

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 1 of 65

- 1- Card of Thanks
- 1- Weismantel Agency Ad
- 2- New flag raised in Groton
- 3- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller
- 6- Area COVID-19 Cases
- 7- July 14th COVID-19 UPDATE
- 10- Baseball Schedule
- 11- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs
- 12- Weather Pages
- 15- Daily Devotional
- 16- 2020 Groton Events
- 17- News from the Associated Press



CARDS OF THANKS

Thank you for remembering our Anniversary with cards and good wishes. We are happy to have you in our lives.

Carrol and Pearl Dean (pd)

Thank you to everyone for the beautiful anniversary and birthday cards and warm wishes. God bless each of you .

Alvin and Donna Bahr.(pd)

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OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Flag raised at newly erected flag pole at the park



Doug Hamilton puts the clips on the rope as the prep work is getting done to erect the new US Flag. Hamilton is pictured on the left, Joe Foertsch is in the background and David McGannon on the right. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Doug Hamilton raises the new United States Flag on the flag pole that was moved from the Groton Area Elementary School to the Groton City Park. Also pictured is Joe Foertsch who was one of the helpers in the project. (Photos

by Paul Kosel)

#142 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Another rough day. We have 3,443,900 cases in the US; that's 65,100 or 1.9% more than yesterday. Not a record, but it bumps yesterday's new case number down to third place and moves into second. And we are now at 15 days in a row of the worst days of the pandemic here. Forty-one states show increasing new cases on a rolling two-week average; only two show decreases. It keeps getting worse, and it's getting worse at an accelerating rate. Notably though, Arizona moves out of the list of states with increasing new cases, so there's that.

California, Nevada, Oklahoma, Texas, and Missouri set records for single-day new case reports. Even though growth in new cases has slowed, Arizona's positivity rate is still at 20%, so there are likely cases being missed with available testing. Not bright spots.

Florida is struggling these days. We talked about their 15,000-case day on Saturday; to put that in perspective, it took the entire US almost two months to reach 15,000 total cases, and the country as a whole didn't have a 15,000-new-case day until late March. The state, with a smaller population than any of these places, has twelve times more total cases than South Korea and Australia combined and three times China's number. Testing positivity rates in the state today were over 18%, which is far too high. Even hospitals with capacity left are citing staff shortages as an issue. The state also broke its record for single-day death reports today. Things are particularly dicey in Miami. Lilian Abbo, chief of infection prevention for the Jackson Health System, citing more than 2000 patients hospitalized, with hundreds of those in intensive care, said, "What we were seeing in Wuhan—six months ago, five months ago—now we are there." Or worse: Wuhan has reported more than 50,000 cases, whereas Miami-Dade County has reported more than 64,000. Eight hospitals in Miami-Dade have reached ICU capacity due to a 68% increase in hospitalizations, 69% increase in ICU bed utilization, and 109% increase in ventilator use. Testing positivity rates in Miami-Dade are running 25 to 28 percent. Florida is the hottest of hot spots these days.

There have now been 136,320 deaths from Covid-19 in the US. We reported 922 new deaths today, a worrying 0.7% increase. Our seven-day average for deaths was 724 yesterday and was running below 500 at the beginning of the month, so this is a jump. We can hope this is simply a matter of fluctuation in day-to-day reporting—one day does not make a trend; but we've been moving in this direction for a week or more, so I am not too hopeful. Twenty-three states are reporting more daily deaths than two weeks ago. In addition to Florida, Alabama and Utah set new single-day records and Oregon matched its previous record. Texas has put refrigerated trucks on standby to serve as reserve morgue space as they anticipate swamping current facilities. We're seeing this in other places too, Arizona and Alabama, for example.

We've talked recently about cases of Covid-19 turning up in military personnel. Now we're looking at 99 cases on Okinawa Island, Japan, where the US has several bases. The outbreak is linked to Fourth of July parties held on the bases as well as off with at least hundreds of personnel in attendance. The outbreak has heightened already-existing tensions between these bases and local governments.

Speaking of holiday celebrations, here's the kind of thing that's going to continue to be a problem unless and until we all wise up: a couple of big Fourth of July parties in Michigan. Between a gathering at Torch Lake Sandbar (which, I have to admit, looked from the photos I saw like a very good time indeed) and a house party, there have been more than 40 cases among attendees and nearly 70 more from exposed contacts (which does not include household members of attendees). Exposures occurred at retail stores, restaurants, businesses, clubs, camps, athletic teams, and a retirement community. (I will mention in passing that, if you insist on hanging out with large crowds and taking no precautions, the very least you could do afterward would be to stay the hell away from nursing homes. Yes, I know that sounds judgey, but come on, people!) Contact tracing broke down when people were unable to name everyone they'd encountered at these gatherings, so public health authorities went public to ask anyone who had attended to self-quarantine for 14 days. Most of the confirmed cases are ages 15-25.

We had to know this next was coming too: Concerns about fall close-contact sports at colleges and universities have been growing for some time. The latest news is that the NJCAA, the governing body for

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 4 of 65

junior college sports, has announced the rescheduling of the football, soccer, and volleyball seasons to the spring. Distance running and tennis will proceed on schedule. The basketball, wrestling, swimming, and diving seasons will begin January 22. More NCAA schools are reevaluating fall seasons too. The Patriot League has joined the Ivy League in cancelling the fall sports season; and we don't think that will be the last such decision made. A Power Five athletic director said, "Right now, I don't see a path in the current environment to how we play," and another college official added, "Ultimately, no one is playing football in the fall." SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey spoke for the record, saying, "Time is an asset that's rapidly slipping away. The fact we've seen increasing cases over the last few weeks across our region is not a positive indicator." I think that's a fair statement: not positive at all.

It's pretty clear we have a while to wait for an effective therapeutic or vaccine (more on that front in a minute); but I certainly don't feel like I want to watch these numbers explode in my updates every night until we do. As far as I am aware, the upcoming flu season has not been cancelled. I cannot even imagine what that's going to look like with those cases piling into hospitals on top of Covid-19. The system can bear only so much before it breaks. So maybe some advice from Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the CDC, is in order. In a video interview with the Journal of the American Medical Association today, he said the most powerful weapon we have is face masks, handwashing, and "being smart about social distancing." He elaborated, "I really do believe if the American public all embraced masking now and we really did it, you know, rigorously . . . I think if we can get everybody to wear a mask right now, I really do think over the next four to six, eight weeks, we can bring this epidemic under control." Who doesn't want that? Who doesn't want their life back? Who doesn't want to get the economy going again? Only way to do that is to slow this virus down. We know what to do.

We talked a couple of days ago at length about school reopening and the challenges attendant on decisions made at the local level about what that might look like. At that time, we discussed the fact that one of the unknowns is the role children play in a community as transmitters of infection. I have some new information to feed into that decision stream, and it's not great news. It appears in countries where reopening looked smart, where new case reports were low, schools are acting as epicenters of new community outbreaks; that is one of the big concerns we did point out.

In Israel, nine schools were closed after almost 250 students and staff turned up with infections; just one school had 116 students and 14 teachers infected. That one apparently started with one 7th-grader, and nearly 7000 people were eventually quarantined. Dr. Uni Klinier from the Health Ministry testified to the Knesset that, "Schools—not restaurants or gyms—turned out to be the country's worst mega-infectors." They're considering another country-wide lockdown.

And that mess in Melbourne, Australia? Looks like a piece of that started in a school. They were reporting just 10-20 new cases a day in June, and then a school outbreak associated with a housing project that had an outbreak leaked out into the community. By last week, there were 75 students, 21 staff, and 14 households involved. That cluster was one of the largest of several that shut down the city for six weeks. So reopening schools complications, even under the best of conditions when community spread appears to be under control. And if you don't have that, reopening could spark a conflagration.

Here's something that could very well be good news—and don't we all need this about now? That Moderna vaccine candidate we've discussed many times before is now all set to go into phase 3 testing on the 27th; this is the final phase where a large number of volunteers is immunized while another large number of volunteers receives a placebo (an inactive substitute), 30,000 people in all, and we all wait to see who gets infected. We had a summary of preliminary results from early phase testing a week or so ago, but the data have now been published in the New England Journal of Medicine. I had my usual trouble getting the paper to load, so I'm relying on summaries here. I will say it looks good: The earliest volunteers did, indeed, develop so-called neutralizing antibodies (the ones that can block the virus from infecting you) at levels similar to what develops in natural infection. There were no serious side effects in this small group—positive news, but no guarantee something more rare won't show up down the road, once we have a few thousand folks vaccinated. Phase 3 will involve two doses a month apart.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 5 of 65

So what we know is the vaccine appears to be safe, and it appears to elicit a good antibody response. There are questions remaining. The biggest one is whether the antibodies that develop are, indeed, protective. Many experts believe they will be, but there's really only one way to be sure, and that's what phase 3 is all about. The hope is that, by the end of the year, we'll know whether the vaccine is effective in preventing infection out in the world.

The early-phase trials included only young adults; the trial has now been expanded to include older adults; but we don't have those data yet. The regulators have them, so it seems likely we'll get a look at them soon enough; and the current plan is to include older people and those with co-morbidities that place them at risk in phase 3. There has also been an effort to include Black and Latino volunteers who have had higher death rates throughout this pandemic. This will answer important questions about whether the vaccine can protect those most at risk. After all of that, the final question which only time can answer is how long that protection might last.

