears soared, he found an audience.

"People were working from home and wanted to cheer themselves up," said Hirano, who estimates 100 customers a day came to the shop. "Some people said they can forget the coronavirus when they come in our store. Flowers can give energy to people."

On June 19, Hirano pulled the tape from the shop's floor, while leaving warning signs up. Officially, the emergency was over, but the challenges continue.

One of the first bouquets he sold in the days afterward was to a customer marking the closing of a nearby restaurant. As other businesses reopen, some have ordered flowers to celebrate. Still, total sales have dropped by up to 20 percent.

Hirano, though, is consistent, returning to the store each day, bowing to customers, donning his favorite New York Yankees cap. Flowers are what he loves, he said.

"As long as you have a store, you have to keep it open," he said. "I never for a moment thought of closing it."

--By Yuri Kageyama in Tokyo

The velvet chairs in DJ Johnson's new NOLA Art Bar were filled with customers sipping cocktails on a mid-March evening when the announcement came: the city had ordered all bars to close. Johnson, who had moved home to New Orleans and invested his savings, turned up the lights, asked everyone to leave and boarded the door.

Six weeks later, though, he adapted to rules that allowed food service businesses to stay open for take-out. His bar hadn't done food. But he started making New Orleans staples like boiled shrimp and oysters, taking orders at a table set up in the gallery's door on St. Claude Avenue. The first day he made \$35.

By late June, he was still not making enough to cover his costs. But he tapped income from rental units he owns to cover bills and to show residents of the Marigny neighborhood that he was there to stay.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 29 of 85

"The more I can get the word out, the better it will be for me when things are able to reopen, post-COVID," he said. "So just weather the storm. Stay open. Let as many people as possible see that you're open."

On June 13, Johnson started seating diners inside the gallery at half capacity. A week later, he restarted construction on a bookstore and coffee shop next door. He's still trying to figure out how to respond to a recent decision by Louisiana's governor to close bars for on-site service, after coronavirus cases spiked. But he's determined to keep going, even if it means going back to selling to passersby at his gallery's door. For motivation, he thinks back to biographies of people like Nelson Mandela, as models for overcoming adversity.

"It's discouraging. But the only thing that kept me going is, there is no quit," he said. "You go until you can't go anymore."

--By Rebecca Santana in New Orleans

For the first few weeks, the hush that settled over Paris as restrictions known as "The Confinement" took hold, provided Shao Lin Tia with some much-prized rest.

Up until then, Tia had been working feverishly at Ginza, the pan-Asian restaurant she and her husband run, filling in for a chef who had left a few months earlier. That came not long after the couple opened a Thai restaurant next door on Rue Daguerre, a street near the city's famed catacombs that hosts a classic Paris market district of cheese shops, florists and cafes.

With both restaurants closed, the Tias had unexpected time to spend with their three children. The family worked their way through the restaurants' food stocks to limit household spending. And the couple took the government at its word that commercial rents would be frozen and stopped payments.

France exempted small businesses in the restaurant, tourism, sports and culture sectors from social security contributions and reimbursed employers about 84% of net salaries. But with no money coming in and expenses looming, the time off began to weigh on the couple's peace of mind.

"The government doesn't give anything for free," Tia said.

Finally, in late April, the rules relaxed enough for the Tias to set up a takeout window. But with Parisians limited to a single outing a day, each requiring a timestamped authorization form, Daguerre emptied early, limiting the dinner trade to just two hours.

In recent weeks, Tia has added a few outdoor tables. But sales remain 30 percent lower than at this time last year, despite unusually beautiful weather. Many neighborhood residents left the city for second homes when the lockdown began and likely will not return until September.

Tia worries that as the government stops covering salaries in coming months, a wave of layoffs could increase pressure on businesses like hers.

"We'll never catch up, never in our lives," she said. "And the hardest is yet to come."

--By Lori Hinnant in Paris

Almost as soon as the pandemic forced Ali Barbarawi to close his Minneapolis dental practice, he began laying a path to reopening.

Experts deemed dental offices as high risks for transmitting infection. So Barbarawi went online to speak with patients of his Chicago Lake Family Dental practice, limiting in-person visits to those with emergencies.

In the meantime, he installed plexiglass shields to limit the potential for airborne spread. He replaced the office carpet with hard flooring to make it easier to sanitize. And he ordered masks, face shields and gowns for staff at the office a block north of Lake Street, a commercial corridor spanning south Minneapolis that has long been home to scores of immigrant- and minority-owned businesses.

When Minnesota officials announced the lifting of some restrictions, Barbarawi made plans for a June 1 reopening. Then, with just a few days to go, protests over the killing of George Floyd spread through the neighborhood.

Sitting at home, eyeing the office security camera on his cellphone, he watched as people broke into

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 30 of 85

the practice and destroyed his equipment. Soon after police told him they would be unable to respond to the scene, he saw the building go up in flames.

"Why a dental office?" he thought. "Why us?"

Barbarawi said, at most, insurance will cover half of what he'll need to rebuild. On the advice of colleagues, he started a GoFundMe campaign, to help bridge the gap.

The destruction is a loss not just for him, but for his staff and patients, he said. But he's determined to rebuild, along with the larger community. Reopening, though, is four to six months away.

--By Mohamed Ibrahim in Minneapolis

In 15 years as a bookseller in east London, Jane Howe never saw the need for a website.

On weekends, shoppers packed the tidy Broadway Bookshop with more often waiting outside, drawn by the store's personalized service.

"I love talking to people (about) what they read and what I read, and swap ideas," Howe said. "I think of it as a dinner table and I lay everything out, these delicious dishes for people to take and try ... It's going to be very difficult to replace online."

The coronavirus didn't leave her much choice.

With foot traffic on the Broadway Market way down and distancing rules in place, Howe decided it made little sense to reopen to customers. She let go of three part-time staffers, tried to negotiate a rent reduction, and borrowed 50,000 pounds from the government.

"If the business fails, how am I going to pay it back? It's a dicey situation," she said.

In mid-June, she launched a website, trying to replicate the interaction that made the brick-and-mortar store special. Loyal customers have been placing orders. Still, in the first week, the site took in just 28 percent of what the store netted before the pandemic.

Howe, who had been planning to retire in a few years, reminds herself that she's a newbie at online commerce. In early July, she began selling books from the store's doorstep, without letting customers inside.

"I'm going to give it my best shot for the next 18 months and then I don't know what will happen after that if we don't break even," she said. "I'm hoping we come out of this in a year's time...all I can do is hope we will."

--By Sylvia Hui in London

Two days before Zakaria Masud reopened his travel agency and money transfer shop in New York's Jackson Heights, he turned on the lights to spend a few hours cleaning. Passersby knocked on the window, asking if he was ready for customers.

The store, Digital One, used to sell 40 air tickets a day, but hadn't sold one in months. Masud's other business, a Bengali newspaper called Weekly Ajkal, had been forced from its office by fire. He worried about getting sick, but reopening could not come soon enough.

By the fourth night back, a half dozen customers lined up at the counter, separated from Masud and his staff by new plastic shields, to wire money to relatives in Bangladesh. Others filed into a makeshift newspaper office in the basement to buy classified ads, hours before Masud printed for the first time since March.

"I think we're losing 50 percent of the revenue," Masud said. "But I think we can survive."

A few days later and one block over, Chander Shekhar tallied his clothing shop's first day back -- four customers and \$200 in sales. He needed \$700 to cover costs and turn a small profit.

But that would take time, Shekhar reasoned. With people staying home and special events on hold, few needed new saris or jewelry repair. It might take the reassurance of a vaccine to bring shoppers back in full, he said.

Still, it was "not a bad beginning." And for the first night in far too long, that was enough to allow his mind some rest.

What is contact tracing, and how does it work with COVID-19?

By The Associated Press undefined

What is contact tracing, and how does it work with COVID-19?

The goal of contact tracing is to alert people who may have been exposed to someone with the coronavirus, and prevent them from spreading it to others. Health experts say contact tracing is key to containing the virus and allowing places to reopen more safely.

But the process isn't easy.

After a person tests positive for the virus, a contact tracer would get in touch with the person and attempt to determine where they have been and who they were around.

The focus is on close contacts, or people who were within 6 feet of the infected person for at least 10 minutes or so. Those people would then be asked to self-isolate, monitor themselves for symptoms and get tested if needed.

For those showing symptoms, the tracing process would start all over again.

Contact tracing is done in a variety of ways around the world. But a common issue is that determining who a person has been around can get harder as gatherings with friends and family resume, and as bars, restaurants and other places start reopening.

Health officials could also become overwhelmed with cases. In the U.S. for example, local health departments may rely on automated texts to alert people who may have been exposed to an infected person. Health officials prefer to call people if possible because it can help build trust. But some people never return calls or texts.

There's also pressure to act quickly. Ideally, most of a person's contacts would be alerted within a day.

The AP is answering your questions about the coronavirus in this series. Submit them at: FactCheck@AP.org.

Read previous Viral Questions:

Is it safe to visit the dentist during the pandemic?

How risky is dining out during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Does wearing a mask pose any health risks?

Supreme Court clears way for execution of federal prisoner

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (AP) — The Trump administration was moving ahead early Tuesday with the execution of the first federal prison inmate in 17 years after a divided Supreme Court reversed lower courts and ruled federal executions could proceed.

Daniel Lewis Lee had been scheduled to receive a lethal dose of the powerful sedative pentobarbital at 4 p.m. EDT Monday. But a court order issued Monday morning by U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan prevented Lee's execution.

A federal appeals court in Washington refused the administration's plea to step in, leaving the hold in place, before the Supreme Court acted by a 5-4 vote. Still, Lee's lawyers insisted the execution could not go forward after midnight under federal regulations.

With conservatives in the majority, the court said in an unsigned opinion that the prisoners' "executions may proceed as planned." The four liberal justices dissented.

Lee's execution was scheduled for about 4 a.m. EDT Tuesday, according to court papers. There was another delay when the government asked for an emergency ruling related to an old stay that had been issued in the case, but that wasn't expected to derail the execution.

The Bureau of Prisons had continued with preparations even as lower courts paused the proceedings.

Lee, of Yukon, Oklahoma, has had access to social visitors, visited with his spiritual adviser and has been allowed to receive mail, prison officials said. The witnesses for Lee are expected to include three family members, his lawyers and spiritual adviser.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 32 of 85

Lee was convicted in Arkansas of the 1996 killings of gun dealer William Mueller, his wife, Nancy, and her 8-year-old daughter, Sarah Powell.

"The government has been trying to plow forward with these executions despite many unanswered questions about the legality of its new execution protocol," said Shawn Nolan, one of the attorneys for the men facing federal execution.

The decision to move forward during a global health pandemic that has killed more than 135,000 people in the United States and is ravaging prisons nationwide, drew scrutiny from civil rights groups as well as family of Lee's victims.

Some members of the victims' family argued they would be put at high risk for the coronavirus if they had to travel to attend, and sought to delay the execution until it was safer to travel. Those claims were at first granted but also eventually overturned by the Supreme Court.

Critics argue that the government is creating an unnecessary and manufactured urgency for political gain. The developments are also likely to add a new front to the national conversation about criminal justice reform in the lead-up to the 2020 elections.

Two more executions are scheduled this week, though one, Wesley Ira Purkey, was on hold in a separate legal claim. Dustin Lee Honken's execution was scheduled for on Friday.

A fourth man, Keith Dwayne Nelson, is scheduled to be executed in August.

In an interview with The Associated Press last week, Attorney General William Barr said the Justice Department has a duty to carry out the sentences imposed by the courts, including the death penalty, and to bring a sense of closure to the victims and those in the communities where the killings happened.

But relatives of those killed by Lee strongly oppose that idea. They wanted to be present to counter any contention that it was being done on their behalf.

"For us it is a matter of being there and saying, 'This is not being done in our name; we do not want this,'" said relative Monica Veillette.

The federal prison system has struggled in recent months to contain the exploding number of coronavirus cases behind bars. There are currently four confirmed coronavirus cases among inmates at the Terre Haute prison, according to federal statistics, and one inmate there has died.

Barr said he believes the Bureau of Prisons could "carry out these executions without being at risk." The agency has put a number of additional measures in place, including temperature checks and requiring witnesses to wear masks.

But on Sunday, the Justice Department disclosed that a staff member involved in preparing for the execution had tested positive for the coronavirus, but said he had not been in the execution chamber and had not come into contact with anyone on the specialized team sent to handle the execution.

The three men scheduled to be executed this week had also been given execution dates when Barr announced the federal government would resume executions last year, ending an informal moratorium on federal capital punishment as the issue receded from the public domain.

Executions on the federal level have been rare and the government has put to death only three defendants since restoring the federal death penalty in 1988 — most recently in 2003, when Louis Jones was executed for the 1995 kidnapping, rape and murder of a young female soldier.

In 2014, following a botched state execution in Oklahoma, President Barack Obama directed the Justice Department to conduct a broad review of capital punishment and issues surrounding lethal injection drugs.

The attorney general said last July that the Obama-era review had been completed, clearing the way for executions to resume.

Associated Press writers Colleen Long and Mark Sherman in Washington, Michael Tarm in Chicago and Andrew DeMillo in Little Rock, Ark., contributed to this report.

Global vaccine plan may allow rich countries to buy more

By MARIA CHENG AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP) — Politicians and public health leaders have publicly committed to equitably sharing any coronavirus vaccine that works, but the top global initiative to make that happen may allow rich countries to reinforce their own stockpiles while making fewer doses available for poor ones.

Activists warn that without stronger attempts to hold political, pharmaceutical and health leaders accountable, vaccines will be hoarded by rich countries in an unseemly race to inoculate their populations first. After the recent uproar over the United States purchasing a large amount of a new COVID-19 drug, some predict an even more disturbing scenario if a successful vaccine is developed.

Dozens of vaccines are being researched, and some countries — including Britain, France, Germany and the U.S. — already have ordered hundreds of millions of doses before the vaccines are even proven to work.

While no country can afford to buy doses of every potential vaccine candidate, many poor ones can't afford to place such speculative bets at all.

The key initiative to help them is led by Gavi, a public-private partnership started by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that buys vaccines for about 60% of the world's children.

In a document sent to potential donors last month, Gavi said those giving money to its new "Covax Facility" would have "the opportunity to benefit from a larger portfolio of COVID-19 vaccines." Gavi told donor governments that when an effective vaccine is found within its pool of experimental shots, those countries would receive doses for 20% of their population. Those shots could be used as each nation wished.

That means rich countries can sign deals on their own with drugmakers and then also get no-strings-attached allocations from Gavi. The donor countries are "encouraged (but not required) to donate vaccines if they have more than they need," the document says.

"By giving rich countries this backup plan, they're getting their cake and eating it too," said Anna Marriott of Oxfam International. "They may end up buying up all the supply in advance, which then limits what Gavi can distribute to the rest of the world."

Dr. Seth Berkley, Gavi's CEO, said such criticisms were unhelpful.

Right now there's no vaccine for anyone, he said, and "we're trying to solve that problem."

Berkley said Gavi needed to make investing in a global vaccine initiative attractive for rich countries. Gavi would try to persuade those countries that if they ordered vaccines already, they should not attempt to obtain more, he said.

But he acknowledged there was no enforcement mechanism.

"If, at the end of the day, those legal agreements are broken or countries seize assets or don't allow the provision of vaccines (to developing countries), that's a problem," Berkley said.

Gavi asked countries for an expression of intent from those interested in joining its initiative by last Friday. It had expected about four dozen high and middle income countries to sign up, in addition to nearly 90 developing countries.

Dr. Richard Hatchett, CEO of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, which is working with Gavi and others, said they would be talking in the coming weeks with countries who had signed deals with drug companies to secure their own supplies.

One possibility: They might ask countries to contribute their private vaccine stockpile to the global pool in exchange for access to whichever experimental candidate proves effective.

"We'll have to find a solution because some of these arrangements have been made and I think we have to be pragmatic about it," he said.

After a vaccine meeting last month, the African Union said governments should "remove all obstacles" to equal distribution of any successful vaccine.

Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention chief John Nkengasong said Gavi should be "pushing hard" on convincing companies to suspend their intellectual property rights.

"We don't want to find ourselves in the HIV drugs situation," he said, noting that the life-saving drugs were available in developed countries years before they made it to Africa.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 34 of 85

Shabhir Mahdi, principal investigator of the Oxford vaccine trial in South Africa, said it was up to African governments to push for more vaccine-sharing initiatives, rather than depending on pharmaceutical companies to make their products more accessible.

"If you expect it to be the responsibility of industry, you would never get a vaccine onto the African continent," Mahdi said.

Last month, Gavi and CEPI signed a \$750 million deal with AstraZeneca to give developing countries 300 million doses of a shot being developed by Oxford University. But that deal happened after the drug company had already signed contracts with Britain and the U.S., who are first in line to get vaccine deliveries in the fall.

"We are working tirelessly to honor our commitment to ensure broad and equitable access to Oxford's vaccine across the globe and at no profit," said AstraZeneca CEO Pascal Soriot. He said its contract with Gavi and CEPI marked "an important step in helping us supply hundreds of millions of people around the world, including to those in countries with the lowest means."

Chinese President Xi Jinping has also vowed to share any COVID-19 vaccine it develops with African countries — but only once immunization has been completed in China.

The World Health Organization has previously said it hopes to secure 2 billion doses for people in lower-income countries by the end of 2021, including through initiatives like Gavi's. About 85% of the world's 7.8 billion people live in developing countries.

Kate Elder, senior vaccines policy adviser at Doctors Without Borders, said Gavi should try to extract more concessions from pharmaceutical companies, including compelling them to suspend patents on the vaccines.

"Gavi is in a very delicate position because they're completely reliant on the goodwill" of drug companies, said Elder. She said the system of how vaccines are provided to developing countries needed to be overhauled so that it wasn't based on charity, but on public health need.

"We're just having our governments write these blank checks to industry with no conditions attached right now," she said. "Isn't now the time to actually hold them to account and demand we as the public, get more for it?"

Yannis Natsis, a policy official at the European Public Health Alliance, said the last thing on the minds of officials in rich countries is sharing with poor ones.

"Politicians are scared if they don't throw money at companies, the citizens in the next country over will get the vaccines first and they will look very bad," Natsis said.

Cara Anna in Johannesburg contributed to this report.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Foreign workers struggle to return to UAE amid virus limbo

By MALAK HARB Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Eudinson Uy and his pregnant wife planned to return to their home in the United Arab Emirates after a vacation in Armenia, but due to a subsequent lockdown of the Gulf country over the coronavirus pandemic, she ended up giving birth there.

Four months later, the Filipino couple and their baby boy are still stuck in Armenia, like thousands of others now trying to return to the UAE, which relies on a vast foreign workforce.

"I have called the UAE Embassy here in Armenia, immigration in Dubai, and all the hotlines and emergency hotlines given by the UAE, but all of them said they cannot help us even if my wife is pregnant," Uy said.

Before the lockdown, foreign workers who had planned work trips or holidays, or to give birth near family back home, flew out of the United Arab Emirates, a federation of seven emirates home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai. They left behind jobs, families, homes and other responsibilities, to which they had always

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 35 of 85

planned to return.

On July 7, Dubai reopened to tourists. The Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship has meanwhile launched efforts to return an estimated 200,000 people to the UAE, but the rules remain unclear and many have had their applications rejected.

Some members of a Facebook group for foreign workers stranded outside said they applied and got rejected over 10 times. One woman said she applied 21 times.

The rules remain particularly unclear when it comes to newborns. Many new mothers who traveled outside the Emirates to give birth found themselves unable to bring back their children. All UAE residents — including children — require a national ID number to return.

The Emirati government does not issue newborns a national ID until they have a residency visa. But many parents could not get their children visas because Emirati embassies abroad were closed due to the pandemic.

"It's like a Catch-22," said Minna Joseph, who has been in Canada since February. "A lot of mothers just have no idea how to bring back their babies."

Joseph was planning on returning in March but is currently in Vancouver, waiting to bring her newborn son back.

Dubai opening to tourists helped some return, as Westerners and those from the Gulf Cooperation Council states get visas on arrival in the UAE. But others, including those from the Asian nations that supply the Emirates its army of laborers, cleaners, taxi drivers and office workers, need a visa issued beforehand.

Dubai also instituted a new system that links newborn babies to their mothers' IDs. But the UAE's six other emirates all have their own immigration rules. Abu Dhabi, for instance, still has its border closed off to the other emirates, requiring a recent negative COVID-19 test before allowing people in.

When the UAE shut down air travel in March, Emirati citizens abroad were able to come back home, but the foreign workers found it much harder. The government made only occasional exceptions for emergencies and humanitarian cases.

"We felt discouraged about what they told us; that they cannot help us even if my wife is pregnant," Uy said. "We really felt sad seeing that they have repatriated to UAE some people who are not even in an emergency case, like my wife."

Foreign medical workers have been on the front lines of treating COVID-19 patients in the Emirates, which has reported nearly 55,000 cases and at least 333 deaths since the outbreak began.

At one point, the government released a video of Abu Dhabi's powerful crown prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, saying he "teared up" while watching residents singing the UAE national anthem and commended their loyalty.

Many of those stuck outside the country feel their loyalty has not been rewarded.

They include Iqra Kamran, a 25-year-old who recently gave birth to her daughter in Karachi, Pakistan. She and her husband were separated for months after he was allowed to return to their home in the UAE. She was not able to join him with their child until Dubai introduced its new system at the end of June.

"My husband is living in UAE and serving UAE for I think eight years or nine years," she said. "So they should favor us."

Officials in Dubai and at the federal level in Abu Dhabi did not respond to requests for comment.

While countries around the world took unprecedented measures in the wake of the pandemic, shutting their borders to travelers, many have since allowed their residents back.