I am aware we have a lot of ifs, but with a novel virus about which much is still not known and given the pace of research, we're in about as good a place as we can hope for with the current state of knowledge. I'm going to guess no one really thought we'd be looking at the possibility of an effective vaccine within just over a year of the emergence of this pathogen, so our research community has done excellent work to date. I should also remind us that there are a couple of dozen other candidates also currently in various stages of testing with a few others nearing phase 3. As I've said before here, more is better. Some vaccine candidates will quite likely fail, so having several in the pipeline bodes well for our hopes of finding our way out of this at some point. So now, we wait.

Tomas Kapler is an online business consultant in the Czech Republic. When he watched a critical shortage of ventilators force physicians in Italy to make difficult decisions about who got one and who did not, he didn't want to see that happen in his country. Prices for the machines were crazy because of the short supply, and demand outpaced supply at any price.

He said, "That seemed so horrific to me that it was an impulse to do something." He did something all right. "I just said to myself, 'Can we simply make the ventilators?'"

As a member of an informal group of volunteers who helped the state deal with the pandemic, he pulled together a team of some 30 people to develop their own ventilator—in a matter of days. Because components were also hard to come by, the team decided to build their ventilators out of parts used in other more common machines. They crowd-funded the financing in less than a day and went to work with the guidance of a professor of biomedical engineering at the Czech Technical University. The professor brought in colleagues on design and students to test it.

They had a working prototype in five days, and it was inexpensive and easy to mass produce. Volunteer pilots flew in supplies, and an energy and chemical company volunteered to do the manufacturing. Within a few weeks, they'd refined the design into the final product. The manufacturing company's CEO, Jiri Denner, said, "I didn't do anything more than those people who were making the face masks. They did the maximum they could. And I did the maximum I could." The machine was ready to go in April.

While the Czech Republic managed to contain their outbreak before things became critical, the team is working to make these ventilators available anywhere in the world they are needed. The team members speak fondly of the effort, of coming together in a time of need to supply what was needed. As the slogan printed on the shipping boxes says, "Powered by Czech heart."

We could use a whole lot more things powered by heart these days. Many folks are hurting, scared, worried. This is a great time, a time of need, to come together to supply what is needed. And we can power the whole thing with heart. Consider going there. Picture the world you want to live in, and then find a way to make it happen.

Keep yourself safe. I'll see you tomorrow.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 6 of 65

Area COVID-19 Cases

	July 15
Minnesota	43,170
Nebraska	21,717
Montana	1,952
Colorado	37,686
Wyoming	1581
North Dakota	4493
South Dakota	7572
United States	3,431,574
US Deaths	136,466

Minnesota	+398
Nebraska	+318
Montana	+109
Colorado	+444
Wyoming	+36
North Dakota	+51
South Dakota	+48
United States	+68,518
US Deaths	+861

	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

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 7 of 65

July 14th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent
from State Health Lab Reports

Active COVID-19 cases in South Dakota dipped by eight today, down to 864. Jones County is back on the fully recovered list. No new deaths recorded in South Dakota, but one was recorded in North Dakota. Those hospitalized in South Dakota dropped by one from yesterday. Brown County gained an active case with that number now at 20.

Brown County:

Active Cases: +1 (20)
Recovered: +1 (339)
Total Positive: +2 (361)
Ever Hospitalized: +1 (19)
Deaths: 2
Negative Tests: +108 (3483)
Percent Recovered: 93.9% (-.3)

South Dakota:

Positive: +48 (7572 total)
Negative: +738 (84,592 total)
Hospitalized: +2 (744 total). 62 currently hospitalized (Down 1 from yesterday)
Deaths: +0 (109 total)
Recovered: +56 (6599 total)
Active Cases: -8 (864)
Percent Recovered: 87.2 +0.2

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Harding 42, Potter +8 (207), unassigned +261 (3363).

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

It was brought to my attention that the active cases needed to be modified to reflect the deaths. So you will see a number in () after the county with the number of deaths in that county and the active cases number now reflects those deaths.

Aurora: 1 active case
Beadle (8): +2 recovered (34 active cases)
Bennett: 1 active case
Bon Homme: -1 positive (1 active cases)
Brookings: +1 recovered (18 active cases)
Brown (2): +2 positive, +1 recovered (20 active cases)
Brule: +1 recovered (7 active cases)
Buffalo (3): +1 recovered (13 active cases)
Butte: 3 active cases
Campbell: Fully Recovered
Charles Mix: +1 positive, +2 recovered (54 active cases)

Clark: 1 active case
Clay: +1 positive, +1 recovered (10 active cases)
Codington: +1 positive, +1 recovered (19 active cases)
Corson: +1 recovered (2 active cases)
Custer: 2 active cases
Davison: +1 positive, +1 recovered (16 active cases)
Day: 3 active cases
Deuel: 1 active case
Dewey: 36 active cases
Douglas: 5 active cases
Edmunds: +1 positive (2 active cases)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 8 of 65

Fall River: 3 active cases
 Faulk (1): 3 active cases
 Grant: +1 positive, +1 recovered (3 active cases)
 Gregory: +1 positive (2 active case)
 Haakon: Fully Recovered
 Hamlin: +1 recovered (1 active cases)
 Hand: 1 active case
 Hanson: 3 active cases
 Harding: No infections reported
 Hughes (2): +2 positive (12 active cases)
 Hutchinson +1 positive (4 active cases)
 Hyde: Fully Recovered
 Jackson (1): 4 active cases
 Jerauld (1): 1 active cases
 Jones: 1 recovered case (FULLY RECOVERED)
 Kingsbury: 2 active cases
 Lake (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (15 active cases)
 Lawrence: +1 positive (2 active cases)
 Lincoln (1): +3 positive, +2 recovered (45 active cases)
 Lyman (1): +4 recovered (17 active cases)
 Marshall: 1 active case
 McCook (1): +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 McPherson: 1 active case
 Meade (1): +1 recovered (7 active cases)
 Mellette: 5 active cases
 Miner: 2 active cases
 Minnehaha (60): +18 positive, +13 recovered (228 active cases)
 Moody: 3 active cases
 Oglala Lakota: +1 positive, +4 recovered (25 active cases)

Pennington (21): +8 positive, +11 recovered (142 active cases)
 Perkins: 1 active case
 Potter: No infections reported
 Roberts: +1 recovered (10 active cases)
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered
 Spink: 2 active cases
 Stanley: Fully Recovered
 Sully: Fully Recovered
 Todd (2): -2 positive, +1 recovered (9 active cases)
 Tripp: +1 recovered (1 active case)
 Turner: 5 active cases
 Union (1): +5 positive, +1 recovered (27 active cases)
 Walworth: 5 active cases
 Yankton (2): +3 positive (13 active cases)
 Ziebach: 2 active cases

The NDDoH & private labs report 2,427 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 55 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 4,493. NDDoH reports one new death.
 State & private labs have reported 235,497 total completed tests.
 3,685 ND patients are recovered.

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian, Non-Hispanic	715	9%
Black, Non-Hispanic	985	13%
Hispanic	1127	15%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	1208	16%
Other	765	10%
White, Non-Hispanic	2772	37%

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

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 9 of 65

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons
Aurora	34	33	301
Beadle	553	507	1564
Bennett	4	3	443
Bon Homme	13	12	629
Brookings	95	77	2017
Brown	361	339	3483
Brule	34	27	592
Buffalo	86	70	545
Butte	3	0	572
Campbell	1	1	66
Charles Mix	97	43	932
Clark	15	14	347
Clay	94	84	1072
Codington	93	74	2183
Corson	20	18	157
Custer	11	9	633
Davison	57	41	1834
Day	19	16	456
Deuel	5	4	317
Dewey	37	1	1229
Douglas	10	5	351
Edmunds	9	7	337
Fall River	13	10	788
Faulk	24	20	142
Grant	18	15	581
Gregory	6	4	268
Haakon	1	1	248
Hamlin	13	12	520
Hand	7	6	221
Hanson	14	11	148
Harding	0	0	42
Hughes	72	58	1366
Hutchinson	18	14	762

Hyde	3	3	105
Jackson	7	2	374
Jerauld	39	37	246
Jones	1	1	41
Kingsbury	8	6	442
Lake	37	21	726
Lawrence	21	19	1612
Lincoln	400	354	5061
Lyman	82	64	764
Marshall	5	4	327
McCook	17	12	529
McPherson	6	5	179
Meade	54	46	1518
Mellette	9	4	270
Miner	10	8	214
Minnehaha	3778	3490	21868
Moody	23	20	507
Oglala Lakota	111	86	2633
Pennington	649	486	8285
Perkins	1	0	100
Potter	0	0	207
Roberts	58	48	1242
Sanborn	12	12	181
Spink	14	12	944
Stanley	14	14	178
Sully	1	1	56
Todd	64	53	1466
Tripp	19	18	489
Turner	29	24	749
Union	156	128	1562
Walworth	16	11	443
Yankton	88	73	2595
Ziebach	3	1	170
Unassigned****	0	0	3363

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	3663	58
Male	3909	51

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	832	0
20-29 years	1578	1
30-39 years	1574	5
40-49 years	1192	7
50-59 years	1179	12
60-69 years	702	21
70-79 years	275	15
80+ years	240	48

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 10 of 65

Baseball Schedule

Date	Team	Opponent	Location	Time
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)