Joseph is still waiting for that chance in Canada with her newborn and her four-year-old daughter Katalaia. Her husband, Stefan, in Dubai, tries to be part of their lives, despite the 11-hour time difference.

"You know it's really sad. It's really difficult," she said. "Thank God for video calls, it's really great. Stef gets to read Kiki a story every night."

Follow Malak Harb on Twitter at www.twitter.com/malakhARB.

Blame game? Cuomo takes heat over NY nursing home study

By JIM MUSTIAN and BERNARD CONDON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo is facing blistering criticism over an internal report that found no strong link between a controversial state directive that sent thousands of recovering coronavirus patients into nursing homes and some of the nation's deadliest nursing home outbreaks.

Scientists, health care professionals and elected officials assailed the report released last week for failing to address the actual impact of the March 25 order, which by the state's own count ushered more than 6,300 recovering virus patients into nursing homes at the height of the pandemic.

And some accused the state of using the veneer of a scientific study to absolve the Democratic governor by reaching the same conclusion he had been floating for weeks — that unknowingly infected nursing home employees were the main drivers of the outbreaks.

"I think they got a lot of political pushback and so their response was, 'This isn't a problem. Don't worry about it,'" said Rupak Shivakoti, an epidemiologist at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health.

"It seems like the Department of Health is trying to justify what was an untenable policy," added Charlene Harrington, a professor emerita of nursing and sociology at the University of California at San Francisco.

Cuomo, who has been praised for leadership that helped flatten the curve of infections in New York, has also been criticized over his handling of nursing homes, specifically the order that told homes they could not refuse to accept recovering COVID-19 patients from hospitals as long as the patients were "medically stable." The order barred homes from even testing such patients to see if they still had the virus.

The directive was intended to free up hospital beds for the sickest patients as cases surged. But relatives, patient advocates and nursing home administrators have called it a misguided decision, blaming it for helping to spread the virus among the state's most vulnerable residents.

Cuomo reversed the order under pressure May 10, long after New York's death toll in care homes had climbed to among the highest in the nation. To date, nearly 6,500 deaths have been linked to the coronavirus in the state's nursing home and long-term care-facilities.

But the 33-page state report flatly says "that nursing home admissions from hospitals were not a driver of nursing home infections or fatalities."

Instead, it says the virus' rampant run through New York nursing homes was propelled by the 37,500 nursing home workers who became infected between mid-March and early June and unknowingly passed the virus on.

The report noted that the number of residents dying at nursing homes peaked on April 8, around the same time as COVID-19 deaths statewide, but nearly a week before the peak of coronavirus patients being transferred from hospitals.

It also said 80% of the 310 nursing homes that admitted coronavirus patients already had a confirmed or suspected case among its residents or staff before the directive was issued. And it contends the median number of coronavirus patients sent to nursing homes had been hospitalized for nine days, the same period that the study said it likely takes for the virus to no longer be contagious.

"If you were to place blame, I would blame coronavirus," Dr. Howard Zucker, the state health commissioner, told reporters last week.

Cuomo said in a later news conference that "ugly politics" were behind "this political conspiracy that the deaths in nursing homes were preventable. And now the report has the facts, and the facts tell the opposite story."

But several experts who reviewed the report at the request of The Associated Press said it has fatal flaws, including never actually addressing the effect of the order.

Among the questions not answered: If 80% of the 310 nursing homes that took coronavirus patients already had cases before the order, what was the effect of the released patients on the other 62 homes? If the median number of patients were released into nursing homes for nine days, that means that by the study's own count more than 3,000 patients were released within nine days. Could they have been infectious?

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 37 of 85

Denis Nash, an epidemiologist at the City University of New York School of Public Health, also noted that New York's nursing home death toll doesn't include nursing home residents who died at a hospital, a "potentially huge problem" that undercounts the virus' toll and could "introduce bias into the analysis."

Among the holes in the study highlighted by University of Texas, Houston, epidemiologist Catherine Troisi was a lack of data on what happened at dozens of nursing homes that had no COVID-19 infections before those sick with the virus were sent to them.

"Would this get published in an academic journal? No," Troisi said.

Shivakoti said he thinks the report may be correct in concluding that the major drivers of the outbreaks were nursing home workers who were sick without knowing it. But that's not the same as saying the discharges played no role.

"If they didn't infect other patients directly," Shivakoti said, "they still could have infected a worker."

Dr. Mark Dworkin, a former Illinois state epidemiologist, said the finding that people don't transmit the virus after nine days of illness applies in the population at large, but it's not clear whether that's true of nursing home residents who may have weaker immune systems and shed the virus longer. He said the state's report used "overreaching" language.

"They really need to own the fact that they made a mistake, that it was never right to send COVID patients into nursing homes and that people died because of it," said Dr. Michael Wasserman, president of the California Association of Long Term Care Medicine.

New York Department of Health spokesman Gary Holmes said the study was intended to "measure the strength of the variables. ... The strongest factor in driving the nursing home infections was through staff infections."

The Cuomo administration report will likely not be the last word. New York's Legislature plans to hold joint hearings next month, and Republicans in Congress have demanded Cuomo turned over records on the March 25 order and its effects.

"Blame-shifting, name-calling and half-baked data manipulations will not make the facts or the questions they raise go away," Louisiana U.S Rep. Steve Scalise, Republican leader of a House subcommittee on the COVID crisis, wrote in a letter to Cuomo last week.

Asked to respond, Cuomo spokesman Rich Azzopardi said: "We're used to Republicans denying science but now they are screeching about time, space and dates on a calendar to distract from the federal government's many, many, embarrassing failures. No one is buying it."

AP investigative news researcher Randy Herschaft and reporter Jennifer Peltz in New York, and reporter Marina Villeneuve in Albany, N.Y., contributed to this report.

Masks for kids? Schools confront the politics of reopening

By JOCELYN GECKER Associated Press

On one side are parents saying, let kids be kids. They object to masks and social distancing in classrooms this fall — arguing both could hurt their children's well-being — and want schools to reopen full time.

On the other side are parents and teachers who call for safeguards that would have been unimaginable before the coronavirus pandemic: part-time school, face coverings for all or a fully online curriculum.

The impassioned tug-of-wars have put educators in the middle of an increasingly politicized debate on how best to reopen schools this fall, a daunting challenge as infections spike in the U.S.

"Don't tell me my kid has to wear a mask," said Kim Sherman, a mother of three in the central California city of Clovis who describes herself as very conservative and very pro-Trump. "I don't need to be dictated to to tell me how best to raise my kids."

With many districts still finalizing how they may reopen, President Donald Trump has ramped up pressure to get public schools back in business, threatening to withhold federal funding from those that don't resume in-person classes. Without evidence, he's accused Democrats of wanting schools closed because of politics, not health.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 38 of 85

Similar mudslinging is happening at school board meetings, in neighbors' social media clashes and in online petitions.

Some parents have threatened to pull their children — and the funding they provide — if masks are required.

Hillary Salway, a mother of three in Orange County, California, is part of a vocal minority calling for schools to fully open with "normal social interaction." If the district requires masks for her son's kindergarten class, she says, "I don't know if my son will be starting his educational career in the public school system this fall."

She wants him to feel free to hug his teacher and friends and can't imagine sending him to a school where he'll get reprimanded for sharing a toy. She started a petition last month urging her district to "keep facial expressions visually available" and helped organize a protest of over 100 people outside the district office, with signs saying, "No to masks, Yes to recess," and "Let me breathe."

Dozens have echoed her beliefs at Orange County Board of Education meetings, where the five-member elected body is majority Republican and is recommending a full return to school without masks or social distancing. The board makes recommendations but not policy, and its supporters argue that face coverings are ineffective, give a false sense of security and are potentially detrimental.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says masks may help prevent infected people from spreading the virus to others and urged students and teachers to wear them whenever feasible. Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has ordered Californians to wear them in public.

Brooke Aston Harper, a liberal parent who attended a particularly spirited board meeting recently, said it was "horrifying" that speakers were "imposing their small worldview on all of us."

"I'm not looking for a fight, I just want us to take precautions," said Harper, whose children are 4 and 6.

She also started a petition, calling on schools to follow state guidelines that include masks for teachers and students, constant social distancing on campuses and other measures.

"For each school board, the question is going to be: What does our community want, and who is the loudest?" she said.

Many parents, educators and doctors agree that the social, educational and emotional costs to children of a long shutdown may outweigh the risk of the virus itself, even if they don't agree on how to reopen safely. The American Academy of Pediatrics has issued guidelines supporting in-person school to avoid social isolation and depression in students. But it said science, not politics, must guide decisions where COVID-19 is spreading.

While children have proven to be less susceptible to the virus, teachers are vulnerable. And many are scared.

"I will be wearing a mask, a face shield, possibly gloves, and I'm even considering getting some type of body covering to wear," says Stacey Pugh, a fifth-grade teacher in suburban Houston.

She hopes her Aldine district will mandate masks for students.

"Come the fall, we're going to be the front-line workers," said Pugh, whose two children will do distance learning with her retired father.

In Texas, a virus hot spot, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott and education leaders say it's safe to reopen schools in August. Districts must offer remote learning for students who opt to stay home, but the state didn't issue safety guidelines, calling masks a local decision.

The Texas American Federation of Teachers and other unions have demanded clear guidelines.

"Texas AFT says a big 'hell no' to what looks like a return to normal in August," president Zeph Capo said. "We won't sacrifice our members and students for politics."

The country's two largest school districts, New York City and Los Angeles, say schools cannot fully reopen in the liberal cities.

While New York City officials say schools will likely combine in-person and distance learning, the Los Angeles school district announced Monday that its students will start the term with online classes from home. Other California cities, including San Diego and Oakland, also say their campuses will stay closed.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 39 of 85

"A 10-year-old student might have a 30-year-old teacher a 50-year-old bus driver or live with a 70-year-old grandmother. All need to be protected," LA Superintendent Austin Beutner said. "There is a public health imperative to keep schools from becoming a petri dish."

Besides masks, the CDC has recommended schools spread out desks, stagger schedules, have meals in classrooms instead of the cafeteria and add physical barriers between bathroom sinks.

Many small, rural communities argue they shouldn't have to comply with the same rules as big cities, where infection rates are higher.

Craig Guensler, superintendent of a small district in California's mostly rural Yuba County, says officials will try to follow state mandates. They have spent \$25,000 on what he calls "spit guards, for lack of a better term" — clear Plexiglas dividers to separate desks — at Wheatland Unified School District's four schools.

Eighty-five percent of parents said in a survey they want their kids in school full time. Officials will space out desks as much as possible but still expect up to 28 in each classroom, Guensler said. Many parents are adamant their children not wear masks, and he suspects they will find loopholes if California requires them.

"Our expectation is we're going to get pummeled with pediatricians writing notes, saying, 'My child can't wear a mask,'" he said.

Associated Press writer Jim Vertuno in Austin, Texas, contributed to this report.

Governor shuts bars, dining as virus hits California hard

By ADAM BEAM Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — As the coronavirus swept California with renewed ferocity, the governor once again closed bars, inside dining and, for much of the state, gyms, indoor church services and hair and nail salons in an effort to prevent COVID-19 cases from swamping hospitals.

Gov. Gavin Newsom issued a sweeping set of closures on Monday as the state recorded more than 329,000 cases and deaths topped 7,000. Hospitalizations have surged by 28% in the past two weeks, including a 20% increase in patients requiring intensive care.

That was lower than a 50% hike seen about a week ago but Newsom said he was concerned about the future and implored people to maintain social distance, wear masks in public and stay home when possible.

"COVID-19 is not going away anytime soon, until there is a vaccine and or an effective therapy," Newsom said.

Meanwhile, the Los Angeles and San Diego school districts, the two largest in California with a combined K-12 student population of about 720,000, announced Monday they won't bring students back to classrooms next month because of rising coronavirus hospitalizations and infection rates.

Earlier in the pandemic California closed beaches, campgrounds and state parks as it sought to limit interactions of people from different households. But as data showed the virus was most likely to be transmitted indoors, the Newsom administration began modifying public health orders, including ordering people to wear face coverings and leaving outdoor activities alone.

On Monday, the governor ordered restaurants to stop serving customers indoors and told bars, wineries, movie theaters, zoos, museums, cardrooms and other indoor entertainment venues to shut down.

Shutdowns went even further in some of the 30 counties on a state watch list because of worrying rises in disease transmission, especially from people mingling without heeding safety guidelines. The listed counties account for roughly 80% of California's population.

Those that have been on the list for three days now must restrict indoor operations for hair and nail salons, tattoo parlors, gyms, shopping malls and houses of worship.

The affected counties include Los Angeles and virtually all of Southern California.

In Los Angeles, Mayor Eric Garcetti immediately implemented the shutdowns and warned that the city was "on the verge" of raising its COVID-19 threat level from orange to red — the highest level — and resorting to shutting down all but essential businesses.

Garcetti noted that Los Angeles County now has more virus cases than Canada.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 40 of 85

"We have never had as many people infected, or infectious," he said. "We've never had as many people in the hospital as there are tonight."

Garcetti supported Newsom's orders but they met with resistance from some churches and fear by small businesses that were struggling to survive after months of being shut down.

Salons will be hard-hit because loans and unemployment insurance will soon run out and many may ignore the order, said Fred Jones, attorney for the Professional Beauty Federation of California.

"We're going to be out there on our own, worse now than ever," Jones said. "We question how many of those salons that just reopened will comply with this second round of closures."

There is "no evidence that a single contagion has been spread in a salon since we've been allowed to reopen," Jones said.

"What a bummer," said Connie Allan, who owns Boat Canyon Barbers in Laguna Beach.

"How long am I going to do this?" she told the Orange County Register. "I'm 59, and it's not like I can find a job somewhere. I've been a barber for 30-plus years, so I don't know ... It's a pretty frightening outlook."

Since the order only bars indoor activities, she was considering other options, such as putting up a canopy to cut hair outside.

Some churches that had cautiously begun holding limited indoor services a month ago were faced with ending them again.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Palm Desert, near Palm Springs, had been allowing only 100 people or fewer into services to maintain social distancing.

Father Howard Lincoln told the Palm Springs Desert Sun that he wasn't surprised by the new order.

"Our right to worship has to be tempered with our clear, moral responsibility to protect others from a highly contagious and sometimes fatal disease," Lincoln said. "As a church, we preach, 'Love thy neighbor.' It is certainly not too much of a sacrifice to wear a mask and socially distance and try to protect others."

Newsom's ban on indoor church services may be unconstitutional, argued Robert Tyler of a nonprofit law group called Advocates for Faith and Freedom, although several judges have upheld earlier restrictions.

"Is a worship service any less protected under the First Amendment than a protest? No," Tyler said in a statement. "The freedom of worship is of paramount importance and we will support churches who provide services as their faith sincerely dictates so long as they do not provide their services recklessly."

Newsom's closure announcements did include a note of hope. The governor said the state had managed to flatten the curve of COVID-19 infections in the wake of mid-March orders that shut down most businesses and kept many people at home.

"We were able to suppress the spread of this virus, we were able to knock down the growth of this in the beginning," Newsom said. "We are going to do that again, there is no doubt in my mind."

Associated Press reporters Christopher Weber and John Antczak in Los Angeles and Amy Taxin in Orange County contributed to this report.

Indian leader's virus fund won't disclose donors, payments

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Bejon Misra responded quickly to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal in March for donations to a new fund to strengthen the country's fight against the coronavirus.

The next day, the 69-year-old retired management professor made a donation.

"It was a generous contribution because Modi is the face of it," Misra said.

Such trust in Modi is common in India, with the prime minister enjoying an 82% public approval rating, according to U.S.-based pollster Morning Consult.

So when the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund, or PM CARES, was launched days after India started a countrywide virus lockdown, donations began pouring in and haven't stopped.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 41 of 85

Retirees like Misra, industrialists, Bollywood stars and foreign companies have all pitched in. But the fund, now valued at more than \$1 billion, has run into controversy over issues of transparency and accountability.

The Associated Press requested a list of donors and payments from Modi's office under the Right to Information Law, which gives citizens access to information from India's often opaque bureaucracy. The request was denied.

Modi's office, which manages PM CARES, has refused to disclose the information, arguing that even though it is administered by the Indian government, it is not a public authority, and therefore not subject to right-to-information laws. As a result, there is little transparency about the money the fund is receiving and spending in the middle of India's still-raging virus outbreak.

"It's not a state secret and the government must answer the questions that are being raised," said Saket Gokhale, an independent activist who was one of the first to question the fund. "They are stonewalling."

Legal experts are challenging the response of Modi's office.

Surender Singh Hooda, a lawyer at India's top court, filed a petition on June 5 arguing that the fund's website must display details of the money received and the way it is used. The Delhi high court told Hooda to withdraw his petition and contact Modi's office first, as is required by law.

Modi's office denied Hooda's request for information.

"The money has been collected under the name of the prime minister and millions of ordinary citizens have donated to it. The least we expect is some transparency," Hooda said.

Modi is the fund's chairman, and the powerful home minister, Amit Shah, and the ministers of defense and finance sit on its board. But unlike other government-administered funds, it isn't audited by India's Comptroller and Auditor General. Instead, Modi appointed a private business consulting firm, SARC & Associates, to audit the fund 12 days after it donated \$212,665 to it.

Sunil Kumar Gupta, the head of SARC & Associates, has been a vocal supporter of Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, appearing in photographs with Modi and top party leaders at various events.

Gupta also wrote a book in 2018 about "Make in India," Modi's project to increase manufacturing and domestic consumption of Indian-made products.

"On what merit was this private company, which is so close to Modi's party, given the job to audit the fund?" asked Gokhale. "It's shady and the activities are very suspect."

Gupta declined requests for comment.

Modi's party colleagues have repeatedly denied any wrongdoing by the fund.

Party spokesperson Nalin Kohli said it was "transparent" and was helping India fight the virus.

PM CARES has also run into other controversies.

After Modi's office said it had spent \$26 million from the fund to buy 50,000 ventilators, two top hospitals in Mumbai and New Delhi described shortcomings in the products and concluded they were prone to failure.

The company that made the ventilators rejected the findings.

The main opposition Congress party called the purchase of the ventilators a scam.

About \$13 million from the fund was allocated for impoverished migrant workers, millions of whom were stranded without work or transportation home during the two-month countrywide lockdown. Many say the allocation came too late.

Modi's party said the \$13 million was given to state governments to provide food, shelter, medical treatment and transportation to the migrants.

Former finance minister Panchabaram, a Congress party member, was critical that the money did not directly "go to the hands of the migrant workers."

Others see the fund as a thinly veiled marketing device for the prime minister.

"It looks like Modi wants to put a stamp of his own on everything," said Aseem Katyal, an independent activist who has been demanding transparency from Modi's office.

But for Misra and many like him, these allegations don't matter — a reminder that Modi's popularity hadn't declined despite rising criticism of his government's handling of the virus due to a surge in infections and an ailing economy. "I trust Modi," said Misra. "He will do no wrong."

Associated Press writer Chonchui Ngashangva contributed to this report.

White House turns on Fauci as Trump minimizes virus spike

By JILL COLVIN, JONATHAN LEMIRE and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With U.S. virus cases spiking and the death toll mounting, the White House is working to undercut its most trusted coronavirus expert, playing down the danger as President Donald Trump pushes to get the economy moving before he faces voters in November.

The U.S. has become a cautionary tale across the globe, with once-falling cases now spiraling. However, Trump suggests the severity of the pandemic that has killed more than 135,000 Americans is being overstated by critics to damage his reelection chances.

Trump on Monday retweeted a post by Chuck Woolery, once the host of TV's "Love Connection," claiming that "Everyone is lying" about COVID-19. Woolery's tweet attacked not just the media and Democrats but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and most doctors "that we are told to trust. I think it's all about the election and keeping the economy from coming back, which is about the election."

At the same time, the president and top White House aides are ramping up attacks against Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious diseases expert. Fauci has been increasingly sidelined by the White House as he sounds alarms about the virus, a most unwelcome message at a time when Trump is focused on pushing an economic rebound.

"We haven't even begun to see the end of it yet," he said in a talk with the dean of Stanford's medical school Monday, calling for a "step back" in reopenings.

Last week, Fauci contradicted Trump about the severity of the virus during a FiveThirtyEight podcast. While Trump contends repeatedly that he has done a great job against the pandemic, Fauci said, "As a country, when you compare us to other countries, I don't think you can say we're doing great. I mean, we're just not."

Trump later said Fauci had "made a lot of mistakes." He pointed to Fauci's early disagreement with him over the China travel ban and to the evolving guidance over the use of masks as scientists' understanding of the virus improved — points the White House expanded on in statements to media outlets over the weekend.

Asked whether the president still had confidence in Fauci, a White House official on Monday insisted Trump did. The official said Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, was regarded as "a valued voice" on the White House coronavirus task force. The official spoke on condition of anonymity even though the president has repeatedly railed against anonymous sources.

"I have a very good relationship with Dr. Fauci," Trump told reporters Monday, calling him "a very nice person." But the president added, "I don't always agree with him."

That supportive message was not echoed by Peter Navarro, a top White House trade adviser who has been working on the coronavirus effort.

In an email, Navarro continued to criticize Fauci to The Associated Press on Monday, saying the doctor has "a good bedside manner with the public but he has been wrong about everything I have ever interacted with him on." That includes, he said, downplaying the early risk of the virus and expressing skepticism over the use of hydroxychloroquine, which Navarro has aggressively championed despite contradictory evidence on its efficacy and safety.

Fauci, who has not appeared at recent White House task force briefings and has been largely absent from television, told the Financial Times last week that he last saw Trump in person at the White House on June 2 and hadn't briefed him in at least two months.

He blamed the fact that he has refused to toe the administration's line for its refusal to approve many of his media requests.

"I have a reputation, as you probably have figured out, of speaking the truth at all times and not sugar-coating things. And that may be one of the reasons why I haven't been on television very much lately," Fauci said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 43 of 85

Trump's political foes put it more strongly.