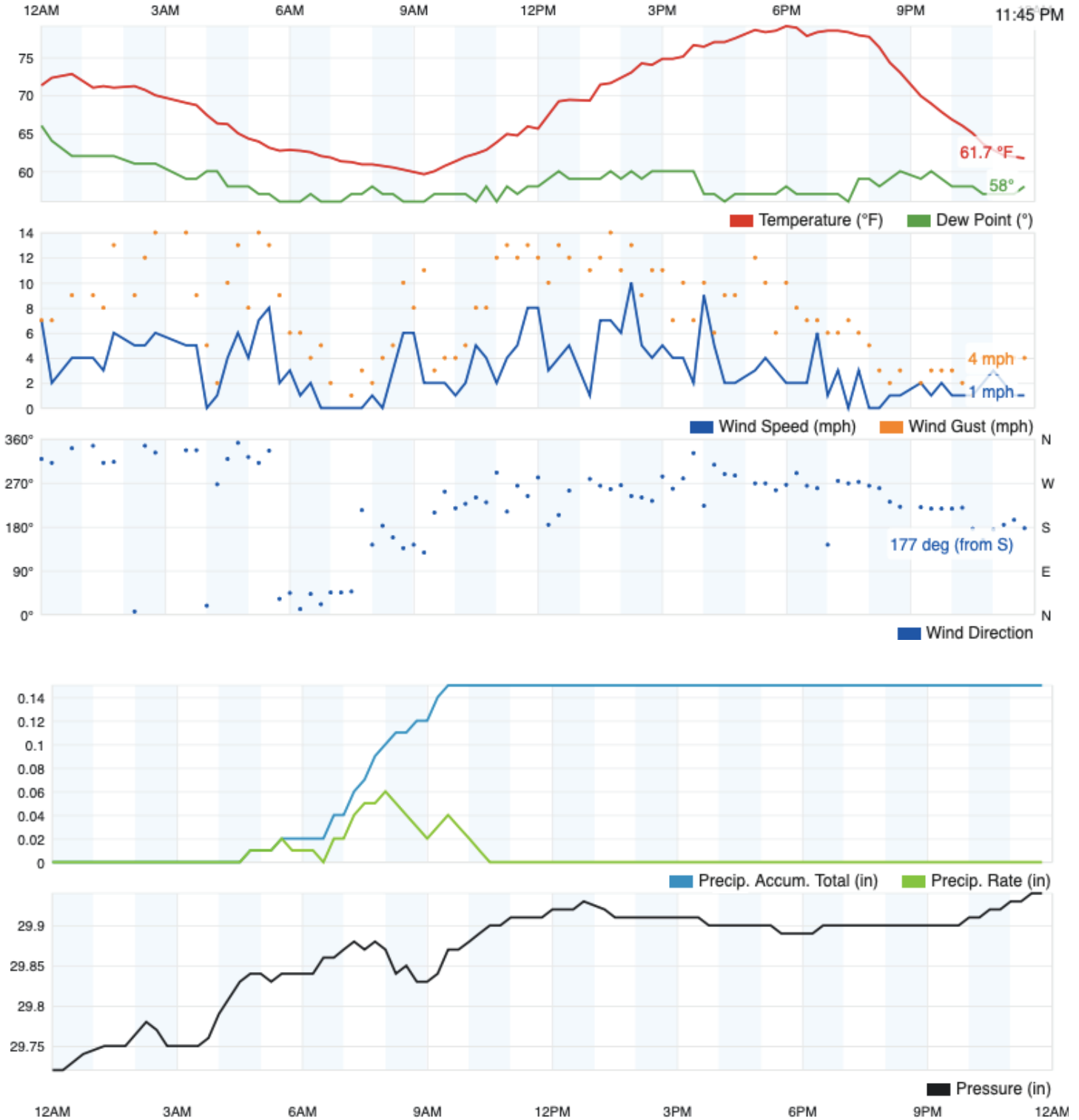
First Round State VFW Jr. Teener Schedule in Webster

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

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 11 of 65

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 12 of 65

Today



Mostly Sunny
then Slight
Chance
T-storms

High: 86 °F

Tonight



Slight Chance
T-storms

Low: 61 °F

Thursday



Slight Chance
T-storms then
Sunny

High: 90 °F

Thursday
Night



Clear

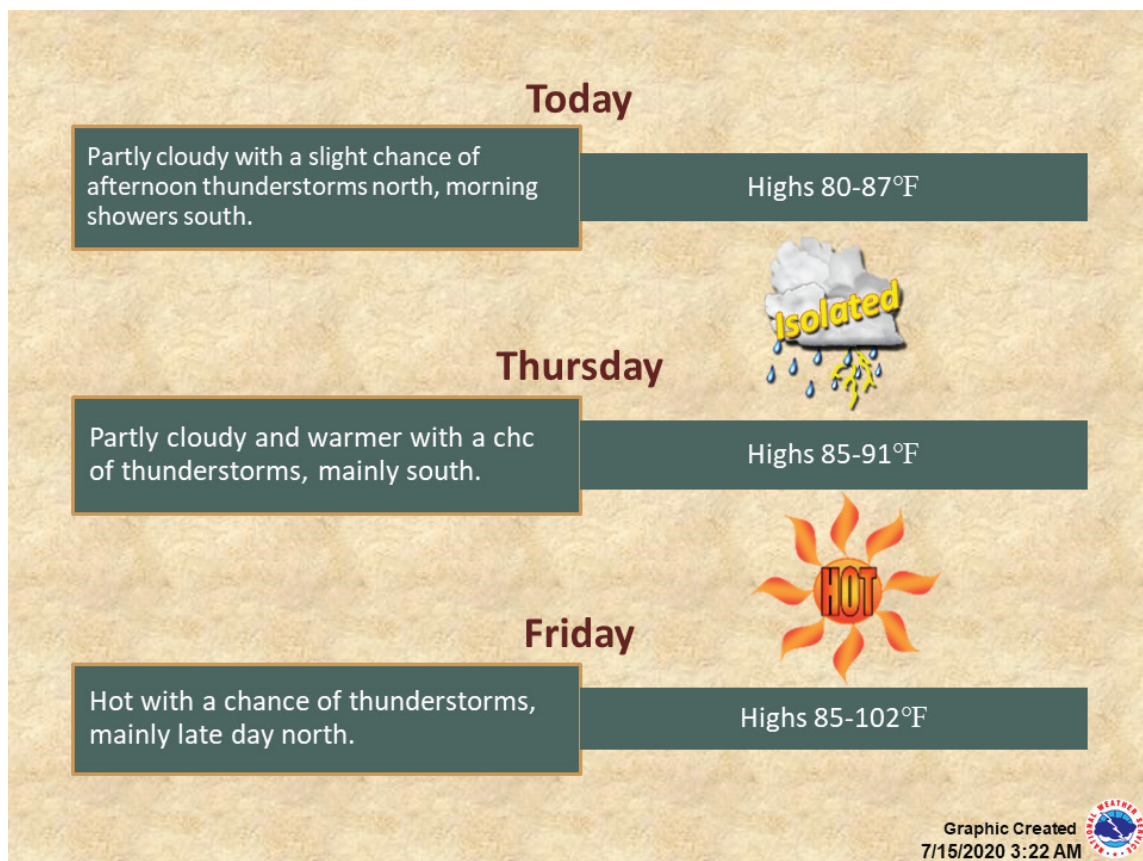
Low: 65 °F

Friday



Sunny then
Slight Chance
T-storms

High: 94 °F



It will be turning warmer across the area through the end of the week. Friday will be downright HOT! Isolated showers/storms are possible too. #sdwx #mnwx

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 13 of 65

Today in Weather History

July 15, 1885: The first of three damaging tornadoes hit 7 miles NNE of Highmore, Hyde County, and moved to the northeast. Two small homes were destroyed before the funnel turned to the east, then northeast and north before lifting. This tornado was estimated to have an F2 strength and was seen in all directions for 20 miles. The second tornado appeared to be motionless 3 miles east of Harrold, and then moved east to Holabird, in Hyde County, where it destroyed two homes and dissipated. A third tornado, this one with an estimated F3 strength, formed to the west of Highmore and moved east into town, then lifted about 4 miles east of town. Three homes were destroyed, and about 20 other buildings were damaged at Highmore. A farmer was killed 2 miles east of town. Losses totaled about \$55,000, which included many new buildings, including a church and a skating rink.

July 15, 1986: Thunderstorms brought locally heavy rainfall to portions of Walworth to Marshall Counties. Three inches of rain in an hour and a half was reported in extreme northwest Marshall County. The highest rainfall amount was seven inches southeast of Bowdle. The rains caused lowland flooding, with water over several roads in Marshall County, including Highway 10, two miles east of Britton. In Britton, 3.86 inches of rain was reported.

July 15, 2006: Record heat occurred across central and north central South Dakota and into parts of northeast South Dakota. Afternoon high temperatures ranged from 105 to as high as 120 degrees. Record highs were set at Pierre, Mobridge, Kennebec, and Timber Lake. Pierre set a new all-time record high of 117 degrees, and Mobridge tied their all-time record high of 116 degrees. Kennebec and Timber Lake both hit a record high temperature of 112 degrees. The coop observer station 17 miles west-southwest of Fort Pierre tied the state record high temperature with 120 degrees. Other high temperatures for the day were 116 degrees at Onida and Mission Ridge, 114 degrees at Murdo, 112 degrees at Redfield and Blunt, 111 degrees at Stephan, 110 degrees at Conde and Gann Valley, and 109 degrees at Aberdeen.