"The president's disgusting attempt to pass the buck by blaming the top infectious disease expert in the country — whose advice he repeatedly ignored and Joe Biden consistently implored him to take — is yet another horrible and revealing failure of leadership as the tragic death toll continues to needlessly grow," said Andrew Bates, a spokesman for Democrat Biden's presidential campaign.

Fauci's public contradictions of Trump have been viewed by the president as a personal affront and have caused some in the West Wing to sour on the doctor, officials say. Some say that, while he is critical of the president in media interviews, he is largely deferential behind closed doors. And they complain about those outside the administration, including some in the media, who have elevated Fauci at the expense of other officials.

Fauci did not respond to a request for comment Monday.

That lionizing of Fauci is anything but welcome as the White House tries to have its medical experts take a step back from the limelight to keep the election-season focus on economic recovery rather than the persistence of the pandemic.

In the early days of the virus, as Trump bristled at the attention Fauci was receiving, the West Wing took control of the doctor's media schedule, significantly cutting into his TV appearances though he continued to find alternative outlets — including podcasts and social media.

The president's team has made clear they have no intention of trying to oust Fauci, knowing the uproar that would create. Instead, they appear content to diminish his reach while encouraging Republican lawmakers, administration officials and other allies to highlight some of Fauci's early missteps.

The effort is part of a White House effort to "counterpunch" on behalf of Trump, who believes all slights must have a forceful response, said one official, who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity to describe internal White House thinking.

At the same time, supporters are flocking to Fauci's defense. The Association of American Medical Colleges' president and chief scientific officer issued a statement saying the organization was "extremely concerned and alarmed by efforts" to discredit Fauci.

"We cannot allow Donald Trump to silence Dr. Fauci or any other government scientists," said Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., who introduced legislation in April to protect Fauci and other leaders of the National Institutes of Health from being fired for political reasons. "Dr. Fauci is saving lives every day."

Associated Press writer Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

Judge blocks federal executions; administration appeals

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (AP) — A U.S. district judge on Monday ordered a new delay in federal executions, hours before the first lethal injection was scheduled to be carried out at a federal prison in Indiana. The Trump administration immediately appealed to a higher court, asking that the executions move forward.

Late Monday, the federal appeals court in Washington, D.C., refused to allow the executions to proceed. The administration has asked the Supreme Court to step in.

U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan said there are still legal issues to resolve and that "the public is not served by short-circuiting legitimate judicial process." The executions, pushed by the administration, would be the first carried out at the federal level since 2003.

Chutkan said the inmates have presented evidence showing that the government's plan to use only pentobarbital to carry out the executions "poses an unconstitutionally significant risk of serious pain."

Chutkan said the inmates produced evidence that, in other executions, prisoners who were given pentobarbital suffered "flash pulmonary edema," which she said interferes with breathing and produces sensations of drowning and strangulation.

The inmates have identified alternatives, including the use of an opioid or anti-anxiety drug at the start of the procedure or a different method altogether, a firing squad, Chutkan said.

The Justice Department appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 44 of 85

And the Bureau of Prisons continued with preparations in order to move forward should the stay be lifted. The man slated for execution, Daniel Lewis Lee has had access to social visitors, has visited with his spiritual adviser and has been allowed to receive mail, prison officials said. He's been under constant staff supervision. The witnesses for Lee are expected to include three family members, his lawyers and spiritual adviser.

The new hold came a day after a federal appeals court lifted a hold on the execution of Lee, of Yukon, Oklahoma, which was scheduled for 4 p.m. EDT on Monday at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana. He was convicted in Arkansas of the 1996 killings of gun dealer William Mueller, his wife, Nancy, and her 8-year-old daughter, Sarah Powell.

"The government has been trying to plow forward with these executions despite many unanswered questions about the legality of its new execution protocol," said Shawn Nolan, one of the attorneys for the men facing federal execution.

The Lee execution was to be carried out after a federal appeals court lifted an injunction on Sunday that had been put in place last week after some members of the victims' family argued they would be put at high risk for the coronavirus if they had to travel to attend. The family on Monday appealed to the Supreme Court.

The decision to move forward with the execution -- and two others scheduled later in the week -- during a global health pandemic that has killed more than 135,000 people in the United States and is ravaging prisons nationwide, drew scrutiny from civil rights groups as well as family of Lee's victims.

Critics argue that the government is creating an unnecessary and manufactured urgency for political gain. The developments are also likely to add a new front to the national conversation about criminal justice reform in the lead-up to the 2020 elections.

Anti-death penalty protesters began gathering in Terre Haute on Monday. Organizer Abraham Bonowitz drove a van through the city with a sign emblazoned on the side of a trailer that read, "'Stop executions now!'"

Because of coronavirus concerns, Bonowitz said his group, Death Penalty Action, wasn't encouraging others to show up. No more than a few dozen protesters were expected to join him.

"It's symbolic," Bonowitz said about the protests. "We are just here to say that this is wrong."

In an interview with The Associated Press last week, Attorney General William Barr said the Justice Department has a duty to carry out the sentences imposed by the courts, including the death penalty, and to bring a sense of closure to the victims and those in the communities where the killings happened.

But relatives of those killed by Lee strongly oppose that idea. They wanted to be present to counter any contention that it was being done on their behalf.

"For us it is a matter of being there and saying, 'This is not being done in our name; we do not want this,'" said relative Monica Veillette.

The relatives would be traveling thousands of miles and witnessing the execution in a small room where the social distancing recommended to prevent the virus' spread is virtually impossible. An attorney for the family members who have objected to the execution said they hadn't traveled to Indiana, as of Monday morning.

The federal prison system has struggled in recent months to contain the exploding number of coronavirus cases behind bars. There are currently four confirmed coronavirus cases among inmates at the Terre Haute prison, according to federal statistics, and one inmate there has died.

Barr said he believes the Bureau of Prisons could "carry out these executions without being at risk." The agency has put a number of additional measures in place, including temperature checks and requiring witnesses to wear masks.

But on Sunday, the Justice Department disclosed that a staff member involved in preparing for the execution had tested positive for the coronavirus, but said he had not been in the execution chamber and had not come into contact with anyone on the specialized team sent to handle the execution.

The three men scheduled to be executed this week had been scheduled to be put to death when Barr

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 45 of 85

announced the federal government would resume executions last year, ending an informal moratorium on federal capital punishment as the issue receded from the public domain. A fourth man is scheduled to be put to death in August.

Executions on the federal level have been rare and the government has put to death only three defendants since restoring the federal death penalty in 1988 — most recently in 2003, when Louis Jones was executed for the 1995 kidnapping, rape and murder of a young female soldier.

In 2014, following a botched state execution in Oklahoma, President Barack Obama directed the Justice Department to conduct a broad review of capital punishment and issues surrounding lethal injection drugs.

The attorney general said last July that the Obama-era review had been completed, clearing the way for executions to resume.

Associated Press writers Colleen Long and Mark Sherman in Washington, Michael Tarm in Chicago and Andrew DeMillo in Little Rock, Ark., contributed to this report.

Legal experts review Black Minnesota teen's life sentence

By ROBIN MCDOWELL Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — An independent panel of national legal experts will review the conviction of an African American man sentenced as a teenager to life in prison for the murder of a little girl struck by a stray bullet, Northwestern University's Center on Wrongful Convictions and the New York-based Innocence Project announced Monday.

Myon Burrell, 34, has spent nearly two decades behind bars. His case captured widespread interest, first at the time of his 2002 arrest, and again this year after Sen. Amy Klobuchar touted it during her run for the U.S. presidency. She used it as an example of how — when top prosecutor in Hennepin County — she helped find justice for the African American community outraged by gun violence and the senseless death of Tyasha Edwards, an 11-year-old Black girl killed while doing homework at her dining-room table.

After the Associated Press and APM Reports highlighted flaws in the investigation that pointed to a possible wrongful conviction, Klobuchar called for a review, saying justice was not only about punishing the guilty but protecting the innocent. She and the Hennepin County Attorney's Office expressed support Monday for the new panel, which hopes to release its findings by the year's end. The senator has also said she would like to see the formation of a Conviction Integrity Unit and a Sentencing Review Board to look into other potentially flawed cases.

Barry Scheck, co-founder of the Innocence Project and one of the first proponents for Conviction Integrity Units nationwide, called the review of Burrell's case an important first step.

He and Laura Nirider — co-director of the Center on Wrongful Convictions, who led efforts to identify and select prospective panel members — will act as advisors as the team looks at the evidence that led to Burrell's conviction and the appropriateness of his sentence.

"A conviction integrity review is a non-adversarial process that seeks cooperation from prosecutors, defenders and police," said Scheck, who is an expert in best practices in conviction integrity and will help guide the panel. "Best practices today include consideration of excessive sentences as well as a review of guilt or innocence and the fairness of the trial."

"In the end, CIUs often ask the question after reviewing all the evidence, 'if we had known all of this at the time we charged the defendant, would we have arrested him in the first place?'"

Nirider, a Minnesota native, who represents innocent juveniles and those widely considered to be wrongfully convicted, including Brendan Dassey, subject of the Netflix series "Making a Murderer," said the panel is filled with some of the country's top legal minds, including a former state attorney general, the leader of one of the first Conviction Integrity Units in the country, and the past president of the national Innocence Network.

The effort, she said, was undertaken with the support of several Minnesota organizations, including the Minneapolis NAACP, the Innocence Project of Minnesota, and the ACLU of Minnesota and panel members.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 46 of 85

"The gross miscarriage of justice that happened in Myon Burrell's case struck a chord with many in the Black community," said Leslie Redmond President of the Minneapolis NAACP,, adding that an independent review of his case is long overdue. "We also know that Myon is one of many young Black men who has been railroaded by the criminal justice system in Hennepin County. There is an urgent need for the establishment of a conviction integrity unit to review those cases now."

The death of George Floyd — who was killed by police in May at a south Minneapolis corner store just three blocks from where Tyesha was shot — has put a spotlight on Minnesota and its long history of racial injustice.

Many members of the state's African American community feel the system is stacked against them, from the time of their arrest and charges filed, to the length of their sentences.

The 1990s and 2000s resulted in the highest rate of incarceration ever seen in America, and young Black men were disproportionately affected.

A largely discredited theory about a remorseless, teen criminals — dubbed "superpredators" — resulted in a tripling of the number of youths thrown into adult facilities, thousands of them sentenced to life. The vast majority were African American. While that trend has started to reverse, those already convicted remain in prison where many will likely die.

Perry Moriearty, an associate professor at the University of Minnesota Law School, said the state has long prided itself on having a progressive penal system, but that is not true when it comes to the punishment of young African American males.

"Black juveniles in Minnesota are eight times more likely to be prosecuted as adults than white juveniles, and we subject them to extraordinarily harsh sentences," she said. "Even as states across the country are abandoning life sentences for adolescents, we continue to permit life without parole or its equivalent. We are on our way to becoming an outlier."

Burrell, 16 at the time of Tyesha's killing, has steadfastly proclaimed his innocence saying he was not even at the scene.

A yearlong AP investigation found there was no hard evidence — no gun, fingerprints, DNA — linking him to the crime.

Surveillance tape that Burrell told police would clear him was never pulled from Cup Food, the same store that called the police on George Floyd for allegedly trying to pass a counterfeit \$20 bill. Much of the state's case relied on jailhouse informants, several of whom have since recanted. And another man has admitted to the shooting, saying Burrell was not even present.

The Hennepin County Attorney's Offices said in a statement Monday it has been cooperating with Burrell's current attorney for nearly two years and will continue to be responsive to the panel's advisors.

Klobuchar, meanwhile, she has been advocating for a review for months.

"As I told Mr. Burrell's family earlier this year, if any injustice was done in the quest for justice for Tyesha Edwards, it must be addressed," she said in an emailed statement. "This investigation is an important step forward and I fully support the work of this distinguished panel."

Indians, other teams pressured after Redskins drop nickname

By TOM WITHERS AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — The spotlight for change is shining on the Cleveland Indians.

Now that the NFL's Washington Redskins have retired their contentious nickname and logo after decades of objection and amid a nationwide movement calling for racial justice, the Indians appear to be the next major sports franchise that might assume a new identity.

Along with the Indians, who recently announced they are in the early stages of evaluating a name change for the first time in 105 years, the Atlanta Braves, Chicago Blackhawks and Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs are among those facing backlash along with the potential of sponsors pulling their financial support.

For some, the time has come for widespread changes to sports nicknames, mascots and symbols as

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 47 of 85

the country reckons with its legacy of racism.

"I understand people aren't willing to change or so quickly, or they're hoping this moment is going to pass. It's not," said activist Frances Danger, who is Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole from Oklahoma. "And now that we've gotten what we needed on the Redskins side, we're going to start working on the rest of them. We're not going to let up."

On Monday, Washington announced it was dropping a nickname that had been in place since 1933 and had grown into an embarrassing scar for the NFL franchise. The team buckled under financial pressure from sponsors including FedEx, the shipping giant and naming rights holder to the team's stadium, as well as other groups.

Indians manager Terry Francona acknowledged having "mixed emotions" about the Redskins' situation. "I'm glad to see that they're acting on it," he said Monday night. "Also, I think that it was probably financially driven. ... You can't always do things when the timing is right, when it's convenient. That's kind of how I feel about this. I hope that our organization will lead as opposed to follow."

While the debate over the Redskins' nickname was waged for years, the drastic change came just two weeks after owner Dan Snyder, who once said he would never change the team's moniker, said the franchise would undergo a "thorough review" before its next move.

Cleveland's situation is different from Washington's on several fronts.

First, the Indians are not feeling heat from any corporate sponsors. At least not publicly.

When the Redskins announced their review earlier this month, the Indians released a statement within hours of Washington's that said, "we are committed to engaging our community and appropriate stakeholders to determine the best path forward with regard to our team name."

The Indians didn't promise to change their nickname. But it would be hard to imagine them going through a detailed evaluation and deciding to stick with a nickname that Native American groups have condemned for years as degrading and racist.

Cleveland showed a willingness to rebrand itself when it pulled the highly debated Chief Wahoo logo off its game jerseys and caps. While the red-faced, toothy caricature remains a presence on some team merchandise, its reduced status and removal from the diamond and signage around Progressive Field was applauded as a positive step.

Even if the Indians decide to drop the nickname, there are numerous other layers — trademark contracts, new logos, Major League Baseball's approval — to work through before the change could take effect.

While the Indians seem open to a new identity, the Braves aren't budging.

They have no plans to change their nickname, telling season-ticket holders in a letter last week that "we will always be the Atlanta Braves." However, the team said it will review the team's "tomahawk chop" chant — a tradition borrowed in the early 1990s from Florida State's powerful football program.

The Blackhawks, too, have no plans for change, saying their name honors a Native American leader, Black Hawk of Illinois' Sac & Fox Nation. The NHL team said it plans to work harder to raise awareness of Black Hawk and "the important contributions of all Native American people."

"We're trying to honor the logo and be respectful," general manager Stan Bowman said. "There's certainly a fine line between respect and disrespect, and I think we want to do an even better job. I think the most important thing is to be clear that we want to help educate. ... I think we've done a good job, but we want to do a better job. And I think we're committed to that as we go forward."

Part of Atlanta's insistence to keep a nickname the franchise brought from Milwaukee in 1966 is due to the team's "cultural working relationship" with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in North Carolina and other tribal leaders it collaborates with regularly.

But as teams look to make changes, Danger and other activists will continue to push them to abandon any connection with Native Americans, who have been portrayed as mascots for generations.

"We're being paraded around without a say in how we're seen," she said. "It's a less bloody continuation of that, of us being a sideshow. It's not hard to choose the right side of history, so I hope these teams will take that step with us, side by side, as we all work together to change the world."

Associated Press writer Felicia Fonseca in Flagstaff, Arizona, and AP Sports Writers Charles Odum in Atlanta and Jay Cohen in Chicago contributed to this report.

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

White House turns on Fauci as Trump minimizes virus spike

By JILL COLVIN, JONATHAN LEMIRE and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With U.S. virus cases spiking and the death toll mounting, the White House is working to undercut its most trusted coronavirus expert, playing down the danger as President Donald Trump pushes to get the economy moving before he faces voters in November.

The U.S. has become a cautionary tale across the globe, with once-falling cases now spiraling. However, Trump suggests the severity of the pandemic that has killed more than 135,000 Americans is being overstated by critics to damage his reelection chances.

Trump on Monday retweeted a post by Chuck Woolery, once the host of TV's "Love Connection," claiming that "Everyone is lying" about COVID-19. Woolery's tweet attacked not just the media and Democrats but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and most doctors "that we are told to trust. I think it's all about the election and keeping the economy from coming back, which is about the election."

At the same time, the president and top White House aides are ramping up attacks against Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious diseases expert. Fauci has been increasingly sidelined by the White House as he sounds alarms about the virus, a most unwelcome message at a time when Trump is focused on pushing an economic rebound.

"We haven't even begun to see the end of it yet," he said in a talk with the dean of Stanford's medical school Monday, calling for a "step back" in reopenings.

Last week, Fauci contradicted Trump about the severity of the virus during a FiveThirtyEight podcast. While Trump contends repeatedly that he has done a great job against the pandemic, Fauci said, "As a country, when you compare us to other countries, I don't think you can say we're doing great. I mean, we're just not."

Trump later said Fauci had "made a lot of mistakes." He pointed to Fauci's early disagreement with him over the China travel ban and to the evolving guidance over the use of masks as scientists' understanding of the virus improved — points the White House expanded on in statements to media outlets over the weekend.

Asked whether the president still had confidence in Fauci, a White House official on Monday insisted Trump did. The official said Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, was regarded as "a valued voice" on the White House coronavirus task force. The official spoke on condition of anonymity even though the president has repeatedly railed against anonymous sources.

"I have a very good relationship with Dr. Fauci," Trump told reporters Monday, calling him "a very nice person." But the president added, "I don't always agree with him."

That supportive message was not echoed by Peter Navarro, a top White House trade adviser who has been working on the coronavirus effort.

In an email, Navarro continued to criticize Fauci to The Associated Press on Monday, saying the doctor has "a good bedside manner with the public but he has been wrong about everything I have ever interacted with him on." That includes, he said, downplaying the early risk of the virus and expressing skepticism over the use of hydroxychloroquine, which Navarro has aggressively championed despite contradictory evidence on its efficacy and safety.

Fauci, who has not appeared at recent White House task force briefings and has been largely absent from television, told the Financial Times last week that he last saw Trump in person at the White House on June 2 and hadn't briefed him in at least two months.

He blamed the fact that he has refused to toe the administration's line for its refusal to approve many

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 49 of 85

of his media requests.

"I have a reputation, as you probably have figured out, of speaking the truth at all times and not sugar-coating things. And that may be one of the reasons why I haven't been on television very much lately," Fauci said.

Trump's political foes put it more strongly.

"The president's disgusting attempt to pass the buck by blaming the top infectious disease expert in the country — whose advice he repeatedly ignored and Joe Biden consistently implored him to take — is yet another horrible and revealing failure of leadership as the tragic death toll continues to needlessly grow," said Andrew Bates, a spokesman for Democrat Biden's presidential campaign.

Fauci's public contradictions of Trump have been viewed by the president as a personal affront and have caused some in the West Wing to sour on the doctor, officials say. Some say that, while he is critical of the president in media interviews, he is largely deferential behind closed doors. And they complain about those outside the administration, including some in the media, who have elevated Fauci at the expense of other officials.

Fauci did not respond to a request for comment Monday.

That lionizing of Fauci is anything but welcome as the White House tries to have its medical experts take a step back from the limelight to keep the election-season focus on economic recovery rather than the persistence of the pandemic.

In the early days of the virus, as Trump bristled at the attention Fauci was receiving, the West Wing took control of the doctor's media schedule, significantly cutting into his TV appearances though he continued to find alternative outlets — including podcasts and social media.

The president's team has made clear they have no intention of trying to oust Fauci, knowing the uproar that would create. Instead, they appear content to diminish his reach while encouraging Republican lawmakers, administration officials and other allies to highlight some of Fauci's early missteps.

The effort is part of a White House effort to "counterpunch" on behalf of Trump, who believes all slights must have a forceful response, said one official, who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity to describe internal White House thinking.

At the same time, supporters are flocking to Fauci's defense. The Association of American Medical Colleges' president and chief scientific officer issued a statement saying the organization was "extremely concerned and alarmed by efforts" to discredit Fauci.

"We cannot allow Donald Trump to silence Dr. Fauci or any other government scientists," said Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., who introduced legislation in April to protect Fauci and other leaders of the National Institutes of Health from being fired for political reasons. "Dr. Fauci is saving lives every day."

Associated Press writer Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

California shuts bars, indoor dining and most gyms, churches

By ADAM BEAM Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Bars and inside restaurant dining are banned throughout California, while indoor religious services, gyms and hair and nail salons are again off-limits in most of the state, Gov. Gavin Newsom said Monday in issuing a sweeping set of closures to head off surging coronavirus cases and hospitalizations.

The order is part of the state's new strategy to control the spread of the virus by focusing on limiting indoor activities to reflect public health officials' evolving understanding of how the virus spreads.

Earlier in the pandemic California closed beaches, campgrounds and state parks as it sought to limit interactions of people from different households. But as data showed the virus was most likely to be transmitted indoors, the Newsom administration began modifying public health orders, including ordering people to wear face coverings and leaving outdoor activities alone.

Newsom has repeatedly implored people to refrain from social gatherings and he expressed frustration

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 50 of 85

that many aren't following the guidance.

"COVID-19 is not going away anytime soon, until there is a vaccine and or an effective therapy," Newsom said. "Limit your mixing with people outside of your household. It's just common sense, but the data suggests not everyone is practicing common sense."

The city of Los Angeles immediately implemented the mandated shutdowns and Mayor Eric Garcetti said he wouldn't hesitate to go further.

Earlier this month the city created a color-coded system to designate the threat level from the virus and corresponding shutdowns. Rising numbers of cases and hospitalizations now have it at orange — the second-highest designation, when people are to minimize all contact with anyone outside their household.

"Red is when everything shuts down again -- everything, to our strictest level. And I do want to warn people that we're close to that," Garcetti said.

Newsom's move faced immediate resistance from religious groups and business organizations. Fred Jones, attorney for the Professional Beauty Federation of California, suggested many hair salons may not comply with the order.

He said there is "no evidence that a single contagion has been spread in a salon since we've been allowed to reopen."

"He should be partnering with his state licensed-professionals, not shutting us down," Jones said.

Robbert Tyler, the attorney for California-based Advocates for Faith and Freedom, said he believes Newsom's order on religious services is unconstitutional. While Newsom says churches can meet outdoors, Tyler said many don't have the facilities for that.

"We have not only an economic crisis but we have a spiritual and mental health crisis that requires as much attention as COVID-19," said Tyler, whose nonprofit organization represents churches on religious liberty issues. "To tell churches they can no longer meet indoors is just a further restriction upon the incredible services provided by churches across the state that are desperately needed."

California was the first state in the country to issue a mandatory, statewide stay-at-home order aimed at slowing the spread of the coronavirus. Most businesses and churches voluntarily complied, scrambling to let employees work from home and moving worship services online.

Public health officials praised Newsom, crediting the March 19 order with limiting the virus' impact in the nation's most populous state, which has about 40 million residents. But the order devastated the economy, causing more than 7.5 million people to file for unemployment benefits.

Newsom moved quickly to reopen the economy in May but by mid-June there were signs that the virus was resurgent and when July arrived Newsom took action. For counties on the state's watch for rising virus cases, he ordered bars to close and indoor operations halted at restaurants, wineries, tasting rooms, zoos, museums and family entertainment centers like bowling alleys and miniature golf courses. On Monday, Newsom extended that order statewide.

In the last two weeks, the number of counties on the watch list has swelled from 19 to 30, covering roughly 80% of the state's population. During that period coronavirus-related hospitalizations have risen 28%, including a 20% increase in patients requiring intensive care. The state's death toll now is above 7,000.

Also Monday, Newsom imposed new restrictions for counties on the state's watch list, ordering them to halt indoor operations for gyms, nail salons, tattoo parlors, hair salons and barbershops, shopping malls and offices for nonessential sectors. The affected counties include Los Angeles and virtually all of Southern California.

Francesca Schuler, advisory board member for the California Fitness Alliance, said her group appreciates the challenge Newsom is facing but is disappointed by the closures. She said fitness centers worked with the state to develop high standards and strict guidelines, including having people wear masks when they work out.

"We're all in on supporting doing the right thing to flatten the curve, but we do believe physical and mental health is the second crisis that's emerging right now," she said. "Fitness is key to that, particularly to mental health."

In Los Angeles County, where 10 million people live, Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said she would update the county's public health order to reflect Newsom's new directives. She said data shows "everything is pointing toward an alarming trend," noting that "every day thousands of people in our community are being infected."

"I know this step back in our recovery journey is disheartening but we must do everything in our power to stop the virus from spreading, from making the people we love sick and from causing untimely deaths," Ferrer said.

Other county leaders were frustrated. Butte County Supervisor Bill Connelly said he has not changed his behavior during the pandemic, except when he was forced to wear a mask while attending church on Sunday. He blamed Newsom for making the "cure worse than the disease."

"He's putting these small businesses under extreme strain, they are going to go under," said Connelly, whose county is not on the state's watch list. "We should have more discretion as to what to do in our communities."

For most people, the new 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.

Associated Press reporters Christopher Weber and John Antczak in Los Angeles and Amy Taxin in Orange County contributed to this report.

4 charged in Los Angeles death of rising rapper Pop Smoke

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Two men and two teens have been charged in the death of rising rapper Pop Smoke, who was killed during a Los Angeles home-invasion robbery in February, the district attorney's office said Monday.

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey said in a statement that Corey Walker and Keandre Rodgers were charged with murder that occurred during the commission of a robbery and burglary. The two boys, 15 and 17 years old, were also charged with murder and robbery while in juvenile court. Their names were not released due to their age.

The 20-year-old New York rapper, whose legal name is Bashar Barakah Jackson, was killed Feb. 19 at a home in the Hollywood Hills. A 911 call from a friend of someone in the house reported armed intruders inside the home, police previously said.

Walker, 19, and Rodgers, 18, could face the death penalty or life in prison without the possibility of parole if convicted. The arraignment for both men has been postponed until Tuesday.

Jaquan Murphy, 21, was also arrested in connection with the incident last week. The complaint includes gang and gun allegations.

Capt. Jonathan Tippet, who oversees the Los Angeles Police Department's elite Robbery-Homicide Division, said three men and two teenage boys likely went to the home because they knew Pop Smoke was there from social media posts. They stole items from the home, though Tippet said he could not divulge what was taken.

All five are believed to be members of a South Los Angeles gang, which Tippet would not name, and at least some of them are believed to be linked to a 2019 homicide when a fight escalated into a shooting outside the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

Authorities did not initially believe the rapper's death was related to a robbery. The home where the shooting occurred is owned by Edwin Arroyave and his wife Teddi Mellencamp, a star of "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills" and the daughter of Rock & Roll Hall-of-Famer John Mellencamp.

Teddi Mellencamp previously said on Instagram that the couple had been notified of the shooting at their rental property but knew no more than what they had seen in media reports.

Pop Smoke arrived on the rap scene in 2018 and broke out with "Welcome to the Party" a gangsta an-

them with boasts about shootings, killings and drugs that became a huge sensation, and prompted Nicki Minaj to drop a verse on a remix.

Earlier this year, Pop Smoke released the mixtape "Meet the Woo 2," which debuted at No. 7 on the Billboard Top 200 albums chart. It was the follow up to his first official release, "Meet the Woo." The rapper also had the popular hit "Gatti" with Travis Scott and Jackboys and "Dior."

His major label debut album, "Shoot for the Stars Aim for the Moon," which was executive produced by 50 Cent, recently topped the Billboard Top 200 albums charts. It was released posthumously July 3 to mostly positive reviews and features appearances from popular artists including Future, DaBaby and Quavo.

Pop Smoke had been scheduled to start a U.S. tour in Washington, D.C., on March 2.

Victims' relatives most vocal opponents of man's execution

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Family members of three people slain in Arkansas more than 20 years ago have been among the most vocal opponents to the federal government's plan to execute one of the men convicted of killing their loved ones.

That man, Daniel Lewis Lee, is first on the list of prisoners set to be killed as the Trump administration tries to bring back federal executions this week after an almost two-decade hiatus.

But relatives of William Mueller, his wife, Nancy, and her 8-year-old daughter, Sarah Powell, who were killed in 1996, say that's not what they want. They have pleaded for years that Lee, of Yukon, Oklahoma, should receive the same life sentence as the ringleader in a deadly scheme that aimed to establish a whites-only nation in the Pacific Northwest.

Hours after the scheduled time for Lee's execution, it was unclear whether any of the executions would go forward. The family members say their grief is compounded by the push to execute the 47-year-old Lee in the middle of a pandemic.

"As a supporter of President Trump, I pray that he will hear my message: the scheduled execution of Danny Lee for the murder of my daughter and granddaughter is not what I want and would bring my family more pain," Earlene Peterson, Nancy's mother and Sarah's grandmother, said in a statement last month.

Family members say the government is forcing them to put their lives at risk if they travel during the coronavirus pandemic to witness Lee's execution. Peterson; her granddaughter Monica Veillette; and Kimma Gurel, Nancy Mueller's sister and Sarah's aunt, asked a judge for a delay, which a judge initially granted.

That decision was overturned as lawyers for the federal government, Lee and others fought in court in the days leading up to the execution.

Peterson, 81, lives in Arkansas, while Veillette and Gurel live in Washington state.

An attorney for the relatives who object to the execution said they hadn't traveled to Indiana as of Monday morning. A Justice Department official said other members of the family were still planning to attend.

Some would have to travel thousands of miles to witness the execution in a small room in which the social distancing needed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus is virtually impossible.

"It feels disingenuous to me for someone to say they're doing this in our family's name and for us, and no one's taken into account our well-being and health," Veillette said.

She said other relatives want to witness the execution to counter the government's argument that it's being done on their behalf.

"For us it is a matter of being there and saying, 'This is not being done in our name; we do not want this,'" she said.

Lee's execution would be only the third carried out in the U.S. since March due to concerns about COVID-19. Missouri executed an inmate in May, and Texas executed a man last week.

The federal executions will bring together lawyers, victims' families, media and others from other communities, which could pose a public health risk. By late June, more than 57,000 inmates at state and federal prisons had tested positive for the virus, according to data compiled by The Marshall Project and The Associated Press

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 53 of 85

"You are creating a petri dish, and then you're bringing that into the prison, and the prison is already a hot spot for the virus," said Robert Dunham, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center.

The Bureau of Prisons says it's implementing safety measures that include conducting temperature checks and requiring witnesses to wear masks.

Lee's attorneys have pressed their case that his death sentence is unfair, and cited evidence from his trial that Chevie Kehoe, the alleged ringleader, actually killed Sarah.

Kehoe, of Colville, Washington, recruited Lee in 1995 for his white supremacist organization. Two years later, they were arrested for the killings of the Muellers and Sarah in Tilly, Arkansas, about 75 miles (120 kilometers) northwest of Little Rock. At their 1999 trial, prosecutors said Kehoe and Lee stole guns and \$50,000 in cash from the Muellers as part of their plan to establish a whites-only nation.

Prosecutors said Lee and Kehoe incapacitated the Muellers and questioned Sarah about where they could find money and ammunition. Then, they used stun guns on them, sealed trash bags with duct tape on their heads, taped rocks to their bodies and dumped them in a bayou.

Kehoe and Lee were both convicted of murder. The lead prosecutor and judge from Lee's trial have in recent years called the disparity in their sentences unfair.

"Perhaps more than anything else, this case illustrates that the most carefully crafted capital punishment regime in the hands of the humans who must carry it out can never be completely free of arbitrariness in all of its implementations," Judge G. Thomas Eisele wrote in a 2008 ruling denying Lee's request to set aside his death sentence.

The U.S. Supreme Court last month cleared the way for Lee and three other federal inmates to be put to death. The other three are slated to die for killing people from Iowa, Kansas and Missouri.

AP writer Michael Balsamo in Terre Haute, Indiana, and former AP writer Hannah Grabenstein contributed to this report.

Follow Andrew DeMillo on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ademillo.

Sheriff: 'Glee' star Naya Rivera saved son before drowning

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Glee" star Naya Rivera's 4-year-old son told investigators that his mother, whose body was found in a Southern California lake Monday, boosted him back on to the deck of their rented boat before he looked back and saw her disappearing under the water, authorities said.

"She must have mustered enough energy to get her son back on the boat, but not enough to save herself," Ventura County Sheriff Bill Ayub said at a news conference.

The boy, Josey Hollis Dorsey, was found asleep and alone in a life vest on the drifting pontoon boat about three hours after they launched on Lake Piru northwest of Los Angeles, setting off a five-day search that ended with the discovery of the body of the 33-year-old floating near the surface early Monday, authorities said.

The mother and son had gone swimming, which was permitted in that part of the lake, Ayub said. She was not wearing a life vest.

Authorities believe that Rivera drowned accidentally, and that her body was most likely trapped in the vegetation under the lake for several days before floating to the top, Ayub said.

Divers had already thoroughly searched the area where she was eventually found, but shrubbery that had grown wildly in the area, which was recently dry, must have kept her hidden in the murky water.

Family members chatted with Rivera via FaceTime when she was on the boat, and search crews watched those videos for clues to where she might have gone down, Ayub said.

"It has been an extremely difficult time for her family throughout this ordeal," Ayub said "We share in their grief."

Rivera played singing cheerleader Santana Lopez for six seasons from 2009 to 2015 on the Fox musical-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 54 of 85

comedy "Glee."

She is the third major cast member from the show to die in their 30s.

The announcement of her death comes seven years to the day after co-star Cory Monteith died at 31 from a toxic mix of alcohol and heroin, with the series losing one of its leads while it was still on the air.

Another co-star, Mark Salling, who Rivera dated at one point, killed himself in 2018 at age 35 after pleading guilty to child pornography charges.

Rivera's body was flown by helicopter 40 miles (64 kilometres) to the coroner's office in Ventura, where an autopsy would be conducted and an official identification made, authorities said.

Ayub said the circumstances from the location of the body to the fact that no one else has been reported missing in the lake makes the department "confident that the body we found is Naya Rivera."

Rivera had experience boating on the lake in Los Padres National Forest an hour's drive from Los Angeles.

It was closed down and searched by dozens of divers with help from sonar and robotic devices combing the bottom and helicopters and drones searching above.

Surveillance video showed the mother and son parking and renting the boat at about 1 p.m. on July 8.

The vendor who rented it to them went looking for them when they failed to return on time, and found the boat drifting in the northern end of the lake with the boy aboard.

The boy, Rivera's son from her marriage to actor Ryan Dorsey, was safe and healthy and quickly reunited with family members after he was found, authorities said.

His parents divorced in 2018 after nearly four years of marriage.

The day before her death, Rivera tweeted a photo of herself and Josey that read, "just the two of us."

Follow AP Entertainment Writer Andrew Dalton on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/andyjamesdalton>.

US budget deficit hits all-time high of \$864 billion in June

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal government incurred the biggest monthly budget deficit in history in June as spending on programs to combat the coronavirus recession exploded while millions of job losses cut into tax revenues.

The Treasury Department reported Monday that the deficit hit \$864 billion last month, an amount of red ink that surpasses most annual deficits in the nation's history and is above the previous monthly deficit record of \$738 billion in April. That amount was also tied to the trillions of dollars Congress has provided to cushion the impact of the widespread shutdowns that occurred in an effort to limit the spread of the viral pandemic.

For the first nine months of this budget year, which began Oct. 1, the deficit totals \$2.74 trillion, also a record for that period. That puts the country well on the way to hitting the \$3.7 trillion deficit for the whole year that has been forecast by the Congressional Budget Office.

That total would surpass the previous annual record of \$1.4 trillion set in 2009 when the government was spending heavily to lift the country out of the recession caused by the 2008 financial crisis.

The June deficit was driven higher by spending on various government relief programs such as an extra \$600 per week in expanded unemployment benefits and a Paycheck Protection Program that provided support to businesses to keep workers on their payrolls.

The report showed that the cost of the Paycheck Protection Program in June was \$511 billion. That reflected a charge to the government for all the bank loans made under the program even though the government will not actually have to pay out funds until the banks determine whether the businesses met the criteria for having the loans forgiven. Those requirements include spending at least 60% of the loan amount on worker pay with the other 40% going to overhead costs such as rent and utilities.

Another reason for the surge in the June deficit was the government's decision to delay tax payments this year until July 15. That decision meant that quarterly payments made by individual taxpayers and corporations will not be due until July 15 this year rather than June.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 55 of 85

So far this budget year, revenues total \$2.26 trillion, down 13.4% from the same period last year, while spending totals \$5 trillion, up 49.1% from a year ago.

The CBO estimate of a \$3.7 trillion deficit for this year could go higher depending on the course of the economy. The country fell into a deep recession in February, ending a record long expansion of nearly 11 years. The Trump administration is predicting that the economy will come roaring back in second half of this year but many private forecasters are concerned that a resurgence of virus cases could make consumers too fearful to resume spending, which drives 70% of the economy.

Congress which has already approved more than \$3 trillion in a series of rescue packages, is scheduled to debate another support effort when it returns from recess on June 20. Democrats are pushing for an extension of the expanded unemployment benefits which will soon run out.

Nancy Vanden Houten, senior economist at Oxford Economics, said she was expecting that lawmakers would end up compromising on a new economic support package that would fall somewhere between a \$3.5 trillion measure passed by the House but not taken up by the Senate and what is shaping up to be an opening offer by Senate Republicans for a package of about \$1.5 trillion.

"The risk is that the deficit will be larger due to additional stimulus but, given the congressional timetable, the impact of the next package will likely be skewed to fiscal 2021, which starts Oct. 1," she said.

US debates school reopening, WHO warns 'no return to normal'

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON and ADAM GELLER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The resurgence of the coronavirus in the United States ignited fierce debate Monday about whether to reopen schools, as global health officials warned that the pandemic will intensify unless more countries adopt comprehensive plans to combat it.

"If the basics aren't followed, there is only one way this pandemic is going to go," said the director of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "It's going to get worse and worse and worse."

Debate over the risks the virus poses, and how best to fight it, were spotlighted in Florida after it shattered the record among U.S. states for the largest single-day increase, with more than 15,000 newly confirmed cases.

Officials and health experts in hard-hit Miami pushed back against pressure, both from Gov. Ron DeSantis and President Donald Trump, to bring students back to classrooms next month.

"We just absolutely cannot risk the health of children, their well-being and safety, or any of our colleagues," said Karla Hernandez-Mats, president of the United Teachers of Dade union and a middle school teacher herself. "We're probably going to have to go to a full shutdown mode. I can't see the schools reopening except with the 100% virtual model."

Parents have until Wednesday to notify the Miami-Dade school district of their decision whether they will send their kids to school this fall or have them study online from home.

"Children can get the virus in their bodies and get contaminated just like anybody else," said Florida International University epidemiologist Dr. Aileen Marty, who has been advising the Miami school district on its reopening plans.

DeSantis has argued that children have not proven to be vectors for the disease and that if retailers like Walmart can be reopened safely, then schools should be able to as well. But he made those arguments with a notable caveat, saying that each county should make its own decision on reopening in consultation with local health officials.

WHO officials cautioned that decisions on reopening schools should be made without political considerations, as part of a comprehensive strategy for battling COVID-19.

"We can't turn schools into yet another political football in this game. It's not fair on our children," Dr. Michael Ryan, the organization's emergencies chief, said Monday.

The debate is hardly limited to Florida.

In Detroit, where summer school classes for hundreds of students opened Monday, protesters blocked a school bus yard with tree branches.

"When I visited schools this morning I knew we were doing the right thing for children," schools Super-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 56 of 85

intendent Nikolai Vitti said, in a post on Twitter.

"COVID is not going away. Many of our children need face-to-face, direct engagement," he said.

But lawyer Shanta Driver said she planned to file a lawsuit to stop the in-person instruction.

"I'm not going back until this pandemic is defeated. There is not a safe way to return to school while this virus is spreading uncontained," said teacher Benjamin Royal.

Officials in California's two largest school districts, Los Angeles and San Diego, announced Monday that students will stick to online learning from home when school resumes next month, rather than return to classrooms.

The districts cited research about school safety experiences from around the world, along with state and local health guidance.

"One fact is clear: Those countries that have managed to safely reopen schools have done so with declining infection rates and on-demand testing available. California has neither," the districts said in a joint statement. Los Angeles, the second largest school district in the U.S., has about 730,000 students and San Diego serves about 135,000 students.

Shortly after the districts made their announcement, California Gov. Gavin Newsom expanded closure of bars and indoor dining statewide and ordered gyms, churches and hair salons closed in most places.

In New York, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said schools will be allowed to reopen in parts of the state where infection rates average 5% or less for two weeks. Students and teachers will be screened for illness, must wear face masks and keep 6 feet apart when possible.

"Common sense and intelligence can still determine what we do even in this crazy environment," Cuomo said. "We're not going to use our children as guinea pigs."

In North Carolina, which reported its highest one-day number of cases and hospitalizations, Gov. Roy Cooper has asked school districts to prepare three re-opening plans that include options for in-person and fully remote learning. His decision is expected later this week.

But teacher Becky Maxam, whose husband is considered high-risk for the virus because of a genetic heart condition, said she doesn't plan to return if her Charlotte middle school reopens.

"I'm not going back if we're opening up. I can't risk my family," Maxam said. "I think we should be virtual until we find a vaccine or cases go down much more than what they are."

The debate over what to do about schools came as a pair of WHO experts were in China for a mission to trace the origin of the pandemic. The virus was first detected in central China's city of Wuhan late last year. Beijing had been reluctant to allow a probe but relented after scores of countries called on the WHO to conduct a thorough investigation.

China has argued that the virus might have originated outside of China and has angrily denied allegations that it covered up the scale of the outbreak as infections first began to spread.

Trump has harshly criticized the WHO over its response to the coronavirus pandemic and accused it of bowing to Chinese influence. The Trump administration formally notified the U.N. last week of its withdrawal from WHO, although the pullout won't take effect until July 6, 2021.

Also Monday, the United Nations warned that the pandemic could cause 130 million more people worldwide to go hungry this year.

U.N. officials estimate there were about 690 million people in 2019 who went hungry worldwide, with the majority in Asia and Africa.

"While it is too soon to assess the full impact of the lockdowns and other containment measures," the agency said that, at a minimum, another 83 million would go hungry as a result of the pandemic.

The WHO's Tedros said noted Monday that the most recent surge in cases had come in the Americas. The United States and Brazil alone account for more than a third of all global deaths from the disease.

In Japan, more than 30 Marines tested positive at the Futenma U.S. air station on Okinawa, where infections among American service members have rapidly risen to more than 90 since last week. Okinawa is home to more than half of about 50,000 American troops based in Japan.

In other parts of the world, the number of infections has been rising dramatically in India, South Africa

and Brazil, whose virus-denying president has tested positive.

India, which has the most confirmed virus cases after the United States and Brazil, on Monday reported a record daily surge of 28,701 new cases reported in the past 24 hours. Authorities in several cities are reinstating strict lockdowns after attempting to loosen things up to revive an ailing economy.