July 15, 2011: A large upper-level high-pressure area built over the region bringing sweltering and humid conditions. This heat was the worst to hit the area since July 2006. Beginning on Friday, July 15th and persisting through Wednesday, July 20th, many locations experienced high temperatures in the 90s to lower 100s, with low temperatures in the 70s at night. Also, humidity levels rose to extreme levels. Surface dew point temperatures in the 70s and lower 80s brought extreme heat index values of up to 110 to 125 degrees. The dew points were some of the highest ever recorded in the region on July 17th. The dew point at Aberdeen tied the previous record with 82 degrees. Sisseton also tied their record with 83 degrees. Watertown came a degree shy of matching their record with 80 degrees.

The prolonged heat took its toll on livestock with fifteen hundred cattle perishing during the heat. Numerous sports and outdoor activities were canceled. Some of the highest heat index values included; 110 degrees at Mobridge; 111 degrees at Watertown; 113 degrees at Miller and Gettysburg; 114 degrees at Wheaton and Faulkton; 116 degrees at Pierre; 118 degrees at Sisseton; and 121 degrees at Aberdeen. The highest heat index value occurred at Leola with a temperature of 98 degrees and a dewpoint of 82 degrees, and the heat index hit 125 degrees. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

1888: The Bandai volcano erupts on the Japanese island of Honshu on this day in 1888, killing hundreds and burying many nearby villages in ash.

1901: The city of Marquette, Michigan set their all-time record high temperature with 108-degree reading.

Groton Daily Independent

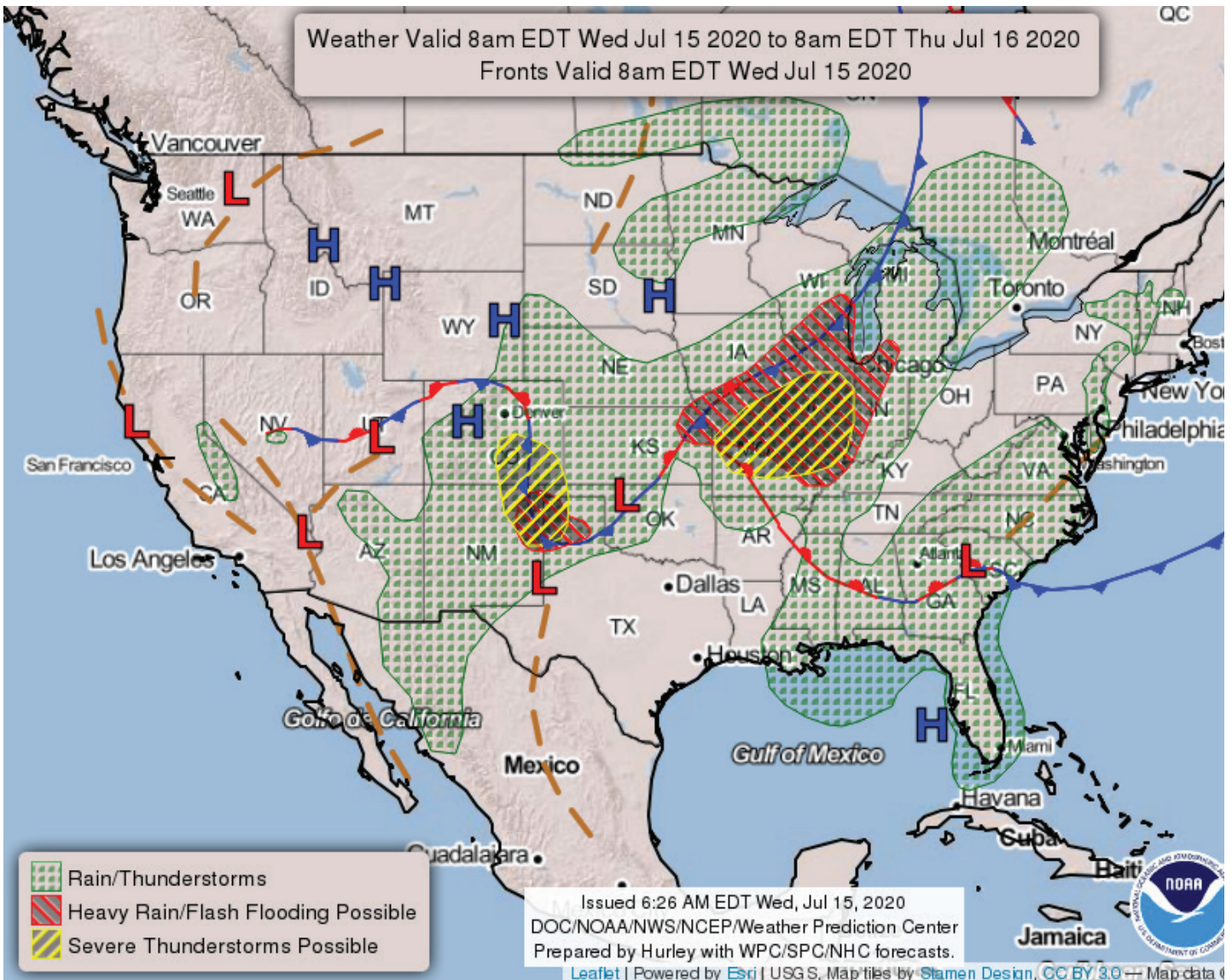
Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 14 of 65

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 79 °F at 5:56 PM
Low Temp: 60 °F at 9:08 AM
Wind: 16 mph at 3:18 AM
Precip: .15

Today's Info

Record High: 114° in 1931
Record Low: 41° in 1912
Average High: 84°F
Average Low: 59°F
Average Precip in July.: 1.49
Precip to date in July.: 0.47
Average Precip to date: 12.33
Precip Year to Date: 8.79
Sunset Tonight: 9:19 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:01 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 15 of 65



THE PROCESS AND THE PRODUCT

The village blacksmith was known for his strength and skills. He was also known for his extreme suffering and unending patience. Everyone also admired his deep and abiding faith in God and his love for the Lord.

One day a new resident of the village stopped by to meet and talk with him. Shortly after they began their conversation, the visitor to his shop said, "I understand from the folk in our town that you have great faith in God. But, sir, with all of the pain and suffering you have endured throughout the years, do you believe - deep down in your heart - that He truly loves you?"

"Oh yes," said the blacksmith, "yes, I do."

"Prove it then, if you will, because it's difficult for me to believe," said the man.

Picking up a piece of metal, the blacksmith said, "For me to make something useful of this metal, I must put it into the fire and allow the heat to make it soft. Then I must put it on the anvil and hammer it with blow after blow if it is to become a useful item. Unless I heat it until it is soft, and then hammer it until it takes shape and becomes something useful, it is worthless."

When days are difficult and nights have no guiding lights, it is not because God wants to confuse or harm us. It is because He loves us and has a unique plan for each of us to fulfill – and He is preparing us to fill it is preparing us to . In times of doubt, visit the Garden of Gethsemane.

Prayer: Lord, even Your Son experienced a time in His life when He openly asked, "Is there possibly another way." And, when there was none, He accepted the "heat." In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today : Then at three o'clock Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" Mark 15

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 16 of 65

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
- 07/25/2020 City-Wide Rummage Sales
- **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

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Tuesday:

Mega Millions

06-26-55-56-64, Mega Ball: 22, Megaplier: 4

(six, twenty-six, fifty-five, fifty-six, sixty-four; Mega Ball: twenty-two; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$91 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$87 million

Appeals court temporarily halts Dakota Access line shutdown

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A federal appeals court on Tuesday temporarily halted a judge's order that the Dakota Access Pipeline be shut down in three weeks.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit issued an "administrative stay" of the judge's order. Though the appeals court said it "should not be construed in any way as a ruling on the merits" of the case, The Bismarck Tribune reported.

The stay will remain in place until the appeals court rules on whether developer Energy Transfer can keep oil flowing while the court decides the Texas-based company's appeal of the shutdown order.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg last week ordered the line shut down by Aug. 5 pending a lengthy environmental review. The line began pumping oil more than three years ago. Energy Transfer estimates it would take three months to empty the pipeline of oil and complete steps to preserve it for future use.

Pipeline supporter GAIN Coalition, which includes businesses, trade associations and labor groups, called the order "a key step forward in reaffirming the Dakota Access Pipeline's critical role in the American energy infrastructure network." North Dakota Republican U.S. Sen. Kevin Cramer, another supporter, called the temporary halt "common sense."

But Earthjustice attorney Jan Hasselman, who represents the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, said the move is not significant.

Hasselman said in a statement an administrative stay is typical and "is not in any way indicative of how the court is going to rule — it just buys the court a little additional time to make a decision."

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.

South Dakota reports 48 COVID-19 cases, no deaths

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials on Tuesday reported 48 cases of COVID-19 as the average number of daily cases has increased slightly over the last two weeks.

Even as Midwestern states like Minnesota and Wisconsin dealt with surges in cases, the number of cases in South Dakota remained mostly steady. Over the past two weeks, the rolling average number of daily new cases has increased by just over 4. The state has yet to report a death from COVID-19 this week, though last week brought a high-mark for the number of deaths recorded in a single day with six.

State officials have counted 109 deaths from the coronavirus, but 87% of confirmed cases have recovered. 864 people tested positive and have active infections, but health officials have warned that number may be higher because some people do not have symptoms or do not get tested.

Commission rejected convict's legal fees waiver request

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Minnehaha County Commission has rejected a request by a Sioux Falls man who pleaded guilty to manslaughter to forgive nearly \$80,000 in public defender legal fees.

With credit for time served in a juvenile detention center, Alex Lingor was given 65 days in jail after pleading guilty to second-degree manslaughter, aggravated assault and distribution of marijuana to a minor following the 2017 death of 15-year-old Kareem Cisse.