In South Africa, which accounts for over 40% of all the reported coronavirus cases in Africa, President Cyril Ramaphosa reimposed a ban on alcohol sales and a nighttime curfew to reduce the number of people needing emergency treatment so hospitals have more beds to treat COVID-19 patients.

"There is no way that we can avoid the coronavirus storm. But we can limit the damage that it can cause to our lives," Ramaphosa said in a letter to the nation Monday.

Geller reported from New York. Associated Press writers around the world contributed to this report.

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

Immigration courts reopen despite rising coronavirus cases

By REGINA GARCIA CANO and JULIE WATSON Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — Three immigration courts reopened Monday as the government extended its push to fully restart the clogged system despite rising coronavirus cases in states where many of the small courtrooms are located.

In Baltimore, people with hearings to reach final decisions were allowed to enter the federal building housing the immigration court only if they wore masks. Benches in a courtroom and seats in a waiting area were blocked off with tape, and social distancing signs were placed on the floor and elevators.

But scheduling hearings, which can include dozens of people in a single courtroom, did not take place Monday.

Courts in Newark and Detroit also were scheduled to reopen Monday. The reopenings extend a haphazard but unmistakable march to business as usual that has outraged judges and lawyers who say the pandemic poses unacceptable risk of spreading disease.

The Justice Department's Executive Office for Immigration Review started reopening courts over the past month to non-detained immigrants, first in Honolulu on June 15 and over the next three weeks in Boston; Buffalo, New York; Hartford, Connecticut; Las Vegas; New Orleans; Chicago; Cleveland; and Philadelphia.

Changes have been frequent and last minute.

Dallas reopened June 29 but, five days later, the agency announced on Twitter that it was closing until July 17 and gave no explanation. Texas has been reporting a record number of coronavirus cases, and its governor has warned the state may have to return to a lockdown to get things under control.

San Diego, which also has seen a surge in coronavirus cases, was scheduled to reopen court on July 6 but moved it back two weeks — again without explanation.

Hearings for non-detained immigrants were suspended in March because of the public health crisis, though courts in detention centers have continued to operate on a limited basis.

The court system's backlog of 1.2 million cases becomes more crushing as long as courts are closed. The Justice Department said Monday that any court whose reopening date hasn't been announced will be closed through July.

At Baltimore's reopening Monday, security guards in the lobby of the federal building told people they could only enter without any accompanying relatives.

Among those told to wait outside was Wilfredo Vazquez, who traveled more than two hours from the West Virginia-Maryland border with his wife, who faces the risk of deportation. They drove the approximately 150 miles (240 kilometers) so she could try to file paperwork in her case after her scheduled check-in in June was canceled.

"We live very far away," Vazquez said. "So much waste of time frustrates me."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 58 of 85

The Justice Department agency has given virtually no explanation on what public health data it is using to determine if courtrooms are safe, said Ashley Tabbador, a Los Angeles-based immigration judge speaking in her capacity as president of the National Association of Immigration Judges union.

"We keep coming back to 'what numbers are you using?'" she said. "They seem to be out of touch with the state numbers we are seeing."

Judges in Dallas have contacted the union, concerned their health is being put at risk. The union represents about 460 immigration judges who work more than 65 courts.

"People don't have trust that the agency is doing the right thing," Tabbador said.

The agency said it continually reviews guidance from the Justice Department, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other federal agencies in making pandemic-related operational decisions.

"Consistent with public health officials' guidance, EOIR has implemented practices to help to protect all people working in and visiting EOIR spaces throughout the country," spokeswoman Kathryn Mattingly said in an email.

In conjunction with the reopening, the government is going to stop allowing the electronic filing of documents, which it had done as a precaution to prevent the spread of the virus.

The agency is requiring face coverings and social distancing, but it has not shared its safety protocols, such as what will be done if someone shows up with no mask, Tabbador said.

Immigration courts are often housed in office buildings — not courthouses — making it particularly difficult for people to spread apart because the rooms are small, Tabbador said, adding that there is also little ventilation, especially in older buildings. The virus may linger in the air indoors, increasing the risk of infection in those spaces, according to the World Health Organization.

Last month, a dozen Democratic senators wrote to the agency asking about the logic behind the May 29 decision to reopen the court system.

Hearings in courts for non-detained immigrants, who can come and go freely, usually require the person be there with their lawyer, especially when deciding whether someone is eligible for asylum.

"Despite these risks, you are moving ahead with the re-openings, and it is far from clear that the immigration courts and the parties who will be using them are prepared for those risks," the senators stated in the letter.

The agency "does not acknowledge the difficulties that litigants still face in effectively presenting their cases, as health concerns may continue to deter witnesses from appearing in court and office closures may make it difficult to obtain medical records, tax records, and other supporting documents," the letter states.

The American Immigration Lawyers Association has urged the agency to postpone the majority of non-detained hearings until the health crisis has subsided.

Watson reported from San Diego.

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

Judge blocks federal executions; administration appeals

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (AP) — A U.S. district judge on Monday ordered a new delay in federal executions, hours before the first lethal injection was scheduled to be carried out at a federal prison in Indiana. The Trump administration immediately appealed to a higher court, asking that the executions move forward.

Late Monday, the federal appeals court in Washington, D.C., refused to allow the executions to proceed. The administration has asked the Supreme Court to step in.

U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan said there are still legal issues to resolve and that "the public is not served by short-circuiting legitimate judicial process." The executions, pushed by the administration, would be the first carried out at the federal level since 2003.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 59 of 85

Chutkan said the inmates have presented evidence showing that the government's plan to use only pentobarbital to carry out the executions "poses an unconstitutionally significant risk of serious pain."

Chutkan said the inmates produced evidence that, in other executions, prisoners who were given pentobarbital suffered "flash pulmonary edema," which she said interferes with breathing and produces sensations of drowning and strangulation.

The inmates have identified alternatives, including the use of an opioid or anti-anxiety drug at the start of the procedure or a different method altogether, a firing squad, Chutkan said.

The Justice Department appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

And the Bureau of Prisons continued with preparations in order to move forward should the stay be lifted. The man slated for execution, Daniel Lewis Lee has had access to social visitors, has visited with his spiritual adviser and has been allowed to receive mail, prison officials said. He's been under constant staff supervision. The witnesses for Lee are expected to include three family members, his lawyers and spiritual adviser.

The new hold came a day after a federal appeals court lifted a hold on the execution of Lee, of Yukon, Oklahoma, which was scheduled for 4 p.m. EDT on Monday at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana. He was convicted in Arkansas of the 1996 killings of gun dealer William Mueller, his wife, Nancy, and her 8-year-old daughter, Sarah Powell.

"The government has been trying to plow forward with these executions despite many unanswered questions about the legality of its new execution protocol," said Shawn Nolan, one of the attorneys for the men facing federal execution.

The Lee execution was to be carried out after a federal appeals court lifted an injunction on Sunday that had been put in place last week after some members of the victims' family argued they would be put at high risk for the coronavirus if they had to travel to attend. The family on Monday appealed to the Supreme Court.

The decision to move forward with the execution -- and two others scheduled later in the week -- during a global health pandemic that has killed more than 135,000 people in the United States and is ravaging prisons nationwide, drew scrutiny from civil rights groups as well as family of Lee's victims.

Critics argue that the government is creating an unnecessary and manufactured urgency for political gain. The developments are also likely to add a new front to the national conversation about criminal justice reform in the lead-up to the 2020 elections.

Anti-death penalty protesters began gathering in Terre Haute on Monday. Organizer Abraham Bonowitz drove a van through the city with a sign emblazoned on the side of a trailer that read, "'Stop executions now!'"

Because of coronavirus concerns, Bonowitz said his group, Death Penalty Action, wasn't encouraging others to show up. No more than a few dozen protesters were expected to join him.

"It's symbolic," Bonowitz said about the protests. "We are just here to say that this is wrong."

In an interview with The Associated Press last week, Attorney General William Barr said the Justice Department has a duty to carry out the sentences imposed by the courts, including the death penalty, and to bring a sense of closure to the victims and those in the communities where the killings happened.

But relatives of those killed by Lee strongly oppose that idea. They wanted to be present to counter any contention that it was being done on their behalf.

"For us it is a matter of being there and saying, 'This is not being done in our name; we do not want this,'" said relative Monica Veillette.

The relatives would be traveling thousands of miles and witnessing the execution in a small room where the social distancing recommended to prevent the virus' spread is virtually impossible. An attorney for the family members who have objected to the execution said they hadn't traveled to Indiana, as of Monday morning.

The federal prison system has struggled in recent months to contain the exploding number of coronavirus cases behind bars. There are currently four confirmed coronavirus cases among inmates at the Terre

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 60 of 85

Haute prison, according to federal statistics, and one inmate there has died.

Barr said he believes the Bureau of Prisons could “carry out these executions without being at risk.” The agency has put a number of additional measures in place, including temperature checks and requiring witnesses to wear masks.

But on Sunday, the Justice Department disclosed that a staff member involved in preparing for the execution had tested positive for the coronavirus, but said he had not been in the execution chamber and had not come into contact with anyone on the specialized team sent to handle the execution.

The three men scheduled to be executed this week had been scheduled to be put to death when Barr announced the federal government would resume executions last year, ending an informal moratorium on federal capital punishment as the issue receded from the public domain. A fourth man is scheduled to be put to death in August.

Executions on the federal level have been rare and the government has put to death only three defendants since restoring the federal death penalty in 1988 — most recently in 2003, when Louis Jones was executed for the 1995 kidnapping, rape and murder of a young female soldier.

In 2014, following a botched state execution in Oklahoma, President Barack Obama directed the Justice Department to conduct a broad review of capital punishment and issues surrounding lethal injection drugs.

The attorney general said last July that the Obama-era review had been completed, clearing the way for executions to resume.

Associated Press writers Colleen Long and Mark Sherman in Washington, Michael Tarm in Chicago and Andrew DeMillo in Little Rock, Ark., contributed to this report.

Subways sparkle, but does cleaning decrease COVID-19 risk?

By DAVID PORTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Mass transit systems around the world have taken unprecedented — and expensive — steps to curb the spread of the coronavirus, including New York shutting down its subways overnight and testing powerful ultraviolet lamps to disinfect seats, poles and floors.

The cleaning measures produced something commuters have not seen in a while, or possibly ever: thousands of freshly scrubbed cars that look, feel and even smell clean. But experts say those steps solve only part of the problem, and transit officials are studying more advanced methods that might someday automatically disinfect transit systems around the clock.

The Moscow Metro and a public bus company in Shanghai have experimented with germ-killing ultraviolet light. Agencies in Hungary and the Czech Republic have tried using ozone gas as a disinfectant. The public transit system in Dallas tested a “dry fogging” system, and Hong Kong used a robot that sprays a hydrogen peroxide solution, according to a survey by international engineering and professional services firm WSP.

In Chicago, rail cars are cleaned every day before starting service and are prowled at night by crews wearing backpack-style electrostatic sprayers that cover all interior surfaces with disinfectant.

All that cleaning does cut the threat of catching the virus, experts say, but the benefits are limited.

The virus transmits predominantly through droplets in the air — it’s “everywhere and could be nowhere,” said Robyn Gershon, a clinical professor of epidemiology at New York University.

Cleaning a train car at a maintenance yard overnight — or even several times during the day, as New York’s Metropolitan Transportation Authority does — might not help the transit employee or passenger stuck in close quarters with a coughing person.

Wearing a face mask “will protect us the most, having that control among ourselves,” Gershon said. “I think the rest of it is really more the illusion, and that’s not a small thing because it plays with our psyches.”

Patrick Warren, the MTA’s chief safety officer, said the authority’s aggressive cleaning and disinfecting began at a time when health officials were warning that the virus could easily be transmitted from hard surfaces — guidance that has since evolved to place more emphasis on airborne transmission.

“As goes the science, so goes what we are doing,” Warren said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 61 of 85

New York's subway system normally serves more than 5 million riders a day, but ridership plunged more than 90 percent at the height of the pandemic. Combined with plummeting revenues at its toll bridges and tunnels, the MTA has projected the pandemic will cost the agency more than \$10 billion through next year. The cleaning program will wind up costing hundreds of millions of dollars over what the MTA would normally spend, Chairman Pat Foye said this past spring.

Is it worth the price? A survey of 1,000 mass transit riders conducted by New York-based advocacy group Tri-State Transportation Campaign found that cleaning topped a list of actions people wanted before they would feel comfortable riding mass transit again.

"But to what extent are we now overspending, or veering too far into security theater?" Executive Director Nick Sifuentes asked recently.

Dr. David Brenner, director of the Center for Radiological Research at Columbia University Irving Medical Center, has assisted the MTA on its UV light pilot program. He called the cleaning "not an ideal solution, but it's a solution that is available."

"I think it does increase the public safety because instead of having a continuous buildup of the virus, you are going back to zero every day," Brenner said. "A much better solution would be if you could continuously decontaminate the air throughout the course of the day."

That possibility may be on the horizon. A 2018 study and another published this month, both of which Brenner contributed to, concluded that low levels of a certain type of ultraviolet light, called far-UVC light, can be circulated continuously in an enclosed space and kill some forms of human coronavirus as effectively as conventional UV light — without the harmful effects to human eyes and skin.

Far-UVC light could offer a whole new level of protection for passengers and transit employees, if it is also found to be effective against the virus that causes COVID-19. The MTA is exploring using the technology on its subways.

The MTA is already testing a different form of UV light to disinfect subway cars, but it can only be done at station yards when the cars are out of service because of the harmful effect on humans. The limited pilot program costs about \$1 million. Officials have not said how much it would cost to expand to the whole system. Chicago Transit Authority officials are waiting for the results of New York's pilot program to see if the light is an option for their transit system.

Fred Maxik, whose company, Healthe, makes far-UVC light systems that are being used in office buildings and schools, cautioned that far-UVC light is not necessarily a panacea for anxious subway riders.

"No technology we have today is going to be perfect. It's going to have to be used in conjunction with other good behaviors," he said. "But I think this is the best of what we've got."

Warren called far-UVC "a great innovation" but added that the logistical challenges of installing it across a century-old subway system are formidable. He would not speculate on what the agency's cleaning efforts might look like a year from now.

"That's the equation that everyone wants the answer to, including us," he said, explaining that the agency is weighing what methods are economical and effective. "If we can't have a clean, disinfected system that the customers trust, we're not going to get the customers to come back."

Associated Press Writer Kathleen Foody in Chicago contributed to this report.

Up next for police defunding advocates: Win local elections

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Amid Americans' national reckoning on racism, a coalition of progressive groups is forming a political action committee to back local candidates who want to redirect money away from traditional police departments into other social services.

An outgrowth of the "Defund the Police" movement, the WFP Justice Fund is led by the Working Families Party and the Movement for Black Lives' Electoral Justice Project. The PAC has filed paperwork with the Federal Election Commission and plans immediately to begin accepting contributions and vetting candi-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 62 of 85

dates to support.

Organizers described the effort to The Associated Press on Monday as a counter to the political power of police unions and a way to continue educating voters about what the "defund" push means. The result, they said, would be a shift in local government budgets and public safety systems around the country.

"We've abided by an era where 'law and order' was this stamp of approval, where law enforcement endorsements somehow signified legitimacy," said Maurice Mitchell, executive director of the Working Families Party, which backs democratic socialists and progressive candidates at all levels of government.

"So we are creating a counterbalance that can create the space for elected officials to do the work that's being demanded from the streets," Mitchell continued, adding that the goal is "divestment from things that aren't working and investment in things that are working."

The PAC's launch came the same day that President Donald Trump met at the White House with law enforcement officers and people who have had positive interactions with them. It's part of Trump's effort to pitch himself as a law-and-order politician while warning of a "radical left" push toward lawlessness.

But the PAC's organizers point to public polling since George Floyd, a handcuffed Black man, died May 25 under the knee of a white Minneapolis police officer.

In June, a survey by the AP and the NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found a dramatic shift in the nation's opinions on policing and race, with considerably more Americans than five years ago believing that police brutality is a serious problem and that too often it unequally targets Black Americans and then goes undisciplined. Notable among those clear majorities was a palpable shift among white Americans.

Jessica Byrd, who leads the Electoral Justice Project and sits on the new PAC's board, said that shift opens the door to policy changes. Yet Byrd and other organizers said they are aware of the fraught politics surrounding calls to "defund the police."

At the White House, Trump continued his broadsides against the movement as his campaign tried to tie them to Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

"Reckless politicians have defamed our law enforcement heroes as the enemy," Trump said. "They call them the enemy. They actually go and say they're the enemy and even call them an invading army."

Biden, in fact, opposes the "defund" idea and wants to change police practices within existing departments while boosting taxpayer support for other social services. Other establishment Democrats have followed suit. Even progressives differ on exactly what local jurisdictions should do.

PAC organizers said they aren't necessarily looking for candidates who pledge absolute elimination of police forces.

"There have been people that have tried to create a straw man argument to suggest that this movement is somehow about abolishing the police altogether tomorrow," Mitchell said. "This movement is about public safety."

Byrd made clear that she wants Americans to understand local policing's roots in enforcing fugitive slave laws before slavery was abolished and the Jim Crow segregation laws that followed abolition. So it isn't "radical," she argued, to support approaches like those made in Camden, New Jersey, which disbanded and rebuilt its police force, or the ongoing restructuring debates in Minneapolis or Los Angeles.

The idea, she said, is a "public safety" approach that spends more on education, neighborhood development and parks and recreation and that steers tasks now handled by police to other agencies.

Armed officers aren't the ideal respondents "if a person is unhoused or a person is in mental health distress or if children are being too loud," Byrd said. "We can have a system where the person who arrives doesn't have a gun, doesn't have a baton and doesn't arrive with the right to be judge, jury and executioner in that moment."

Mitchell and Byrd said the PAC could expand to target legislative races, since state lawmakers write much of the criminal code. But mayors' executive control of police departments and city councils' control of police budgets, they said, are the starting point.

In Washington, D.C., City Council candidate Janeese Lewis George, backed by the Working Families Party, recently toppled an incumbent Democrat on a "defunding" platform and is in line to claim the seat in November. She faced an establishment advertising onslaught that she said misrepresented her position

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 63 of 85

by suggesting she wanted to abolish police altogether. That's not the case, she said.

"I was coming from the standpoint that we want to reduce crime in our city -- and the answer isn't to continue to give money to the police department but to fund programs that work," she said.

George said she's simply inviting a serious conversation that goes beyond slogans. "It's a gradual thing," she said, "getting people to buy into innovative ideas."

Associated Press writer Aamer Madhani contributed to this report from Washington.

Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, "Ground Game."

Washington's NFL team drops 'Redskins' name after 87 years

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Washington NFL franchise announced Monday it is dropping the "Redskins" name and Indian head logo, bowing to recent pressure from sponsors and decades of criticism that they are offensive to Native Americans.

A new name must still be selected for one of the oldest and most storied teams in the National Football League, and it's unclear how soon that will happen. But for now, arguably the most polarizing name in North American professional sports is gone at a time of reckoning over racial injustice, iconography and racism in the U.S.

The team said it is "retiring" the name and logo and that owner Dan Snyder and coach Ron Rivera are working closely to develop a new moniker and design. The announcement came on the old letterhead with the Redskins name because the team technically retains it until a new one is approved.

"As a kid who grew up in the (D.C. area), it'll always be #HTTR (fight song 'Hail to the Redskins') but looking forward to the future," starting quarterback Dwayne Haskins tweeted.

The "R" in "Hail to the Redskins" could soon be replaced by Redtails, Redwolves or Redhawks. Redtails or Red Tails — an homage to the Tuskegee Airmen from World War II — is the favorite on online sportsbook BetOnline, and the group said it "would be honored and pleased to work with the organization during and after the (name change) process, should this name be adopted."

This will be the NFL's first name change since the late 1990s when the Tennessee Oilers became the Titans two seasons after moving from Houston.

After President Donald Trump last week criticized the Redskins and Major League Baseball's Cleveland Indians for considering name changes, White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said the president "believes that the Native American community would be very angry at this and he does have polling to back him up." She cited a 2016 Washington Post poll showing 90% of Native Americans aren't offended by the name, a survey that has since been discredited by experts.

The announcement came less than two weeks after Snyder, a boyhood fan of the team who once declared he would never get rid of the name, launched a "thorough review" amid pressure from sponsors. FedEx, Nike, Pepsi and Bank of America all lined up against the name, which was given to the franchise in 1933 when the team was still based in Boston.

Native American advocates and experts have long criticized the name they call a "dictionary-defined racial slur." Over a dozen Native leaders and organizations wrote to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell last week demanding an immediate end to Washington's use of the name. Goodell, who has fielded questions on the topic for years, said he supported the review.

"The NFL and Dan Snyder, we have to commend them on making the right call to change the name," said Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter, leader of the "Change the Mascot" campaign. "Dan Snyder won today because now he has a legacy that will be different from the racial slur that was the team name. I know that's not an easy thing to do, but it was the right thing to do."

Protests against the name predate Snyder buying the team in 1999, and, until now, he had shown no willingness to consider a change. Strong words from sponsors — including a company run by a minority stakeholder of the team — changed the equation.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 64 of 85

FedEx earlier this month became the first sponsor to announce it had asked the organization to change the name, particularly important because CEO Frederick Smith owns part of the team. FedEx paid \$205 million for the long-term naming rights to the team's stadium in Landover, Maryland.

The lease at FedEx Field expires in 2027, and dropping the name keeps open various possibilities in Maryland, Virginia and Washington for the team's new stadium and headquarters. District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser has said the name was an "obstacle" to Snyder building on the old RFK Stadium site, which is believed to be his preference.

Bowser said she welcomed the name change but there were still obstacles to overcome before the team's return from suburban Maryland became a serious possibility.

"Yes, we want to change the name and change the location," she said. "The Washington football team should be playing in Washington."

At a Dick's Sporting Goods store in the northeast part of the district, Redskins burgundy gear took up far less rack space Monday than that of the reigning MLB champion Nationals and about as much as the NHL's Capitals. A store employee said the merchandise generally doesn't sell very well, crediting that to a combination of the name, the move out of the district and years of professional mediocrity.

MLB's Atlanta Braves and the NHL's Chicago Blackhawks have said they have no inclination to make a change. Some advocates would like to see all Native American names, mascots and imagery out of sports.

"Our fight continues," Crystal Echo Hawk of the Native American advocacy group IllumiNative said in a statement. "We will not rest until the offensive use of Native imagery, logos and names are eradicated from professional, collegiate and (other school) sports. The time is now to stand in solidarity and declare that racism will not be tolerated."

Halbritter said it was important to note those other names are not a slur, but he hopes a "broader discussion" can be had. He pointed out that Florida State spoke with the Seminole tribe about its name, the same thing a minor league baseball team in Spokane, Washington, did with local Native Americans.

Long removed from the glory days of winning Super Bowl titles in the 1982, 1987 and 1991 seasons under coach Joe Gibbs, Washington's NFL team has just five playoff appearances in 21 years and no postseason victories since 2005. The team has lacked a nationally marketable player since Robert Griffin III's short-lived stardom, and the 2020 schedule features zero prime-time games for a franchise that used to be a draw.

Re-branding with a new name and logo — and perhaps the same burgundy and gold colors — coupled with turning football operations over to Rivera could be a boon for Snyder on and off the field. Even if a segment of the fan base opposes the change in the name of tradition, winning would more than make up for those losses.

Marty Conway, a Georgetown University adjunct professor of sports marketing and business, said that while the NFL and team could pay tens of millions of dollars to buy back old merchandise, the long-term benefits are more lucrative with a new stadium naming rights deal and other corporate sponsorships.

"It's a huge opportunity, certainly long overdue in terms of the time frame," Conway said. "But I think there's sort of an immediate opportunity, which we're seeing play out every day, which is to reposition the franchise and in a step-by-step way away from the roots of its past and consistent with the change in time and social climate."

Associated Press writers Kevin Freking and Ashraf Khalil contributed to this report.

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

Millennials and boomers: Pandemic pain, by the generation

By DAN SEWELL Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — Millennials, you're taking a big hit — again. And you're not OK, either, boomers.

Sometimes at odds, America's two largest generations now have something to agree on: The coronavirus pandemic has smacked many of them at a pivotal time in their lives.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 65 of 85

For baby boomers, named for the post-World War II surge of births, that means those who are retired or are nearing retirement are seeing their 401(k) accounts and IRAs looking unreliable while their health is at high risk.

Millennials, who became young adults in this century, are getting socked again just as they were beginning to recover after what a Census researcher found were the Great Recession's hardest hits to jobs and pay.

"The long-lasting effects of the Great Recession on millennials, that was kind of scarring," said Gray Kimbrough, a millennial and an economist at American University in Washington. "And now when the economy had finally clawed back to where we were before the Great Recession, then this hit at a particularly bad time as well for millennials in particular."

Another factor: Millennials had been the most diverse generation, and the pandemic has hurt Black people and Latinos disproportionately both in health and financially. "The pandemic has shined a spotlight on massive inequality by race, ethnicity and gender," said Christian Weller, a professor of public policy at the University of Massachusetts-Boston.

This year has highlighted America's generation gaps, especially between the two largest generations. Both have been stereotyped as being self-absorbed — millennials as selfie-obsessed avocado toast addicts, boomers for their oversized "mcmansions" and self-indulgence. And both are feeling pandemic pain, though in different ways.

"When the generations divide, youth will know only youth; the aged will know only the aged," Landon Jones wrote in "Great Expectations: America & the Baby Boom Generation," his 1980 book that coined the term boomer. "And as always, the boom generation will know only itself."

The boomers were mostly born to "the Greatest Generation," Americans who survived the Great Depression as children and rallied together to win World War II. But while birth rates slowed down during the ensuing "Generation X," the millennial generation expanded, fueled in part by immigration.

Millennials became the best-educated generation and more open to social change, only to find that the boomers' helped elect Republican Donald Trump president by outvoting them in 2016.

Hence the dismissive "OK, boomer!" And boomers aren't amused.

The virus has killed older Americans more than others. It left many isolated at home for safety — and with a sense they are considered expendable in efforts to reopen the economy.

"We've become a throwaway generation," said Norm Wernet, 74, an advocate for retiree causes in Ohio. "It infuriates us."

It's upsetting to see so many younger people going maskless around older people, Wernet said, even as federal disease experts say wearing masks helps protect vulnerable people. Boomers, he said, aren't getting to enjoy the golden years they worked decades to reach.

Meanwhile, a string of newspaper and magazine stories have dubbed millennials "the unluckiest generation."

Analyst Ana Hernandez Kent, 29, who has been studying her millennial generation at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, said in May that millennials "may face a devastating setback" from the pandemic — but that all is not lost.

"Millennials still have time to recover," she wrote, adding that the current crisis offers an opportunity to rethink household finances and build resilience against future setbacks. "With many millennials entering positions of power," she wrote, "policymakers may be prompted to think creatively about solutions to help financially strengthen not only this generation but also the ones that follow."

Richard Fry, a senior researcher for the Washington-based Pew Research Center, says early studies of pandemic attitudes have shown that older people see it more as a health crisis, while young adults worry more about economic impact. But researchers are finding older Americans have been hit harder by job loss, too, in this recession.

Having lunch together on a restaurant deck in suburban Cincinnati, a father and son recently discussed differences in generational views of 2020.

"I've had friends that have been laid off. I've been partially furloughed along the way. I'm not accustomed to that," said Chris Newsome, 36, a millennial who went to college under the G.I. Bill after serving two

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 66 of 85

tours of Army duty in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. That helped his finances through the Great Recession, but he's "certainly feeling the sting" of this downturn.

"We haven't seen something exactly like this before," Newsome said. "We don't really know what we're walking into. ... It's complicated everybody's personal and professional lives."

Newsome, who works in job placement, said some businesses he worked with stopped hiring or shut down. His family and peers had to suddenly work from home, leaving many to manage day care and schooling. Gbenga Ajilore, a senior economist at the Center for American Progress, said the pandemic has forced one parent in some two-income families to drop out of the work force.

Chris' father, Buck Newsome, 64, president of Cambridge Financial Group, said he felt the Great Recession was "more visceral for me and my peers."

Many boomers were in peak earning years, "sailing along" toward retirement, when underlying problems with the economy highlighted by the housing bubble finally popped. But the current recession was self-inflicted, caused by shutdowns and quarantines for public health, he said.

He thinks the underpinnings remain to get the economy moving again, though that's clouded by uncertainty. Newsome hears from many peers who got so "clobbered" in 2008 and 2009 that they have sold off.

"Emotion comes into play," he said. "They say, 'I can't take that kind of hit again.'"

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, 64, had been raising alarms about insufficient retirement savings among older Americans before the current downturn. He and Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Maryland, have pushed legislation aimed at the one-fifth of Americans nearing retirement who have little or no savings.

"A lot of people are low in terms of retirement savings, particularly baby boomers," Portman said, with recent pay cuts and layoffs aggravating that. Congress' first COVID-19 relief package allowed people to withdraw money from their 401(k)'s without the usual penalties, but that has further drained retirement savings.

Brian Bascom, 30, said fellow millennials — already dealing with a sluggish economy — weren't positioned to weather job loss or furloughs. Many are carrying college debt; some had been wary about the stock market after seeing parents' and grandparents' savings hammered during the Great Recession.

"This may have shaped their ideals and perspectives about the investing marketplace," said Bascom, a financial adviser with Morgan Stanley in Cincinnati. He said it's important for his generation to trim unnecessary expenses — cutting Starbucks runs, frequent restaurant dinners or that extra streaming service.

Adding to uncertainty have been the widespread protests sparked by deaths of Black men and women at the hands of police. Ajilore sees "the same line of unequal treatment" running through the nation's COVID-19 response. "These protests may actually benefit and give an impetus to create a more inclusive recovery," Ajilore said.

"We're a resilient country, and right now we're pretty divided," said Buck Newsome, boomer. "But if history is any indication, we'll somehow pull this together."

He added, laughing: "I hope I'll be around to see it."

Follow Cincinnati-based AP correspondent Dan Sewell at <https://www.twitter.com/dansewell>

Fly without flapping? Andean condors surf air 99% of time

By CHRISTINA LARSON AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new study sheds light on just how efficiently the world's largest soaring bird rides air currents to stay aloft for hours without flapping its wings.

The Andean condor has a wingspan stretching to 10 feet and weighs up to 33 pounds, making it the heaviest soaring bird alive today.

For the first time, a team of scientists strapped recording equipment they called "daily diaries" to eight condors in Patagonia to record each wingbeat over more than 250 hours of flight time.

Incredibly, the birds spent just 1% of their time aloft flapping their wings, mostly during take-off. One bird flew more than five hours, covering more than 100 miles (160 km), without flapping its wings.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 67 of 85

"Condors are expert pilots — but we just hadn't expected they would be quite so expert," said Emily Shepard, a study co-author and biologist at Swansea University in Wales.

The results were published Monday in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"The finding that they basically almost never beat their wings and just soar is mind-blowing," said David Lentink, an expert in bird flight at Stanford University, who was not involved in the research.

To birds, the sky is not empty, but a landscape of invisible features — wind gusts, currents of warm rising air, and streams of air pushed upward by ground features such as mountains.

Learning to ride air currents allows some birds to travel long distances while minimizing the exertion of beating their wings.

Scientists who study flying animals generally consider two types of flight: flapping flight and soaring flight. The difference can be compared to peddling a bicycle uphill, versus coasting downhill, said Bret Tobalske, a bird flight expert at the University of Montana, who was not involved in the study.

Past studies have shown that white storks and osprey flap for 17% and 25% of their overland migratory flights, respectively.

The Andean condor's extreme skill at soaring is essential for its scavenger lifestyle, which requires hours a day of circling high mountains looking for a meal of carrion, said Sergio Lambertucci, a study co-author and biologist at the National University of Comahue in Argentina.

"When you see condors circling, they are taking advantage of those thermal uplifts," or rising gusts of warm air, he said.

The recording devices were programmed to fall off the birds after about a week.

Retrieving them wasn't so easy. "Sometimes the devices dropped off into nests on huge cliffs in the middle of the Andes mountains, and we needed three days just to get there," said Lambertucci.

Follow Larson on twitter: @larsonchristina

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.

As virus spreads, Bolsonaro ties with military under strain

By MAURICIO SAVARESE and MARCELO de SOUSA Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — After 35 years of civilian-led democracy, President Jair Bolsonaro has created the most militarized Brazilian government since the fall of the country's dictatorship.

Packing his Cabinet with retired and active-duty generals and giving more than 3,000 government jobs to soldiers, Bolsonaro has prompted criticism from political opponents that he is co-opting the prestige of the Brazilian military in order to erode democratic institutions.

In recent weeks, however, influential figures in military spheres have begun a pushback against his use of the armed forces. A series of high-ranking retired officers, who historically give voice to the views of active-duty leaders, have begun expressing concern about Bolsonaro's governance and heavy reliance on the military. Experts see those statements as a way of undermining any presidential schemes to unconstitutionally assert his dominance over other branches of government.

The statements have come as Brazil is swamped by the coronavirus, which Bolsonaro has consistently downplayed as a threat as he undermined shutdowns and other preventive measures. Bolsonaro, himself a former army captain, said last week that he had contracted the virus and was taking unproven malaria medication to fight it.

Both Bolsonaro's handling of the outbreak and his own illness have been seen as embarrassing by high-ranking military leaders. The actions have weakened his relationship with the armed forces, experts and former military officials said.

It also prompted an attack from Supreme Court Justice Gilmar Mendes, who has a history of dialogue with the high command. He said Saturday the army has associated itself with genocide during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, Bolsonaro's defense minister, Gen. Fernando Azevedo, said in a statement

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 68 of 85

Monday that the armed forces are fully engaged in trying to preserve lives, and he asked the country's top prosecutor to investigate Mendes' comments.

Two retired generals who served as Bolsonaro's ministers told The Associated Press this month that the administration lacks leadership and organization, and can't rely exclusively on the military to succeed.

Brazil traditionally has allowed the armed forces to temporarily loan service members of all ranks to work in civilian jobs for limited periods. Officers and troops who want to serve longer terms come under pressure to retire from the military first, although they generally retain close ties to serving members.

Retired Gen. Carlos Alberto Santos Cruz was Bolsonaro's government secretary, but quit after six months over a rift in communications strategy. He spent 47 years in the army and commanded U.N. peacekeeping force in Haiti (2007-2009) and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2013-2015).

He said high-ranking military officers were becoming uncomfortable with Bolsonaro's blending of the military with his civilian administration.

"It is not good to have such a strong (military) representation. It is better society be represented in a diverse manner," he said. "That may be intentional to transfer the armed forces' prestige to the administration. But it is not for lack of technocrats elsewhere."

Bolsonaro has frequently bristled at rulings from the independent judiciary, and his biggest objection came after the Supreme Court blocked his pick to head the federal police April 29. He joined supporters who protested the court's action in the capital of Brasilia and called on the military to assume a greater role. One activist group launched fireworks in the court's direction.

Bolsonaro told supporters May 3 at the presidential palace that he had the military's backing.

The next day, the defense minister published a rare statement saying the armed forces believe the independence of government branches is "essential for the country's governability."

Retired Gen. Maynard Santa Rosa, who was Bolsonaro's strategic affairs minister for nine months, said the military will avoid drawing closer to him, but officers won't leave the Cabinet unless there is a major scandal like the corruption cases that have marred previous administrations.

"Then there is the possibility of a step back," Santa Rosa said.

An active-duty air force brigadier, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to talk to the press, said many military officials agree with Bolsonaro's criticism of the Supreme Court, but the high command won't support any authoritarian moves such as openly disobeying its rulings.

He added that top leaders of the armed forces are pressuring active-duty appointees to retire so the military isn't confused with the administration.

"It is clear that those (military ministers) in the Bolsonaro administration are in a difficult position," Aldo Rebelo, a civilian former defense minister, said in an interview. "They have to accept a president who threatens other branches of government, who attends protests in front of the army headquarters. It is not a comfortable position."

The president's press office told the AP it would not respond to questions about the military's role in government nor about critiques of former officers.

Brazil's military mostly kept out of politics since the end of the dictatorship in 1985, focusing on border control, security operations and logistics in remote areas.

Now, almost half of the Cabinet is comprised of former military officers, many of whom left the armed forces to work for Bolsonaro.

On Thursday, Azevedo tried to dispel fears of a de facto military government, saying none of the other ministers speak for the high command despite their long careers in the armed forces.

"There is no one else," Azevedo said in a live broadcast.

Bolsonaro has doled out hundreds of other lower government jobs to military personnel, with many aimed at controlling Amazon deforestation in order to shield the country from environmental criticism.

Bolsonaro also looked to Gen. Eduardo Pazuello, an army logistics expert with no health experience before April, to lead Brazil's fight against the coronavirus.

The president ordered the army to mass produce the anti-malarial drug, chloroquine, which hasn't proven to be effective against the coronavirus. Pazuello, who remains interim health minister almost two months

on, distributed more than 4 million pills nationwide.

The virus has killed more than 70,000 people in Brazil, most of them on the general's watch.

Carlos Melo, a political science professor at Insper University in Sao Paulo, said the military has increasingly shown its discomfort with the president's actions and poor management of the health crisis.

Even before Bolsonaro caught the coronavirus, the commander of the army's COVID-19 center refused to shake the president's hand during a meeting broadcast live, instead offering his elbow. Four others, including two generals, subsequently did the same.

"It is an embarrassment for them that the president caught the virus," Melo said. "Bolsonaro doesn't follow rules, which are dear to military leaders who see this crisis as the challenge of their generation."

Ten-Hut! Mask On! Class of 2024 to West Point amid pandemic

By MICHAEL HILL Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. (AP) — New cadet candidates arriving at the U.S. Military Academy on Monday were promptly tested for COVID-19, stood at attention in face masks and were given shouted orders to wash their hands.

The transition from civilian to West Point cadet is different for the Class of 2024 as the academy adapts to the pandemic, starting with Reception Day, or R-Day.

Reception Day still ushers in an intense period of training that introduces new arrivals to the rigors of cadet life. But this year, older cadets barked orders through face masks. New cadets will still have to endure the weeks of drills, marches and exertions of Cadet Basic Training, unofficially known as "Beast Barracks." But that training will be two weeks shorter this year.

"I know that it's shorter, but I trust it will be the same experience overall. I'll still get to know all my classmates," said Justin Suess of Batavia, Illinois. "I am prepared. I've been exercising hard."

The more than 1,220 new cadets this year are arriving over three days, from Sunday through Tuesday, instead of one Reception Day, as usual.

New arrivals dropped off by their parents Monday morning took a moment for goodbye hugs before being tested for COVID-19. Results come back in an hour or so. Those who test positive — as four did Sunday — will be isolated for weeks but will still take part in training.

Hundreds of new cadets spent Monday being hustled around in groups for the traditional round of uniform fittings, buzz cuts and lining up. They were ordered to "Hurry Up!" and "Move With a Purpose!" but also "Wash Your Hands!" at an outdoor water station. At another station, older cadets shouted orders to the new arrivals from behind a see-through plastic sheet. New cadets marched in socially distant intervals.

"We can mitigate exposure as much as possible, but we can't eliminate it. What we can do is prevent transit from one person to the next by adhering to strict, non-pharmaceutical interventions," said Lt. Col. Robert Kinney, who is in charge of R-Day operations.

All new cadets will be monitored and spend most of their time in cohorts of 35 to 40, said Brigadier Gen. Curtis A. Buzzard, commandant of cadets.

Though this year's Cadet Basic Training has been shortened from six weeks to four, Buzzard said he's confident they will be well trained.

They will still shoot, rappel, march, drill, navigate, spend four nights in field training and throw a live hand grenade, he said, though some training will be deferred until next summer.

"I still think we have a very good plan to acculturate them to West Point and the Army," Buzzard said.

The changes in training mirror those made by the other service academies this summer, as well as by the military in general.

Army soldiers undergoing Basic Combat Training are monitored and initially have limited contact with others for 14 days as they focus on academic training. Members of the smaller cadres then join the rest of the trainees for the remaining weeks of training.

At West Point, new cadets will be formally accepted into the Corps of Cadets after training.

Class of 2021 Cadet Morgan Ammons of Fort Knox, Kentucky, is especially pleased that the Class of 2024

includes Dylan Ammons, her younger sister, who arrived Sunday for training.

"I think it will be a little more challenging," said the elder Ammons. "They're still doing all the things that are required of them in the six weeks in four weeks. So it will be a little more fast paced."

Prosecutors: Epstein victim to speak at associate's hearing

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — One or more victims of Jeffrey Epstein will tell a judge Tuesday that his ex-girlfriend should be denied bail on charges that she recruited teenage girls for him to sexually abuse in the 1990s, prosecutors said Monday.

Prosecutors made the revelation in court papers as they argued there is no reason to free British socialite Ghislaine Maxwell on bail.

They also revealed new details about Maxwell's July 2 arrest at a \$1 million New Hampshire estate she purchased in December, saying FBI agents had to bust into her residence after she failed to cooperate.

"As the agents approached the front door to the main house, they announced themselves as FBI agents and directed the defendant to open the door," prosecutors wrote. "Through a window, the agents saw the defendant ignore the direction to open the door and, instead, try to flee to another room in the house, quickly shutting a door behind her."

The government said agents were forced to break through the door to arrest Maxwell, who was in an interior room in the home. Prosecutors also revealed that Maxwell had been guarded at the home by a security company staffed with former members of the British military.

The descriptions were made as prosecutors sought to boost arguments that the 58-year-old citizen of the U.S., the United Kingdom and France should remain behind bars until trial. They said she had the money, the means and the incentive to flee since she could face many years in prison, if convicted.

Prosecutors told a Manhattan federal judge in court papers that at least one woman and possibly more were expected to exercise their right to appear at Tuesday's hearing and ask that Maxwell be detained until trial. And they also revealed that additional individuals have offered the government evidence to support its case since Maxwell's arrest.

"The Government is deeply concerned that if the defendant is bailed, the victims will be denied justice in this case," prosecutors wrote.

They also revealed that two of three women who alleged they were recruited by Maxwell to be sexually abused by Epstein had never spoken to law enforcement authorities until last year.

The filing came a day before an arraignment and bail hearing for Maxwell, who has been held for the last week at a federal jail in Brooklyn.

On Friday, her lawyers filed arguments that said she's being made a scapegoat after Epstein killed himself in a Manhattan lockup last August. They said she should be freed on \$5 million bail with electronic monitoring.

"Ghislaine Maxwell," they wrote, "is not Jeffrey Epstein."

They said their client denies any allegations of misconduct, has had no contact with Epstein for more than a decade and has never been charged with a crime or found liable in civil litigation stemming from the allegations against Epstein.

Prosecutors noted that Maxwell's defense lawyers proposed offering as collateral property their client owns in the United Kingdom, but they said that was beyond the reach of U.S. authorities.

A defense lawyer did not return a message seeking comment Monday.

Epstein was arrested in July 2019 and was awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges of women and girls in Florida and New York in the early 2000s when he died by suicide in custody.

Polish president wins 2nd term after bitter campaign

By VANESSA GERA and MONIKA SCISLOWSKA Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Polish President Andrzej Duda declared victory Monday in a runoff election in which he narrowly won a second five-year term, acknowledging the campaign he ran was often too harsh as he appealed for unity and forgiveness.