The teen was killed when he crashed into a tree while Lingor was chasing him for stealing some marijuana. In a letter to the commission, Lingor said he's in the process of purchasing a home in Sioux Falls with a friend and is unable to move forward with the transaction because of the lien the county is holding against him.

County commissioners rejected the request with a 4-0 vote.

Commissioner Jeff Barth said in a typical request for a compromise of lien, officials like to see some effort by the applicant to make payments for a period of time.

Documents obtained by the Argus Leader show Lingor hasn't made any payments toward his public defender's fees.

Statue of Black protester replaces toppled UK slave trader

LONDON (AP) — An artist has erected a statue of a Black Lives Matter protester atop the plinth in the English city of Bristol formerly occupied by a statue of a slave trader.

Marc Quinn created the life-size resin and steel likeness of Jen Reid, a protester photographed standing on the plinth after demonstrators pulled down the statue of Edward Colston and dumped it in Bristol's harbor on June 7.

The statue, titled "A Surge of Power (Jen Reid)" was erected before dawn on Wednesday without approval from city officials.

Reid, who came to inspect her likeness, said "it's something that fills me with pride."

"I think it's amazing," she said. "It looks like it belongs there. It looks like it's been there forever."

Colston was a 17th-century trader who made a fortune transporting enslaved Africans across the Atlantic to the Americas on Bristol-based ships. His money funded schools and charities in Bristol, 120 miles (195 kilometers) southwest of London.

The toppling of his statue was part of a worldwide reckoning with racism and slavery sparked by the death of a Black American man, George Floyd, at the hands of police in Minneapolis in May.

Quinn, one of Britain's best-known sculptors, said Reid had "created the sculpture when she stood on the plinth and raised her arm in the air. Now we're crystallizing it."

City authorities fished the Colston statue out of the harbor and say it will be placed in a museum, along with placards from the Black Lives Matter demonstration.

Bristol Mayor Marvin Rees cast doubt on whether the new statue would be allowed to stay, noting that it "was the work and decision of a London-based artist."

"The future of the plinth and what is installed on it must be decided by the people of Bristol," he said in a statement.

"This will be critical to building a city that is home to those who are elated at the statue being pulled down, those who sympathize with its removal but are dismayed at how it happened and those who feel that in its removal, they've lost a piece of the Bristol they know, and therefore themselves."

Apple wins EU court case over \$15 billion in claimed taxes

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — A European Union court on Wednesday delivered a hammer blow to the bloc's attempts to rein in sweetheart tax deals between multinationals and individual member countries when it ruled that technology giant Apple does not have to pay 13 billion euros (\$15 billion) in back taxes to Ireland.

The EU Commission had claimed in 2016 that Apple had an illegal tax deal with Irish authorities that allowed it to pay extremely low rates. But the EU's General Court said Wednesday that "the Commission did not succeed in showing to the requisite legal standard that there was an advantage."

"The Commission was wrong to declare" that Apple "had been granted a selective economic advantage and, by extension, state aid," said the Luxembourg-based court, which is the second-highest in the EU. The ruling can only be appealed on points of law.

The EU Commission had ordered Apple to pay for gross underpayment of tax on profits across the European bloc from 2003 to 2014. The commission said Apple used two shell companies in Ireland to report its Europe-wide profits at effective rates well under 1%.

In many cases, multinationals can pay taxes on the bulk of their revenue across the EU's 27 countries in the one EU country where they have their regional headquarters. For Apple and many other big tech companies, that is Ireland. For small EU countries like Ireland, that helps attract international business and even a small amount of tax revenue is helpful for them. The net result, however, is that the companies often end up paying very low tax.

The Irish government welcomed the ruling. "Ireland has always been clear that there was no special treatment provided" to the U.S. company, it said in a statement. "Ireland appealed the Commission Decision on the basis that Ireland granted no state aid and the decision today from the Court supports that view."

Apple CEO Tim Cook has called the EU demand for back taxes "total political crap."

The defeat is especially stinging for EU Vice-President Margrethe Vestager, who has campaigned for years to root out special tax deals. Trump has referred to her as the "tax lady" who "really hates the U.S."

The Eurodad network of 49 civil society organisations said that the ruling showed how tough any tax policy remains. "If we had a proper corporate tax system, we wouldn't need long court cases to find out whether it is legal for multinational corporations to pay less than 1% in taxes," said Tove Maria Ryding of Eurodad.

Even though taxation remains under the authority of its member countries, the EU is seeking to create a level playing field among the 27 nations by making sure special deals including ultra-low tax rates with multinationals are weeded out.

The ruling comes at a time when tax income for EU nations is especially welcome because of the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. At a time when cash-strapped households are suffering, the EU wants to make sure multinationals making profits on the continent pay their fair share, too.

Meanwhile, the EU Commission was to unveil new plans to combat tax fraud only hours after the ruling in Luxembourg.

"In times like these when we are passing multibillion-euro economic stimulus packages, we cannot afford to waste a single cent in tax revenue", said EU legislator Markus Ferber of the Christian Democrat EPP Group.

Profile of a killer: Unraveling the deadly new coronavirus

By ADAM GELLER and MALCOLM RITTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — What is this enemy?

Seven months after the first patients were hospitalized in China battling an infection doctors had never seen before, the world's scientists and citizens have reached an unsettling crossroads.

Countless hours of treatment and research, trial and error now make it possible to take much closer measure of the new coronavirus and the lethal disease it has unleashed. But to take advantage of that intelligence, we must confront our persistent vulnerability: The virus leaves no choice.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 20 of 65

"It's like we're in a battle with something that we can't see, that we don't know, and we don't know where it's coming from," said Vivian Castro, a nurse supervisor at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Yonkers, just north of New York City, which struggled with its caseload this spring.

Castro had treated scores of infected patients before she, too, was hospitalized for the virus in April, then spent two weeks in home quarantine. As soon as she returned to the emergency room for her first shift, she rushed to comfort yet another casualty -- a man swallowing the few words he could muster between gasps for air.

"It just came back, that fear," she said. "I just wanted to tell him not to give up."

The coronavirus is invisible, but seemingly everywhere. It requires close contact to spread, but it has reached around the globe faster than any pandemic in history.

COVID-19 was not even on the world's radar in November. But it has caused economic upheaval echoing the Great Depression, while claiming more than 570,000 lives. In the U.S. alone, the virus has already killed more Americans than died fighting in World War I.

Even those figures don't capture the pandemic's full sweep. Nine of every 10 students worldwide shut out of their schools at one point. More than 7 million flights grounded. Countless moments of celebration and sorrow -- weddings and graduations, baby showers and funerals -- put off, reconfigured or abandoned because of worries about safety.

In short, the coronavirus has rescripted nearly every moment of daily life. And fighting it -- whether by searching for a vaccine or seeking to protect family -- takes knowing the enemy. It's the essential first step in what could be an extended quest for some version of normalcy.

"There's light at the end of tunnel, but it's a very, very long tunnel," said Dr. Irwin Redlener, director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University.

"There's a lot we don't know. But I think it's absolutely certain we're going to be adapting to a new way of life. That's the reality."

The new coronavirus is roughly 1,000 times narrower than a human hair. But scrutinized through an electron scope, it is clear this enemy is well-armed.

Coronaviruses, including the newest one, are named for the spikes that cover their outer surface like a crown, or corona in Latin. Using those club-shaped spikes, the virus latches on to the outer wall of a human cell, invades it and replicates, creating viruses to hijack more cells.

Find a way to block or bind the spikes and you can stop the virus.

Once inside a human cell, the virus' RNA, or genetic code, commandeers its machinery, providing instructions to make thousands of virus copies.

But the coronavirus has a weakness: an outer membrane that can be destroyed by ordinary soap. That neutralizes the virus, which is why health experts emphasize the need to wash hands.

Like organisms, viruses evolve, searching for traits that will ensure survival, said Charles Marshall, a professor of paleontology at the University of California and self-described "deep time evolutionary biologist."

"Coronaviruses fit into the standard evolutionary paradigm extremely well, which is if you've had some innovation, you get into some new environment ... you get into a human and you do well, you're going to proliferate," Marshall said.

There are hundreds of coronaviruses, but just seven known to infect people. Four are responsible for some common colds. But in 2002, a virus called SARS, for severe acute respiratory syndrome, spread from China to sicken about 8,000 people worldwide, killing more than 700. Another coronavirus causes Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome, or MERS, identified in 2012, spread to humans through camels.

The new coronavirus, though, has captivated scientists' attention unlike any in decades.

When researcher Thomas Friedrich logged on to his computer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison after a meeting in January, he found colleagues had been frantically posting messages to one another about the new virus.

"People were getting increasingly excited and beginning to brainstorm ideas," said Friedrich, who has

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 21 of 65

spent years studying other infectious diseases.

Now much of Friedrich's lab is focused on the coronavirus, studying its spread in Wisconsin, and collaborating with scientists around the world examining the disease's behavior in monkeys.

Even early on it was clear this virus posed a major threat, he said. Human immune systems had never encountered it. And unlike Zika, whose spread can be controlled by targeting mosquitoes, or AIDS, which most often requires sexual contact, the new virus is readily transmitted through air.

"It had all the hallmarks, to me, of a potential pandemic," Friedrich said. "Basically, everyone in the world is susceptible."

The new virus has breached borders and claimed victims with stealth and speed that make it difficult to track.

Scientists are fairly certain the disease originated in bats, which harbor many coronaviruses. To get to humans, it may have been passed through another animal, possibly consumed for meat. By late January, when Chinese authorities walled off the city of Wuhan, where the disease was first diagnosed, it was too late to stop the spread.