The close race followed a bitter campaign between Duda and Warsaw Mayor Rafal Trzaskowski that was dominated by cultural issues. The government, state media and the influential Roman Catholic Church all mobilized in support of Duda and sought to stoke anti-Semitism, homophobia and xenophobia in order to shore up conservative support.

Duda celebrated what was seen as a mandate for him and the right-wing ruling party that backs him, Law and Justice, to continue on a path that has reduced poverty but raised concerns that democracy is under threat.

"It was a very sharp campaign, probably too sharp at times," Duda told supporters in Odrzywol, a town near Warsaw. "If anyone is offended by my words, please forgive me. And give me the chance to improve in the next five years."

Duda received 51.03% of Sunday's vote, while Trzaskowski got 48.97%, according to final results Monday from the state electoral commission.

Duda told supporters in Odrzywol that he was grateful and moved by winning the support of more than 10 million voters. He said that with the race now over, it was time to turn to the difficult job of returning the country to strong growth after the economic blow of the coronavirus.

Trzaskowski conceded defeat and congratulated Duda. He thanked his supporters and said his strong showing would be the catalyst to fight to keep Poland from becoming a one-party state.

"This is just the beginning of the road," Trzaskowski said.

But Adam Michnik, a prominent anti-communist dissident and the founding editor of the liberal Polish newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza, said the result bodes badly for Poland's young democracy.

"Andrzej Duda's victory will be understood by his voters, and first of all by those in power, as a permission for the kind of politics that Law and Justice has been pursuing for almost five years, and that is a policy of the destruction of the democratic system, of isolating Poland in Europe, of homophobia, of xenophobia, nationalism and of using the Catholic Church as a tool," Michnik said.

"I would not even rule out a situation in which, if this policy is continued and we see an attempt on the free media, culture and science, there could be another 'Maidan,'" he said, referring to the bloody 2014 pro-Europe protests in Ukraine.

Critics and human rights groups worry Duda's victory will boost illiberal tendencies at home and in the European Union, which has also struggled to halt an erosion of rule of law in Hungary under Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

Among those who welcomed Duda's victory were Orban, as well as the Czech leaders.

Orban congratulated him on Facebook, saying "bravo!" while Czech President Milos Zeman though a spokesman said: "Long live Poland!"

The result was dispiriting for liberals in Europe who are keen to halt what they consider the threat of populism and nationalism.

Remigijus Simasius, the liberal mayor of the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius, offered his condolences to Poles and said the small difference in support of about 2% "sometimes determines the path between progress and regress."

Duda got help from U.S. President Donald Trump, who invited him to the White House in late June and said he was "doing a terrific job."

His campaign focused on defending traditional family values in the predominantly Catholic nation of 38 million people, and on preserving social spending policies.

The party's popular policies included lowering the retirement age and paying monthly cash bonuses of 500 zlotys (\$125) per child to all families irrespective of income.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 72 of 85

Many credit Law and Justice for being the first party to reduce the economic inequality that came with Poland's transition from communism to a market economy three decades ago. There is a strong sense among Poles that the economic help is restoring a sense of dignity after decades of hardship from war, communism and the upheaval brought by capitalism.

The party also stoked conflict with the EU by taking control of the top courts and judicial bodies. Officials in Brussels repeatedly expressed concern over the rule of law in both Poland and Hungary, which were for many years hailed as the most successful democracies to emerge from behind the Iron Curtain.

Law and Justice officials have said they plan to continue reshaping the justice system and also want to nationalize foreign-owned private media outlets. Critics fear that lower courts will face increased political pressure and that press freedom will face new threats.

Zselyke Csaky, an expert on central Europe with the human rights group Freedom House, said Duda's victory gives the party "essentially free rein" until parliamentary elections in 2023 "to do away with limits on its power and work towards destroying Poland's independent institutions."

Sunday's vote was originally planned for May but was delayed by the coronavirus pandemic. Turnout was 68.18%, close to a record set in 1995, in a sign of the huge stakes for Poles.

As the race tightened, Duda turned further to the right in search of votes. He denounced the LGBT rights movement as an "ideology" worse than communism.

His campaign also cast Trzaskowski as someone who would sell out Polish interests to Jewish interests, tapping old anti-Semitic tropes in a country that was home to Europe's largest Jewish community before it was decimated by Germany in the Holocaust.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which monitored the election, said that while well organized, "negative campaigning and mutual vilification abounded" and that "the incumbent's campaign and coverage by the public broadcaster were marked by homophobic, xenophobic and anti-Semitic rhetoric."

But the World Jewish Congress focused on Duda's past condemnations of anti-Semitism in a congratulatory statement, not mentioning the harsh campaign.

"President Duda has spoken out against this hatred, and we remain hopeful that he will continue to do so," WJC President Ronald Lauder said.

During the campaign, Duda also lashed out at a German correspondent and a partly German-owned tabloid for their campaign coverage, alleging "a German attack in these elections." A German Foreign Ministry spokesman said Monday that Berlin works "outstandingly" with the Polish government and would continue to do so.

Associated Press writers Geir Moulson in Berlin; Pablo Gorondi in Budapest, Hungary; and Karel Janicek in Prague and Liudas Dapkus in Vilnius, Lithuania, contributed.

More than 200 schools back lawsuit over foreign student rule

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

BOSTON (AP) — More than 200 universities are backing a legal challenge to the Trump administration's new restrictions on international students, arguing that the policy jeopardizes students' safety and forces schools to reconsider fall plans they have spent months preparing.

The schools have signed court briefs supporting Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as they sue U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in federal court in Boston. The lawsuit challenges a recently announced directive saying international students cannot stay in the U.S. if they take all their classes online this fall.

A wide range of colleges and state and local officials are standing up to the policy, which faces mounting legal opposition. Massachusetts filed a federal suit Monday that was joined by Democratic attorneys general in 16 other states and the District of Columbia. Other suits have come from Johns Hopkins University and the state of California. The University of California system has said it will sue.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 73 of 85

A judge is scheduled to hear arguments Tuesday in the case brought by Harvard and MIT. If the judge does not suspend the rule, colleges across the U.S. will have until Wednesday to notify ICE if they plan to be fully online this fall.

The Department of Homeland Security and ICE say the new policy is backed by existing law forbidding foreign students from taking all of their classes online. ICE suspended the rule in March in response to the pandemic, but the agency told universities it was subject to change, according to a Monday court filing from the Trump administration.

The agencies say their updated guidance still provides leniency by allowing foreign students to maintain their visas even if they study online from abroad this fall.

"Rather than completely rescinding the March guidance and reverting to business as usual with respect to schools and foreign students, ICE announced a measured transition to begin a move toward reopening schools and allowing students to return to classrooms," the brief said.

A brief filed Monday by 59 universities, however, says the rule throws their plans into disarray with less than a month before some schools start the fall term. They challenged the policy's legal grounds and say it forces schools across the nation to "choose between opening their campuses regardless of the public health risks, or forcing their international students to leave the country."

The group includes all of Harvard's companions in the Ivy League and other prestigious schools including Stanford and Duke universities. They collectively enroll more than 213,000 international students.

"These students are core members of our institutions," the schools wrote. "They make valuable contributions to our classrooms, campuses and communities — contributions that have helped make American higher education the envy of the world."

The colleges are asking the court to block the rule as quickly as possible, saying it's already being used to turn students away. Last Wednesday, a DePaul University student was prevented from entering the country after arriving in San Francisco, according to the filing. Harvard previously said one of its students from Belarus was turned away from a flight at an airport in Minsk last week.

If the policy is upheld, schools could be forced to reconsider their fall plans. Princeton last week said first-year students and juniors could live on campus this fall, while sophomores and seniors would replace them during the spring semester. But that plan was based on the understanding that foreign students could continue remote learning from the U.S., the filing said.

"Princeton now may be forced to reassess its plan, with just weeks to go before the fall semester, lest sophomore and senior international students be forced to leave the country — and potentially be unable to return for the spring," according to the brief.

A separate coalition of 180 colleges filed a brief saying colleges were "blindsided" by the policy. The group, known as the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, said it was a reversal of a March 13 directive from ICE that waived limitations around online education for foreign students "for the duration of the emergency." They point to data suggesting the number of new coronavirus cases in the U.S. is higher now than it was in March.

"All seem to agree the emergency remains ongoing, but ICE's policy has inexplicably changed," the group wrote.

The directive also stands to hurt colleges financially, the group wrote. International students typically pay the highest tuition rates and rarely are eligible for scholarships. The alliance said many colleges risk losing millions of dollars over the policy, including Northern Virginia Community College, which estimates it could lose nearly \$10 million in tuition from foreign students.

A separate brief filed by the Princeton Theological Seminary says the policy would bring "crippling consequences" from a funding perspective. The seminary said its international ties include many foreign donors who would find the guidance "such a shocking affront that PTS' relationships with those donors may never recover."

The suit is also being backed by 26 cities and counties that say the policy would damage their economies. Those range from New York City, which says international students contribute \$3 billion per year to

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 74 of 85

its economy, to Iowa City, Iowa, which says its 2,500 resident international students contribute millions of dollars a year.

Briefs of support have also been filed by scientific associations, student governments, education unions and 71 higher education associations.

Under the new rule, international students will be forced to leave the U.S. or transfer to another college if their schools operate entirely online this fall. New visas will not be issued to students at those schools, ICE said, and others at schools offering a mix of online and in-person courses will be barred from taking all of their classes online.

It would apply even if an outbreak forces schools to shift classes entirely online mid-term, according to the guidance.

The policy was issued the same day Harvard announced that its first-years would be invited to campus but that all undergraduate classes will be held online.

The suit from Harvard and MIT argues that ICE issued the policy without offering any justification and without allowing the public to respond. It also says the agency is breaking from its March 13 promise to provide flexibility during the pandemic.

UN: Pandemic could push tens of millions into chronic hunger

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — The United Nations says the ranks of the world's hungry grew by 10 million last year and warns that the coronavirus pandemic could push as many as 130 million more people into chronic hunger this year.

The grim assessment was contained in the latest edition of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, an annual report released Monday by the five U.N. agencies that produced it.

Preliminary projections based on available global economic outlooks suggest the pandemic "may add an additional 83 (million) to 132 million people to the ranks of the undernourished in 2020," the report said.

Also compounding the situation is what the report's authors described as "unprecedented Desert Locust outbreaks" in Eastern Africa.

The U.N. agencies estimated that nearly 690 million people, or nearly 9% of the world's population, went hungry last year, an increase of 10 million since 2018 and of nearly 60 million since 2014.

The report noted that after steadily declining for decades, chronic hunger "slowly began to rise in 2014 and continues to do so."

In terms of sheer numbers, Asia is home to the greatest number of undernourished people, an estimated 381 million, the report said. Africa has the most as a percentage of the population, U.N. researchers found, with nearly 20% of the continent's people undernourished. That compares to 8.3% in Asia and 7.4% in Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the report.

With progress in fighting hunger stalled even before the pandemic, the report's authors said that COVID-19 "is intensifying the vulnerabilities and inadequacies of global food systems" — defined in the report as all the activities and processes affecting the production, distribution and consumption of food.

The U.N. agencies said a "staggering" 3 billion people or more can't afford to acquire the food needed for a healthy diet.

More must be done, including "ensuring all people's access not only to food, but to nutritious foods that make up a healthy diet," they said.

As a result of the pandemic, food supply disruptions, lost livelihoods and the inability of people working abroad to send remittances home to their families mean it's "even more difficult for the poorer and vulnerable populations to have access to healthy diets," the U.N. agencies concluded.

Oxfam, a humanitarian group dedicated to fighting poverty, called the U.N. report "highly alarming." In a statement, Oxfam called on governments to fully fund the United Nation's COVID-19 appeal and to cancel the debts of low-income countries so resources could be freed up to tackle "the surge in hunger linked to the pandemic."

AP FACT CHECK: Trump team's false comfort on schools, virus

By CALVIN WOODWARD, HOPE YEN and CHRISTOPHER RUGABER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's aides are misrepresenting the record on kids and the coronavirus as they push for schools to reopen.

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany on Monday inaccurately characterized what the chief of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said on the matter. A day earlier, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos also was wrong in stating that the research shows there is no danger "in any way" if kids are in school.

No such conclusion has been reached.

Their comments came as Trump continued to spread falsehoods about a pandemic that is taking a disproportionate hit on the U.S. and is not under control.

A look at recent claims and reality:

SCHOOLS

McENANY: "Just last week you heard Dr. Redfield say that children are not spreading this." — Monday on Fox News Channel's "Fox and Friends"

THE FACTS: No, Dr. Robert Redfield, the CDC director, did not say that. He said officials don't have evidence that children are "driving" infections at this point. But they have not ruled out that children spread the virus to adults.

Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House coronavirus coordinator, said last week the government doesn't have enough data to show whether and to what degree kids can infect others.

The bulk of data has been collected from adults and particularly from those who were sick, leaving questions about children still unanswered, Birx said. She said children under 10 are the least tested age group.

The officials did not reach a conclusion that "children are not spreading this." Nor does the evidence prove that they are.

The government has counted tens of thousands of children who have been infected with the virus and in some cases hospitalized. Overall, public health officials believe the virus is less dangerous to children than adults.

DEVOS: "There's nothing in the data that suggests that kids being in school is in any way dangerous." — Sunday on "Fox News Sunday."

THE FACTS: Not so. Like McEnany, DeVos is suggesting certainty where none exists as she urged schools to provide full-time, in-person learning in the fall even with community transmission of COVID-19 rising in many parts of the U.S.

It's premature to claim that there are no risks "in any way" seen in data. How significant a risk has not been established.

The CDC in April studied the pandemic's effect on different ages in the U.S. and reviewed preliminary research in China, where the coronavirus started. It said social distancing is important for children, too, for their own safety and that of others.

"Whereas most COVID-19 cases in children are not severe, serious COVID-19 illness resulting in hospitalization still occurs in this age group," the CDC study says.

In May, the CDC also warned doctors to be on the lookout for a rare but life-threatening inflammatory reaction in some children who've had the coronavirus. The condition had been reported in more than 100 children in New York and in some kids in several other states and in Europe, with some deaths.

The agency's current guidance for communities on the reopening of K-12 schools says the goal is to "help protect students, teachers, administrators, and staff and slow the spread of COVID-19." The guidance says "full sized, in person classes" present the "highest risk" of spreading the virus and advises face masks, spreading out of desks, staggered schedules, eating meals in classrooms instead of the cafeteria and "staying home when appropriate" to help avert spikes in virus cases.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 76 of 85

VIRUS

TRUMP: "Deaths in the U.S. are way down." — tweet on July 6, one of at least a half dozen heralding a drop in daily deaths from the virus.

THE FACTS: It's true that deaths dipped as infections spiked in many parts of the country. But deaths lag sickness. And now, the widely expected upturn in U.S. deaths has begun, driven by fatalities in states in the South and West, according to data analyzed by The Associated Press.

"It's a false narrative to take comfort in a lower rate of death," Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said Tuesday. He advised Americans: "Don't get yourself into false complacency."

The new AP analysis of data from Johns Hopkins University shows the seven-day rolling average for daily reported deaths in the U.S. increased to 664 on Friday from 578 two weeks ago, as deaths rose in more than half the states. That's still well below the lethal numbers of April.

"It's consistently picking up," said William Hanage, a Harvard University infectious diseases researcher. "And it's picking up at the time you'd expect it to."

TRUMP: "For the 1/100th time, the reason we show so many Cases, compared to other countries that haven't done nearly as well as we have, is that our TESTING is much bigger and better. We have tested 40,000,000 people. If we did 20,000,000 instead, Cases would be half, etc. NOT REPORTED!" — tweet Thursday.

THE FACTS: His notion that infections are high only because the U.S. diagnostic testing has increased is false. His own top public health officials have shot down this line of thinking. Infections are rising because people are infecting each other more than they were when most everyone was hunkered down.

It's true that increased testing also contributes to the higher numbers. When you look harder, you're going to see more. But the testing has uncovered a worrisome trend: The percentage of tests coming back positive for the virus is on the rise across nearly the entire country.

That's a clear demonstration that sickness is spreading and that the U.S. testing system is falling short. "A high rate of positive tests indicates a government is only testing the sickest patients who seek out medical attention and is not casting a wide enough net," says the Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center, a primary source of updated information on the pandemic.

Americans are being confronted with long lines at testing sites, often disqualified if they are not showing symptoms and, if tested, forced to wait many days for results.

TRUMP on the coronavirus: "We have the lowest Mortality Rate in the World." — tweet Tuesday.

THE FACTS: This statement is wholly unsupported.

An accurate death rate is impossible to know. Every country tests and counts people differently, and some are unreliable in reporting cases. Without knowing the true number of people who become infected, it cannot be determined what portion of them die.

Using a count kept by Johns Hopkins University, you can compare the number of recorded deaths with the number of reported cases. That count shows the U.S. experiencing more deaths as a percentage of cases than most other countries now being hit hard with the pandemic. The statistics look better for the U.S. when the list is expanded to include European countries that were slammed early on by the virus but now appear to have it under control. Even then, the U.S. is not shown to be among the best in avoiding death.

Such calculations, though, do not provide a reliable measurement of actual death rates, because of the variations in testing and reporting, and the Johns Hopkins tally is not meant to be such a measure.

The only way to tell how many cases have gone uncounted, and therefore what percentage of infected people have died from the disease, is to do another kind of test comprehensively, of people's blood, to find how many people bear immune system antibodies to the virus. Globally, that is only being done in select places.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 77 of 85

ECONOMY

TRUMP: "Job growth is biggest in history." — tweet Wednesday.

THE FACTS: Yes, but only because it is following the greatest job losses in history, by far.

The U.S. economy shed more than 22 million jobs in March and April, wiping out nearly a decade of job growth in just two months, as the viral outbreak intensified and nearly all states shut down nonessential businesses. Since then, 7.5 million, or about one-third, of those jobs have been recovered as businesses reopened. Even after those gains, the unemployment rate is 11.1%, down from April and May but otherwise higher than at any point since the Depression.

TRUMP: "Economy and Jobs are growing MUCH faster than anyone (except me!) expected." — tweet Wednesday.

THE FACTS: Not really. It's true that May's gain of 2.7 million jobs was unexpected. Economists had forecast another month of job losses. But most economists projected hiring would sharply rebound by June or at the latest July, once businesses began to reopen. The gains kicked in a month earlier than forecast.

Now, though, coronavirus cases are rising in most states, imperiling the climb back. In six states representing one-third of the economy — Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, and Texas — governors are reversing their reopening plans, and the restart is on pause in 15 other states. Such reversals are keeping layoffs elevated and threatening to weaken hiring.

TRUMP TEAM ON BIDEN

TRUMP campaign ad, playing out a scenario where a person needing help calls the police in a Biden presidency and gets a voice recording: "You have reached the 911 police emergency line. Due to defunding of the police department, we're sorry but no one is here to take your call." The ad closes with the message: "You won't be safe in Joe Biden's America."

THE FACTS: Biden has not joined the call of protesters who demanded "defund the police" after Floyd's killing. He's proposed more money for police, conditioned to improvements in their practices.

"I don't support defunding the police," Biden said last month in a CBS interview. But he said he would support tying federal aid to police based on whether "they meet certain basic standards of decency, honorableness and, in fact, are able to demonstrate they can protect the community, everybody in the community."

Biden's criminal justice agenda, released long before he became the Democrats' presumptive presidential nominee, proposes more federal money for "training that is needed to avert tragic, unjustifiable deaths" and hiring more officers to ensure that departments are racially and ethnically reflective of the populations they serve.

Specifically, he calls for a \$300 million infusion into existing federal community policing grant programs. That adds up to more money for police, not defunding law enforcement.

Biden also wants the federal government to spend more on education, social services and struggling areas of cities and rural America, to address root causes of crime.

Democrats, meanwhile, have pointed to Trump's repeated proposals in the administration's budget to cut community policing and mediation programs at the Justice Department. Congressional Republicans say the program can be effectively merged with other divisions, but Democrats have repeatedly blocked the effort. The program has been used to help provide federal oversight of local police departments.

Despite proposed cuts, Attorney General William Barr last month said that the department would use the COPS program funding to hire over 2,700 police officers at nearly 600 departments across the country.

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE: Biden "said that he would, quote, absolutely cut funding for law enforcement." — remarks Thursday in Philadelphia.

REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE email: "In the wake of rioting, looting, and tragic murders ripping apart communities across the country, Joe Biden said 'Yes, absolutely' he wants to defund the police." — email Wednesday from Steve Guest, RNC's rapid response director.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 78 of 85

THE FACTS: That's misleading, a selective use of Biden's words on the subject.

The RNC email links to an excerpted video clip of Biden's conversation with liberal activist Ady Barkan, who endorsed Biden on Wednesday after supporting Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders during the Democratic primaries. A full recording of that conversation, provided by the Biden campaign to The Associated Press, shows he again declined to support defunding police.

Barkan raises the issue of police reform and asks whether Biden would funnel money into social services, mental health counseling and affordable housing to help reduce civilian interactions with police.

Biden responds that he is calling for increased funding for mental health providers but "that's not the same as getting rid of or defunding all the police" and that both approaches are needed, including more money for community police.

Asked again by Barkan, "so we agree that we can redirect some of the funding," Biden then answers "absolutely yes."

Biden then gives the caveat that he means "not just redirect" federal money potentially but "condition" it on police improvements.

"If they don't eliminate choke holds, they don't get (federal) grants, if they don't do the following, they don't get any help," Biden replied.

"The vast majority of all police departments are funded by the locality, funded by the municipality, funded by the state," he added. "It's only the federal government comes in on top of that, and so it says you want help, you have to do the following reforms."

BIDEN ON TRUMP

BIDEN: "President Trump claimed to the American people that he was a wartime leader, but instead of taking responsibility, Trump has waved a white flag, revealing that he ordered the slowing of testing and having his administration tell Americans that they simply need to 'live with it.'" – statement Wednesday marking the rise in U.S. coronavirus infections to more than 3 million.

THE FACTS: To be clear, the government did not slow testing on the orders of the president.

Trump at first denied he was joking when he told a Tulsa, Oklahoma, rally on June 20 that he said "to my people, 'Slow the testing down, please'" because "they test and they test." Days later he said he didn't really mean it.

In any event, a succession of his public-health officials testified to Congress that the president never asked them to slow testing and that they were doing all they could to increase it. But testing remains markedly insufficient.

Associated Press writers Mike Stobbe and Nicky Forster in New York and Lindsey Tanner in Chicago contributed to this report.

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

Find AP Fact Checks at <https://apnews.com/APFactCheck>.

Follow @APFactCheck on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/APFactCheck>.

Kelly Preston, actor and wife of John Travolta, dies at 57

By JAKE COYLE and LYNN ELBER Associated Press Writers

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Kelly Preston, who played dramatic and comic foil to actors ranging from Tom Cruise in "Jerry Maguire" to Arnold Schwarzenegger in "Twins," died Sunday, husband John Travolta said. She was 57.

Travolta said in an Instagram post that his wife of 28 years died after a two-year battle with breast cancer.

"It is with a very heavy heart that I inform you that my beautiful wife Kelly has lost her two-year battle with breast cancer," Travolta said. "She fought a courageous fight with the love and support of so many."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 79 of 85

The couple had three children together.

"Shocked by this sad news," Maria Shriver said on Twitter. "Kelly was such a bright loving soul, a talented actress, and a loving mom and wife. My heart breaks for her family who have already known such sadness and grief."

Born Kelly Kamalelehua Smith on Oct. 13, 1962, in Honolulu, Hawaii, Preston had a lengthy acting career in movies and television beginning in the 1980s, including the 1985 teen comedy "Mischiefs," 1986's "Space Camp" and her breakthrough, 1988's "Twins." Preston played Marnie, the woman who marries Schwarzenegger's character.

Preston was first married to actor Kevin Gage. They divorced in 1987.

The year after, Preston met Travolta while shooting the 1989 film "The Experts," a box-office flop about a Soviet KGB agent who hires hip New Yorkers to update the spy program's understanding of American society. They meet on the dance floor after Travolta asks, "Does anyone here know how to dance." Preston responds: "I know how to dance."

They were married in 1991 at a midnight ceremony in Paris while expecting their first son, Jett.

Preston starred opposite Kevin Costner in the 1999 film "For the Love of the Game." In 2003, she starred in "What a Girl Wants" and as the mom in the live-action adaptation of "The Cat in the Hat." The following year she appeared in the music video for Maroon 5's "She Will Be Loved."

Preston gave one of her most well-received performances in "Jerry Maguire" as the ex-fiancée of Cruise's sports agent who dumps him early in the movie. The Daily News called her "icily effective."

On Monday, Russell Crowe recalled knowing Preston in the '90s. He said he hadn't seen her much since, "but when I did, she was always the same sparkly eyed gem."

Preston occasionally appeared in films with her husband, though the results were seldom among either's best work. Among them: the box-office bomb "Battlefield Earth" in 2000 and the 2009 Disney comedy "Old Dogs," also with their daughter, Ella Bleu.

In January 2009, Jett Travolta, 16, died after a seizure at the family's vacation home in the Bahamas. The death touched off a court case after an ambulance driver and his attorney were accused of trying to extort \$25 million from the actors in exchange for not releasing sensitive information about their son's death.

Travolta testified during a criminal trial that ended in a mistrial and was prepared to testify a second time, but decided to stop pursuing the case and it was dismissed. He cited the severe strain the proceedings and his son's death had caused the family.

Both Preston and Travolta returned to acting, with Preston's first role back in the Nicholas Sparks adaptation, "The Last Song," which starred Miley Cyrus and her future husband, Liam Hemsworth.

In addition to Jett and Ella Bleu, who was born in 2000, the couple had son Benjamin in 2010. Ella wrote on Instagram Sunday: "I have never met anyone as courageous, strong, beautiful and loving as you. Anyone who is lucky enough to have known you or to have ever been in your presence will agree that you have a glow and a light that never ceases to shine and that makes anyone around you feel instantly happy."

The couple last starred together in the 2018 film "Gotti," with Travolta playing John Gotti and Preston playing the crime boss's wife, Victoria.

"Kelly's love and life will always be remembered," Travolta said on Instagram. "I will be taking some time to be there for my children who have lost their mother, so forgive me in advance if you don't hear from us for a while. But please know that I will feel your outpouring of love in the weeks and months ahead as we heal."

Coyle reported from New York

Outer Banks island ravaged by storms and virus restrictions

By BEN FINLEY Associated Press

OCRACOKE, N.C. (AP) — When Hurricane Dorian pounded the wisp of earth that is Ocracoke Island, a wall of Atlantic seawater flooded Bob Chestnut's home, surf shop and four vehicles.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 80 of 85

Seven months later, his shop was ready for business. But the coronavirus pandemic kept the doors locked. Now, as the abbreviated summer season shifts into high gear, Chestnut is focused on economic survival, welcoming crucial tourists while hoping the potentially deadly virus never arrives.

"Since we already lost the fall season and the spring season, this is it," a masked Chestnut said on the steps of his shop, Ride the Wind. "This is the one time period that we've got a shot to make some money."

This secluded tourist destination on North Carolina's Outer Banks is recovering from the most damaging hurricane in its recorded history while in the midst of one of the world's worst pandemics.

Virus-related restrictions on visits were lifted in May. But just over half of the hurricane-ravaged businesses have reopened, welcoming tourists like a smile with missing teeth. The island is now also casting a wary eye toward August, which is when the hurricane season is expected to heat up again.

"Ocracoke is a paradise on good days," said Tom Pahl, a Hyde County commissioner who lives here. "But when things go bad, they go really bad. And we're aware of that. We dig in, and we help each other get through it."

He added: "This has been an unprecedented level of really bad."

Hurricane Dorian struck Ocracoke on Sept. 6 and launched a 7-foot (2-meter) storm surge over parts of the island's village, which measures about a square mile.

About 400 of the island's nearly 1,000 year-round residents were forced out of their homes, many of which had flooded for the first time. Dozens of structures have had to be demolished.

Many people are still displaced or waiting for houses to be raised higher off the ground. The island's one school, serving about 170 students, is being rebuilt. Metal debris containers remain in some yards, while backhoes and bulldozers still share roads with golf carts and beach cruisers.

Chip Stevens, whose Blackbeard's Lodge hotel is still being rebuilt, expressed various worries, including the loss of tax revenue from both the hurricane and the pandemic-related business closures.

"We have a big reckoning coming," he said.

The island has attracted the likes of singer Jimmy Buffett over the years. And its businesses rarely require shoes. Now they're requiring masks.

Ocracoke is reachable only by plane or boat, and the island has reported no confirmed cases of the virus. But people are arriving from places where COVID-19 remains a deadly reality — and is even surging.

Kari Styron, rental manager for Ocracoke Island Realty, said even at a reduced capacity, the island is "very busy right now."

And yet Ocracoke remains an ideal destination during a pandemic, boasting miles of undeveloped beaches as well as spaced-out rental homes and a handful of mostly quaint hotels.

Visitors have included Mark Aaronson, 46, who lives in the Philadelphia suburbs and has been visiting Ocracoke since he was a kid.

"We can do the whole social distancing thing with a much better view," he said in late June outside a coffee shop with his family.

For the first time in months, Aaronson said he was able to sit at a bar, in Howard's Pub, albeit spaced out from other customers. It felt "liberating" and prompted him to send photos to friends.

Aaronson said the pandemic was never going to interfere with his vacation plans. But he said he was a little "freaked out" at times by the lack of mask wearing on parts of Ocracoke compared to what he sees back home.

Since then, North Carolina's governor has imposed a statewide mask requirement, which took effect June 26. The following week, North Carolina saw a new high in coronavirus cases in other parts of the state.

Meanwhile, island residents like Chestnut are trying to adjust and survive. For his shop, that means teaching surfing classes in the age of social distancing.

People can spread out on the beach for the beginning part of the lesson, but instructors still need to hold the back of a customer's surfboard while in the water.

"People want to come here," Chestnut said. "I'm encouraged by it. But we're in hurricane season already. Another storm that takes out the road for a couple weeks is just not going to be pleasant."

Even if a hurricane does blow through, Scott Bradley said he and his family won't evacuate their island home unless it's a Category 4 or Category 5 storm.

"Where would you go with the virus out there?" asked Bradley, who is president of the nonprofit Ocracoke Foundation, which supports community projects and aims to preserve the island's maritime heritage. "This is probably the safest place to be."

In Egypt, volunteers make meals with love for virus patients

By MARIAM FAM Associated Press

Fatma Youssef stuffs rice, chicken or meat and vegetables into boxes spread on her dining table -- tens of them in the last few weeks. On some, she scribbles "Be well" in Arabic; on others, she writes "Together, we will get through this."

Youssef doesn't know who will eat her food. Still, she says, she cooks it with love -- and purpose.

She and other volunteers in Egypt hope the meals will help nurse quarantined coronavirus patients back to health and provide them with some respite. In different neighborhoods in Cairo and some other cities, they've enlisted to cook, donate food or make contactless deliveries to patients' homes.

"Good things come out of crises all the time," said Youssef, 27. "I didn't expect that there would be people who would drop everything to help others they don't know, haven't met and will not meet."

The effort took off in early June after Basma Mostafa, a 30-year-old journalist, wrote on Facebook that she was thinking of cooking nutritious meals for patients. She asked if someone would be willing to help with expenses or delivery or to connect her with those who are sick. She did not expect much.

Messages flooded her inbox. Friends and strangers offered to pitch in. So, she decided to create the meals initiative.

"I am amazed," Mostafa said. "The idea exploded quickly probably because people felt alone ... and found something that says, 'no, you're not alone.'"

Today, about 1,500 volunteers take part in the program, and thousands more have asked to join, Mostafa said. Others have created similar efforts in their neighborhoods, she added.

The personal touch is the handwritten messages of support. Some are scribbled on heart-shaped notes or embellished with drawings of smiley faces.

"We are all with you," reads one. "Speedy recovery," says another. After one volunteer wrote, "made with love," it has become a favorite slogan.

Mostafa said she got the idea of helping out when she was going through a particularly difficult time. "I thought that to alleviate my suffering, I can engage with the suffering of others and feel more for them," she said. "I derive my strength and perseverance from the patients."

In their Facebook group, organizers offer two options: one with different categories for those wanting to help, another to request meals. Boxes are offered to patients, rich or poor, who are living alone or with other sick and quarantined family members.

When some patients ask to pay for their meals, organizers encourage them to pay it forward instead by donating supplies after they recover, Mostafa says.

Mai Ezzat says she was skeptical a stranger would make the trip to her home to deliver meals.

The 20-year-old lives with her parents and two brothers. They all went into quarantine after her father contracted the virus, she said, and others showed symptoms. No one was able to go out to buy food. A volunteer brought cooked meals, vegetables and fruits to the family's doorstep.

The gesture made her feel like "there's still good out there" and offered a morale boost, she said.

Radwa Shalash, one of the organizers, says she is moved when patients who have received meals call to say they recovered.

"I have seen people who are willing to volunteer everything they've got, literally," she said. "It made me feel like if something happened to me, if I ever needed something, I would find many people -- so many people."

Fam reported from Winter Park, Florida.

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Families of Italy's virus dead seek answers, solace, justice

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — It started out as way for grief-struck families to mourn their coronavirus dead online: a Facebook group where relatives who were denied a funeral because of Italy's stringent lockdowns could share photos, memories and sorrow that their loved ones had died all alone.

But this spontaneous virtual forum for eulogies, anguish and condolences has now turned into an influential activist group that is providing a steady stream of testimony and evidence to prosecutors investigating whether any crimes contributed to Italy's COVID-19 toll.

Members of the Noi Denunceremo (We Will Denounce) Facebook group and an affiliated non-profit committee filed some 100 new cases Monday with Bergamo prosecutors investigating the outbreak, on top of 50 complaints lodged last month.

Wearing a face mask with the group's logo outside the tribunal Monday, We Will Denounce co-founder Stefano Fusco said the complaints don't accuse anyone specifically of wrongdoing.

"We simply tell our stories and ask the prosecutors to investigate about what happened here and why ... there was such a huge massacre," he said.

The case files and Facebook posts paint a visceral portrait of the lives swept up in Italy's devastating coronavirus outbreak, the first in the West: of mothers and fathers taken away by ambulance and never seen alive again by their children; of frantic efforts to locate vacant intensive care beds and impossible-to-find oxygen tanks; of hospitals so overwhelmed trying to save the living that relatives of the dead were often just an afterthought.

"It's a system that didn't hold up, a system that had to choose who to save and who not," said Diego Federici, 35, who lost his otherwise healthy mother and father to COVID-19 in just four days in March.

Federici believes that neither of his parents was treated adequately. He says his mother was essentially sedated until she died and then her body was transported to Bologna, 250 kilometers (155 miles) away, to be cremated because Bergamo's crematoriums and cemeteries were full.

"There are too many doubts, too many things that were done badly," he said in a telephone interview.

Compiled by sons and daughters, widows and widowers, the majority of cases that We Will Denounce has filed with prosecutors concern deaths in northern Lombardy's provinces of Bergamo and Brescia, where the outbreak erupted in late February. The two provinces fast became ground zero of the European epidemic and together account for around a quarter of Italy's 35,000 official COVID-19 deaths.

Experts believe the true number of coronavirus deaths is much higher, in Italy and elsewhere, due to testing limitations.

"We are certain that with 35,000 dead, they can't go and cover up everything as has unfortunately occurred with other Italian tragedies," said Fusco, who co-founded We Will Denounce with his father after the March 11 death of the family patriarch, Antonio.

Many members of the group assert that the failure of regional and national political leaders to seal off virus-afflicted areas in Bergamo and Brescia early on allowed the contagion to spread throughout Lombardy and overwhelm its health care system, eventually leading to the West's first nationwide lockdown.

Bergamo prosecutors have already questioned Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte, the health and interior ministers, as well as members of Lombardy's regional government and industrial leaders. They also interviewed We Will Denounce members whose posts helped spark the investigation. No charges have been filed and it's not clear if any will be.

But simultaneously with Monday's filing, We Will Denounce sent a letter asking the European Commission and the European Court of Human Rights to supervise the Italian investigation, alleging that crimes

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 83 of 85

against humanity are involved and that Italian citizens' right to life and dignity were violated.

The group's attorney, Consuelo Locati, whose father died during the outbreak, cited two regional decrees that she says contributed to the deaths: A March 8 decree allowing recovering COVID-19 patients to be housed in nursing homes, and a March 23 decree essentially instructing Lombardy's general practitioners to treat suspected virus patients by phone, not in person.

The directive to treat by telephone, Locati said, violated the patients' constitutional right to health care. Many relatives of virus victims say during the peak of the outbreak, their family doctors were themselves sick or declined to conduct in-person visits. Locati says they were essentially prevented from doing so by the regional government, which was struggling to provide adequate protective equipment for health care workers.

"This prohibition of doing house visits is found in so many complaints, and so much testimony: of the doctor who won't go out or who can't go out, the doctor who prescribes antibiotics via telephone," she said.

The effect was that patients died at home or waited too long to go to the hospital and were then too sick to be saved, she said.

"They could have come to check him earlier. A doctor even told us: 'You should have hospitalized him earlier,'" said Sharon Potta, whose 51-year-old father died and who was at the Bergamo tribunal Monday filing her case.

Potta said ambulances refused to come to the house when her father fell ill, and the family couldn't leave because of the lockdown. "What were we supposed to do?"

The Lombardy regional government has strongly defended its handling of the pandemic, pointing to the heroic efforts of doctors and nurses there and the region's successes in adding intensive care beds to keep up with demand. At the same time, though, regional officials have acknowledged shortcomings.

Lombardy's governor, Attilio Fontana, has appointed a committee of five experts to review "what worked less well and what worked well" as the region looks to identify what part of the health care system "should be looked at again, modified and corrected."

"We are all ready to recognize if errors were committed — if they were committed — but underlying that is the fact that we found ourselves in the middle of a cataclysm that no one ever expected," Fontana told a June 29 press conference when asked about the We Will Denounce complaints.

Stefano Fusco said he never expected his Facebook group would grow as quickly as it did and turn into a juggernaut of activism pressing for justice for Italy's virus dead.

"We created it thinking maybe it would get no more than 1,000 people, but in the first 24 hours there were 5,000 members," Fusco said. Within a week, membership had reached 14,000 and today stands at 60,000.

The main rule of the group is to keep politics out of posts and not accuse anyone directly of wrongdoing.

"It's simply to remember someone, and give a face to the numbers, because during the pandemic the dead were just numbers. But to us, behind 100 dead there are 100 families who are suffering," Fusco said.

What is remarkable is that the posts are so similar, and are responded to with an outpouring of condolences and broken heart emojis from strangers, many of whom have clearly endured the same fate.

Ludovica Bertucci wrote the Facebook group recently, eulogizing her dead father, grandparents and uncle and asking if anyone was to blame for her loss: "I'm afraid of the answer ... afraid of discovering that if someone had taken a different decision, maybe my stupendous father would be here with me, together with all the others."

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

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 84 of 85

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, July 14, the 196th day of 2020. There are 170 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 14, 2016, terror struck Bastille Day celebrations in the French Riviera city of Nice (nees) as a large truck plowed into a festive crowd, killing 86 people in an attack claimed by Islamic State extremists; the driver was shot dead by police.

On this date:

In 1789, in an event symbolizing the start of the French Revolution, citizens of Paris stormed the Bastille prison and released the seven prisoners inside.

In 1798, Congress passed the Sedition Act, making it a federal crime to publish false, scandalous or malicious writing about the United States government.

In 1865, the Matterhorn, straddling Italy and Switzerland, was summited as a seven-member rope party led by British climber Edward Whymper reached the peak. (Four members of the party fell to their deaths during their descent; Whymper and two guides survived.)

In 1914, scientist Robert H. Goddard received a U.S. patent for a liquid-fueled rocket apparatus.

In 1921, Italian-born anarchists Nicola Sacco (SAH'-koh) and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were convicted in Dedham, Massachusetts, of murdering a shoe company paymaster and his guard. (Sacco and Vanzetti were executed six years later.)

In 1933, all German political parties, except the Nazi Party, were outlawed.

In 1960, British researcher Jane Goodall arrived at the Gombe (GAHM'-bay) Stream Reserve in the Tanganyika Territory (in present-day Tanzania) to begin her famous study of chimpanzees in the wild.

In 1980, the Republican national convention opened in Detroit, where nominee-apparent Ronald Reagan told a welcoming rally he and his supporters were determined to "make America great again."

In 2004, the Senate scuttled a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. (Forty-eight senators voted to advance the measure — 12 short of the 60 needed — and 50 voted to block it).

In 2009, disgraced financier Bernard Madoff arrived at the Butner Federal Correctional Complex in North Carolina to begin serving a 150-year sentence for his massive Ponzi scheme.

In 2013, thousands of demonstrators across the country protested a Florida jury's decision the day before to clear George Zimmerman in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin.

In 2014, the Church of England voted overwhelmingly in favor of allowing women to become bishops.

Ten years ago: An Iranian nuclear scientist who'd disappeared a year earlier headed back to Tehran, telling Iranian state media that he'd been abducted by CIA agents. (The U.S. said Shahram Amiri was a willing defector who'd changed his mind.)

Five years ago: World powers and Iran struck a deal to curb Iran's nuclear program in exchange for relief from international sanctions. President Barack Obama laid out an expansive vision for fixing America's criminal justice system in a speech to the NAACP's annual convention in Philadelphia. NASA's New Horizons spacecraft got humanity's first up-close look at Pluto, sending word of its triumphant flyby across 3 billion miles to scientists waiting breathlessly back home. Mike Trout became the first player in 38 years to lead off the All-Star Game with a home run, and the American League beat the National League 6-3. Veteran television journalist Marlene Sanders, 84, died in New York.

One year ago: Injecting race into his criticism of liberal Democrats, President Donald Trump tweeted that four congresswomen of color should go back to the "broken and crime infested" countries they came from; all of the women were American citizens, and three were born in the U.S. Novak Djokovic won his fifth Wimbledon title, and his second in a row, beating Roger Federer in a fifth-set tiebreaker. Former boxer Pernell Whitaker, a four-division champion, died at the age of 55 after being hit by a car in Virginia.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Nancy Olson is 92. Former football player and actor Rosey Grier is 88. Actor Vincent Pastore is 74. Music company executive Tommy Mottola (muh-TOH'-luh) is 72. Rock musician

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 011 ~ 85 of 85

Chris Cross (Ultravox) is 68. Actor Jerry Houser is 68. Actor-director Eric Laneuville is 68. Actor Stan Shaw is 68. Movie producer Scott Rudin is 62. Singer-guitarist Kyle Gass is 60. Country musician Ray Herndon (McBride and the Ride) is 60. Actress Jane Lynch is 60. Actor Jackie Earle Haley is 59. Actor Matthew Fox is 54. Rock musician Ellen Reid (Crash Test Dummies) is 54. Rock singer-musician Tanya Donnelly is 54. Former child actress Missy Gold is 50. Olympic gold medal snowboarder Ross Rebagliati is 49. Rhythm-and-blues singer Tameka Cottle (Xscape) is 45. Country singer Jamey Johnson is 45. Hip-hop musician "taboo" (Black Eyed Peas) is 45. Actor Scott Porter is 41. Actress Phoebe Waller-Bridge is 35. Rock singer Dan Smith (Bastille) is 34. Actress Sara Canning (TV: "The Vampire Diaries") is 33. Rock singer Dan Reynolds (Imagine Dragons) is 33.