The most severe pandemic in recent history, the "Spanish flu" of 1918, was spread by infected soldiers dispatched to fight World War I. But aboard ships, it took weeks for the troops and the disease to cross oceans.

Now, with more than 100,000 commercial flights a day ferrying tourists, business travelers and students around the globe, the new virus spread rapidly and virtually invisibly, said medical historian Mark Honigsbaum, author of "The Pandemic Century: One Hundred Years of Panic, Hysteria and Hubris."

"By the time we woke up to the outbreak in Italy, it had been there for weeks if not months," he said.

Soon after the first case in Wuhan, Chinese tourists with the virus traveled to France. But doctors there reported recently that a fishmonger contracted the disease even earlier than that, from an unknown source. On January 21, the first confirmed U.S. case was reported in Washington state, in a man who had traveled to Asia.

"It's one person coming in from China and we have it under control. It's going to be just fine," President Donald Trump said at the time. Ten days later, he blocked entry to most travelers from China.

But genetic analysis of samples taken from New York patients showed most of the virus present arrived from Europe instead, and took root in February -- well before anyone thought about quarantining after a trip to Madrid, London or Paris.

Since February, when Dr. Daniel Griffin began treating patients suspected of having COVID-19, he's cared for more than 1,000 people with the disease, first noted for attacking the lungs. But the infection certainly does not stop there.

"I am actually shocked," said Griffin, a specialist in infectious diseases at New York's Columbia University Medical Center. "This virus seems to leave nothing untouched."

Scientists are getting a handle on the many ways the disease affects the body, but it's a scramble.

The lungs are, indeed, ground zero. Many patients find themselves gasping for breath, unable to say more than a word or two.

Even after five days in the hospital, Vivian Castro, the nurse who became infected, said she returned home struggling for air.

"I climbed two flights of stairs to my room and I felt like I was going to die," she said.

The reason why becomes clear in autopsies of those who have died, some with lungs that weigh far more than usual. Under a microscope, evidence of the virus' destruction is even more striking.

When Dr. Sanjay Mukhopadhyay examined autopsy samples from a 77-year-old Oklahoma man, he noted changes to the microscopic sacs in the patient's lungs. In a healthy lung, oxygen passes through the thin walls of those sacs into the bloodstream. But in the Oklahoma patient, the virus had turned the sac walls so thick with debris that oxygen was blocked.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 22 of 65

The thickened walls "were everywhere," preventing the lungs from sustaining the rest of the body, said Mukhopadhyay, of Ohio's Cleveland Clinic.

Autopsies reveal "what the virus is actually doing" inside patient's bodies, said Dr. Desiree Marshall, a pathologist at the University of Washington who recently examined the heart of a Seattle man who died from disease.

"Each autopsy has the chance to tell us something new," she said. And those insights from the bodies of the dead could lead to more effective treatment of the living.

The coronavirus, though, keeps raising fresh questions. It left the hearts of two men in their 40s, recently treated by Griffin, flaccid and unable to pump enough blood. Some younger people have arrived in emergency rooms suffering strokes caused by blood clotting, another calling card.

Kidneys and livers fail in some patients and blood clots puts limbs at risk of amputation. Some patients hallucinate or have trouble maintaining balance. Some get a treatable paralysis in arms or legs. Many have diarrhea, but often don't mention it until Griffin asks.

Their explanation? "That's the least of my problems when I can't breathe."

Initially, doctors often put patients on ventilators if their blood oxygen levels dropped. But death rates were so high they now try other strategies first, like turning patients on their stomachs, which can help them breathe. The truth is that hospital workers are learning as they go, sometimes painfully.

"Every patient that I see, I think that could've been me," said Dr. Stuart Moser, a cardiologist hospitalized in New York in March after he was infected. He recalls fearing that he might be put on a ventilator and wondering if he'd ever see his family again. Now, back at work, he said much of what he and his colleagues have learned about the virus' myriad effects enables them only to treat patients' symptoms.

"It's difficult because they have so many problems and there are so many patients," Moser said, "and you just want to do the right thing -- give people the best chance to get better."

In recent weeks, researchers have recruited 3,000 patients from around the world in a bid to solve a puzzling anomaly. Why does the coronavirus ravage some previously healthy patients, while leaving others relatively unscathed?

The project, called the COVID Human Genetic Effort, focuses on each person's unique genetic makeup to seek explanations for why some got sick while others stay healthy. It's one of several projects looking for genetic causes of susceptibility, including recent work by other labs suggesting a link between blood type and risk of serious illness.

"Step one is understanding and step two is fixing. There is no other way," said one of the project's leaders, Jean-Laurent Casanova, of The Rockefeller University in New York. He is paid by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which also helps fund The Associated Press Health and Science Department.

His project focuses on people 50 or younger who had no health problems before the coronavirus put them in intensive care. But the question of why the disease affects people so differently has broader implications.

It's not clear, for example, why the disease has had such a limited impact on children, compared to other age groups. People older than 65 are well over 100 times more likely to be hospitalized for the virus than people under 18. But so far, there's no explanation why.

Do children resist infection for some reason? Or is it that, even when infected, they are less likely to develop symptoms? If so, what does that mean about their chances for passing the infection along to others, like their grandparents?

These aren't just academic questions. Answers will help in assessing the risks of reopening schools. And they could eventually lead to ways to help make older people resistant to the disease.

In largely sparing children, the pandemic virus echoes the bugs that caused SARS and MERS, said Dr. Sonja Rasmussen, a professor of pediatrics and epidemiology at the University of Florida.

Scientists wonder if children might have some key difference in their cells, such as fewer of the specialized proteins that the coronavirus latch onto. Or maybe their immune systems react differently than in adults.

While the virus has mostly bypassed children, researchers have recently been troubled by a serious, albeit uncommon, condition in some young patients, that can cause inflammation in hearts, kidneys, lungs

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 23 of 65

and other organs. Most patients recovered, but the potential for long-term damage remains uncertain.

"This is what happens with a new virus," Rasmussen said. "There's a lot we don't know about it. We're on that steep learning curve."

With states and countries reopening in the face of an ongoing pandemic, it's even more crucial to find solutions. At least the last few months have spotlighted the most critical questions.

Can people who have been infected with the disease get it again?

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government's top infectious disease expert, has said that having the disease once should confer some degree of immunity. But it's not clear how much or for how long, or what levels or types of antibodies people must have to protect them against future illness.

If some people harbor the virus without symptoms, how can we block transmission?

The reality is that many infected people will never feel symptoms or get sick. That means temperature checks and other strategies based on symptoms won't be enough to stop it. Instead, many experts believe, widespread testing is needed to find silent carriers, isolate them until they are no longer contagious, and track down those they may have infected. Masks and distancing can help prevent infection and slow the spread of the virus.

Will researchers find medicines that can be used to treat the disease?

Hundreds of studies are under way, testing existing medicines and experimental ones. So far, only one -- a common steroid called dexamethasone -- has been shown to increase survival. An antiviral medicine, remdesivir, has been shown to shorten recovery time. Two others -- the malaria drugs chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine -- have not proven safe or effective for treating COVID-19 in large-scale trials, but some studies are still testing them to see if they might help prevent infection or illness.

How long will it take to find a vaccine?

Scientists in more than 150 labs around the world are pursuing a vaccine and nearly two dozen candidates are in various stages of testing. But there's no guarantee any will pan out. Finding out if any offer true protection will require testing thousands of people in places where the virus is spreading widely. Some huge studies are expected to begin this month.

"It's almost the Manhattan Project of today, where an enormous amount of resources are being devoted to this," said Rene Najera, an epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins University and the editor of a vaccine history website run by The College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

In the U.S., the goal is to have 300 million doses of potential vaccines by January. But any that fail tests will have to be thrown out. The World Health Organization has called for equitable sharing of any eventual vaccine between rich and poor countries, but how that will happen is far from clear.

It's also uncertain how useful any vaccine will be if a sizable number of people, their skepticism fed by misinformation, refuse to be inoculated.

Even an effective vaccine will not address the likelihood that, given the large number of coronaviruses and increasing contact between people and the animals harboring them, the world is very likely to face other pandemics, said Honigsbaum, the medical historian.

That means uncertainty will linger as a hallmark of the new normal.

The knowledge gained about the coronavirus could prove invaluable in defusing that doubt and, eventually, in defeating the enemy. The real uncertainty, Redlener said, is whether people will use the lessons learned to protect themselves from the virus -- or downplay the threat at their peril.

Associated Press reporters Carla K. Johnson, Marilyn Marchione, Sam McNeil and Lauran Neergaard contributed to this story.

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.

Trump looks to scale back environmental reviews for projects

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is expected to announce a new federal rule to speed up the environmental review process for proposed highways, gas pipelines and other major infrastructure, a move that critics are describing as the dismantling of a 50-year-old environmental protection law.

Trump will travel to Atlanta on Wednesday to announce the federal rule as he seeks to make it easier to meet some of the country's infrastructure needs. When he first announced the effort in January, the administration set a two-year deadline for completing full environmental impact reviews while less comprehensive assessments would have to be completed within one year. The White House said the final rule will promote the rebuilding of America.

Critics call the Republican president's efforts a cynical attempt to limit the public's ability to review, comment on and influence proposed projects under the National Environmental Policy Act, one of the country's bedrock environmental protection laws.

"This may be the single biggest giveaway to polluters in the past 40 years," said Brett Hartl, government affairs director at the Center for Biological Diversity, an environmental group that works to save endangered species.

Trump has made slashing government regulation a hallmark of his presidency and held it out as a way to boost jobs. But environmental groups say the regulatory rollbacks threaten public health and make it harder to curb global warming. With Congress and the administration divided over how to boost infrastructure investment, the president is relying on his deregulation push to demonstrate progress.

"The United States can't compete and prosper if a bureaucratic system holds us back from building what we need," Trump said when first announcing the sweeping rollback of National Environmental Policy Act rules.

Georgia is emerging as a key swing state in the general election. Trump won the Republican-leaning state by 5 percentage points in 2016, but some polls show him trailing former Vice President Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee. This will be Trump's ninth trip to Georgia and his sixth visit to Atlanta during his presidency.

The president's trip also comes as the state has seen coronavirus cases surge and now has tallied more than 12,000 confirmed cases and more than 3,000 deaths.

Jon Ossoff, a Democrat who is running against incumbent Republican Sen. David Perdue, said Trump's decision to come to Georgia to discuss infrastructure as the state's coronavirus crisis worsens demonstrates that the president is "in denial and out of control."

"Coming here for a routine photo-op is, frankly, bizarre, surreal against this unprecedented health and economic crisis," Ossoff said.

Judd Deere, a White House spokesman, said that if Ossoff views a major policy announcement to expedite critical infrastructure projects as anything other than about job growth and economic expansion, then it might explain why he lost an election two years ago.

The White House said the administration's efforts will expedite the expansion of Interstate 75 near Atlanta, an important freight route where traffic can often slow to a crawl. The state will create two interstate lanes designed solely for commercial trucks. The state announced last fall, before the White House unveiled its proposed rule, that it was moving up the deadline for substantially completing the project to 2028.

Thousands of Americans on both sides of the new federal rule wrote to the Council on Environmental Quality to voice their opinions.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce cited a North Carolina bridge in its letter as an example of unreasonable delays, saying the bridge that connected Hatteras Island to Bodie Island took 25 years to complete, but only three years to build. "The failure to secure timely approval for projects and land management decisions is also hampering economic growth," the business group wrote.

The Natural Resources Defense Council said that when Congress passed the National Environmental Policy Act 50 years ago, it did so with the understanding that environmental well-being is compatible with economic well-being. The proposed rule, it said, would lead federal agencies to make decisions with sig-

nificant environmental impacts without ever considering those impacts in advance.

"At the end of the day, it would lead to poor decision, increased litigation and less transparency," said Sharon Buccino, a senior director at the environmental group.

Trump's trip to Georgia comes one day after Biden announced an infrastructure plan that places a heavy emphasis on improving energy efficiency in buildings and housing as well as promoting conservation efforts in the agriculture industry. In the plan, Biden pledges to spend \$2 trillion over four years to promote his energy proposals.

Trump's push to use regulatory changes to boost infrastructure development also comes as the House and Senate pursue starkly different efforts. The Democratic-controlled House passed a \$1.5 trillion plan that goes beyond roads and bridges and would fund improvements to schools, housing, water and sewer, and broadband. A GOP-controlled Senate panel passed a bill last year setting aside \$287 billion for roads and bridges, but other committees are still working on the measure, including how to pay for it.

Associated Press writer Aamer Madhani 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. CONSTRUCTION MADE EASIER President Trump is expected to announce a shorter environmental review process for proposed highways, gas pipelines and other major infrastructure. Critics say the move dismantles a 50-year-old environmental protection law.

2. FOR SOME EYES ONLY Video from the body cameras of two officers charged in George Floyd's death is being made available for public viewing by appointment, but for now news organizations can't publish the footage.

3. UNREST UNSETTLES PORTLAND Nightly protests devolved into violent clashes with police have prompted soul-searching in the Oregon city that prides itself on its progressive reputation.

4. BALLOT BOX DEFIANCE Hundreds of thousands of people voted in Hong Kong's unofficial pro-democracy primaries, despite warnings the election could violate the territory's new security law.

5. SUPERMODEL TAKES OVER Tyra Banks will replace longtime host Tom Bergeron on ABC's "Dancing With the Stars" and also become the show's executive producer.

In defeat, Sessions still says Trump right for the nation

By BILL BARROW and KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

MOBILE, Ala. (AP) — Jeff Sessions took the stage Tuesday night near the Alabama gulf coast with the same certitude he'd displayed on another, bigger stage across town almost five years ago. Donald Trump's vision, the former attorney general declared anew, is right for America.

Yet this occasion couldn't have been more different.

Neither Trump nor the boisterous throngs they'd greeted together at an August 2015 stadium rally were anywhere to be seen as Sessions calmly conceded defeat in Alabama's Republican Senate runoff. The outcome ended Sessions' hopes of returning to the Senate seat he abandoned to join Trump's administration and instead left him to defend his honor one last time against the unlikely president he'd helped elect but then angered.

From the White House, Trump tweeted his joy over the stinging defeat of the former Justice Department chief he's chastised since Sessions recused himself in the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential campaign.

"I leave elected office with my integrity intact," Sessions said, initially standing alone before his grandsons joined him in front of reporters. "I hold my head high."

For Trump, the outcome mixes vengeance and vindication. A turncoat, as he sees it, lost. And the

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 26 of 65

president's preferred candidate, former Auburn University football coach Tommy Tuberville, won handily, immediately becoming a strong challenger to vulnerable Democratic Sen. Doug Jones in November.

Tuberville, not coincidentally, boasts a profile not unlike Trump, the former reality television star turned politician.

Tuberville, 65, has never held public office but comes to the political arena with a well-known brand. He embraces Trump and sells himself as an outsider, a conservative culture warrior. Jones, Tuberville told his supporters Tuesday, threatens Alabama with "New York values." The president, a New York native, wrote Tuesday night on Twitter that Tuberville would be a "GREAT senator."

Sessions, for his part, seemed eager to move on from a primary fight that saw Tuberville call him "weak" and a "disaster." He pledged to help Tuberville defeat Jones in November, offering seemingly typical statements about party unity. But Sessions took special care when discussing the matter that dominated and ultimately doomed his comeback attempt.

"Let me say this about the president and our relationship. I leave with no regrets," the 73-year-old Sessions said. "I was honored to serve the people of Alabama in the Senate, and I was extraordinarily proud of the accomplishments we had as attorney general."

That includes, he emphasized, stepping away from the Russia investigation.

"I followed the law, I did the right thing, and I saved the president's bacon in the process," Sessions said, repeating his argument that his recusal helped lead to the president's "exoneration."

"I took the road less traveled, didn't try to excuse myself or get in a fight or undermine the leader of our country and the great work he has to do," Sessions said, calling that "an honorable path."

He also alluded to what drew him to Trump in the first place — similar views on immigration, trade and the chumminess of Washington.

Sessions was the first sitting senator to endorse Trump in the 2016 primary campaign, but even that didn't necessarily mean Trump had the approval of a heavyweight. Sessions, once Alabama attorney general and a U.S. attorney under President Ronald Reagan, had been elected to the Senate in 1996. But he went to Washington as a determined budget hawk.

He focused on judicial confirmations — partly because of his own rejected nomination to the federal court during the Reagan administration. He pushed for a harder line on immigration, sometimes criticized U.S. foreign policy and railed against the bipartisan push for more relaxed international trade. And he tied those positions together as a conservative agenda aimed at working-class Americans he said are ignored by establishment powers.

For years, that made him a relative outlier among Capitol Hill Republicans. He was overshadowed back home by Alabama's senior senator, Richard Shelby, who's been in the Senate since 1987. Yet in Trump, Sessions finally found his vessel. And despite all the brow beating, Sessions said Trump and those issues remain the right path for the GOP and the country.

"I think it's time for this Republican Party to listen to the Donald Trump agenda because he has talked about those things frankly and openly," Sessions said Tuesday night, adding that the president can win a second term — as long as he "stays on message." ____

Barrow reported from Atlanta.

Rules once lifted are reimposed to try to curb new outbreaks

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Virus restrictions once lifted are being reimposed, shutting businesses and curbing people's social lives as communities try to curb a disease resurgence before it spins out of control.

Residents of Australia's second-largest city were warned on Wednesday to comply with lockdown regulations or face tougher restrictions. Melbourne's 5 million people and part of the city's semi-rural surroundings are a week into a new, six-week lockdown to contain a new outbreak there.

"The time for warnings, the time for cutting people slack is over," Victoria state Premier Daniel Andrews said. "Where we are in a very serious and deadly position."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 27 of 65

Victoria reported 238 new cases, which authorities say may indicate a stabilizing trend underway in Melbourne's outbreak.

Indian authorities will impose lockdowns in high-risk areas in nearly a dozen states as the nation's coronavirus caseload approaches 1 million.

A two-week lockdown starting Thursday has been imposed in Bihar, a state in eastern India with 128 million people and a fragile health system. Since Saturday, Bihar has recorded over 1,000 cases each day despite limited testing.

Nearly 2.5 million poor migrant workers who were stranded during India's initial nationwide lockdown have returned to the state after losing their jobs in large cities.

In Bangalore, a key technology hub in southern India where major tech companies like Amazon and Apple have offices, the government has ordered a weeklong lockdown.

The boost that India's economy received in June after the nationwide lockdown was relaxed is being halted by the localized lockdowns, experts say.

Economic indicators like labor participation rates and electricity consumption declined in July from June, according to the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy, an independent think tank.

Renewed restrictions took effect in Hong Kong on Wednesday, with public gatherings limited to four people, restaurants restricted to takeout after 6 p.m., and a one-week closure for gyms, karaoke bars, and selected other businesses. Masks also are mandated on public transit for the first time, with the non-compliant being fined.

Sammi Li, the owner of the Mibrows salon, said small businesses such as hers are at the mercy of such mandatory closures as there is little they can do to prepare. She expects the cycle of reopening and closing to continue until a vaccine is found.

"We'll just try to work as much as we can when we are open, to prepare for another closure," she said.

During the last round of closures, Li received a \$3,870 government subsidy that covered costs such as rent and utilities, but not income lost. It's unclear whether there will be subsidies this time.

Of the nearly two dozen possible COVID-19 vaccines in progress, candidates from the U.S., China and Britain are entering final testing stages. The first one tested in the U.S. revved up people's immune systems just the way scientists had hoped, researchers reported Tuesday as they prepared to begin key final testing.

In the U.S., places including Washington state are delaying timetables for reopening their economies. Gov. Jay Inslee said counties will remain at their current stage of economic reopening at least until July 28.

Inslee warned there was a "significant risk" that parts of the economy may have to be closed again if coronavirus activity continues to climb.

The United States is the worst-hit country with 3.4 million cases, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally. It said more than 13.3 million people have been infected worldwide, and 578,000 have died.

The actual numbers are thought to be far higher due to a number of reasons including limited testing.

New Zealand has been a success story in the pandemic by pursuing the ambitious target of eradication of the virus. Some in near-neighbor Australia are arguing that the Australian government also should have pursued eradication rather than suppression.

New Zealand has not recorded a locally spread case in 75 days, and all 27 of its active cases are people quarantined after foreign travel.

If it has a future community outbreak, a system of local or regional lockdowns would be used and a second national lockdown would be a last resort, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said. Local lockdowns might involve buildings, suburbs or a city.

"Our priority will be to control any cases with the least intrusive measures and over the smallest area we can," Ardern said. "No one wants to go backwards but the reality is our fight against the virus is not over and we must have a plan at the ready to protect our current position if it comes back."

Some countries including South Korea have weathered the pandemic without severe economic lockdowns, although officials shut schools until May and temporarily closed leisure facilities in some major cities when infections rose. The country's professional baseball league, which returned to action in May

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 28 of 65

without spectators, is now preparing to bring back fans in the stands.

Instead of placing stringent social restrictions, the country is attempting to contain its outbreak by mobilizing technological tools to trace contacts and enforce quarantines. Smartphone tracking apps monitor tens of thousands of people quarantined at home.

But health authorities in recent weeks have said they are finding it increasingly difficult to trace contacts and predict infection routes as people increasingly venture out in public.

Business shutdowns were not enforced during Japan's state of emergency that ended in late May, but many stores and restaurants closed voluntarily. Recent spikes in Tokyo and other major cities have prompted local governments to take action.

About 100 infections on U.S. military bases on the southern island of Okinawa prompted Gov. Denny Tamaki to demand the U.S. military to seal off the affected bases. The U.S. military said the bases have been placed under a lockdown. Defense Minister Taro Kono said "a number of problems" have been found in the U.S. military's coronavirus handling.

The southern prefecture of Kagoshima issued a 14-week closure request for dancing halls, bars and other nightclubs after one venue was connected to about 100 infections.

In Tokyo, Gov. Yuriko Koike and central government officials have largely identified nighttime entertainment districts as hotbeds of recent rises in COVID-19 cases and said shutdown requests were possible.

After a surge in daily infections beginning last month, Israel moved last week to reimpose restrictions, closing events spaces, live show venues, bars and clubs. It has imposed lockdowns on areas with high infection rates, which in some cases sparked protests from residents. Officials have warned that if case numbers don't come down in the coming days, Israel will have no choice but to lock the entire country down again, as it did in the spring.

"I don't see what other tools we have aside from a lockdown," Israeli Health Minister Yuli Edelstein told the Israeli news site Ynet. "Unless there is a miracle."

Israel appeared to have contained its outbreak in May, but after a hasty and erratic reopening, saw the number of new cases shoot up. It is now reporting about 1,500 new cases a day, far higher than its peak in the spring.

AP reporters around the world contributed to this report.

Asia Today: Rules return in Hong Kong, India, ease in China

HONG KONG (AP) — Renewed restrictions took effect in Hong Kong on Wednesday, with restaurants limited to takeout after 6 p.m., as the Asian financial center battles a resurgence of the coronavirus.

Mask-wearing has been made compulsory on public transport for the first time, with fines of up to 5,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$650). Public gatherings are once again restricted to four people, after the limit was eased last month to allow up to 50.

The semi-autonomous Chinese territory has seen a return of locally transmitted cases in the past 10 days after a long spell without them. About 300 new cases have been reported since July 6, including more than 220 non-imported ones.

The city reversed plans to allow major public events, postponing a highly popular annual book fair slated to open Wednesday. Hong Kong Disneyland, which had reopened last month, shuttered again in accordance with the renewed restrictions.

Gyms and beauty salons have been ordered closed, and eateries are not allowed to offer dine-in services from 6 p.m. to 5 a.m. Schools had already been reclosed from Monday.

The city of 7.5 million people has recorded 1,569 confirmed cases and eight deaths since the outbreak began.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

— China is further easing restrictions on domestic tourism after reporting no new local cases of COVID-19 in nine days. A directive from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism dated Tuesday said tourist sites could

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 29 of 65

allow 50% of their daily visitor capacity, up from 30%, and that interprovince group tours can resume. The National Health Commission said six new cases were recorded Tuesday, all in people who had arrived from overseas. It has not reported any domestic cases since an outbreak in Beijing that infected more than 330 people before it faded early this month. China has reported 83,611 confirmed cases and 4,634 deaths since the outbreak began. It does not include people who test positive but show no symptoms in its case count.

— India's coronavirus cases surged by 29,429, and authorities are reimposing lockdowns in high-risk areas. The new cases took the national total to 936,181. The Health Ministry also reported another 582 deaths, taking total fatalities up to 24,309. A two-week lockdown was imposed Wednesday in eastern Bihar state and its population of nearly 128 million. Nearly 2.5 million poor migrant workers have returned to the state after losing jobs in other parts of the country. India's key southern technology hub, Bangalore, was also put under a weeklong lockdown on Wednesday. About a dozen states, including Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Assam, have put high-risk areas under lockdowns, only allowing essential food supplies and health services.

— The leader of Australia's worst-hit state said police were cracking down on a coronavirus lockdown in the nation's second-largest city. Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews warned that restrictions would be increased unless the spread was contained in Melbourne. The Australian military is bolstering police numbers at checkpoints. Police were scanning license plates to determine drivers' addresses and whether they were subjected to stay-at-home orders. Chief Health Officer Brett Sutton said 238 new cases detected in the latest 24-hours could be the start of a stabilization in the spread of the virus in Melbourne, more than a week into a new lockdown in the city and part of its surrounds.

— New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern outlined her government plans to contain future community outbreaks in the South Pacific nation that has not recorded a locally spread case in 75 days. Its two new cases recorded Wednesday and all 27 of its active cases are people quarantined after foreign travel. Ardern said a system of local or regional lockdowns would be used and a national lockdown would be a last resort. Local lockdowns might involve buildings, suburbs or a city. "Our priority will be to control any cases with the least intrusive measures and over the smallest area we can," Ardern said.

— South Korea has reported 39 new cases of the coronavirus, most of them tied to international arrivals as the virus continues to spread in Asia, the United States and elsewhere. The figures released by the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Wednesday brought national totals to 13,551 cases, including 289 deaths. The KCDC said at least 28 of the new cases were linked to arrivals from abroad, but it didn't immediately disclose where they were from. South Korea requires two-week quarantines on all passengers arriving from overseas. Foreign nationals arriving from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan beginning this week must provide health certificates proving they had tested negative for COVID-19 amid widening outbreaks in Southern and Central Asia.

— The number of travelers who entered and left the Philippines dropped 95% under its coronavirus quarantine. Immigration Commissioner Jaime Morente predicted the travel slump would remain dire. "We do not foresee these statistics to rise in the near future while the entire world is still fighting to defeat this coronavirus," Morente said. The government was forced to ease a lockdown in the capital and quarantine restrictions elsewhere last month to reopen the faltering economy despite infection spikes. Nearly 60,000 COVID-19 cases have been reported in the country, including more than 1,600 deaths.

— Members of Tokyo's coronavirus task force raised caution levels in the Japanese capital to the highest on a scale of four and urged officials to secure more hospital beds, increase testing and raise awareness about the situation's urgency. Gov. Yuriko Koike asked residents to avoid non-essential out-of-town trips, but stopped short of requesting business closures. Norio Ohmagari, a member of the task force, said infections appear to be expanding, with the number of untraceable cases on the rise. He said infections are no longer concentrated in nightlife districts and are spreading in workplaces, restaurants, households, nursing homes and childcare facilities. Tokyo reported 8,189 cases including 325 deaths as of Tuesday.

Lebanon looks to China as US, Arabs refuse to help in crisis

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Facing a worsening economic crisis and with little chance of Western or oil-rich Arab countries providing assistance without substantial reforms, Lebanon's cash-strapped government is looking east, hoping to secure investments from China that could bring relief.

But help from Beijing risks alienating the United States, which has suggested such a move could come at the cost of Lebanese-U.S. ties.

A tiny nation of 5 million on a strategic Mediterranean crossroads between Asia and Europe, Lebanon has long been a site where rivalries between Iran and Saudi Arabia have played out. Now, it's becoming a focus of escalating tensions between China and the West.

In recent months, the Lebanese pound has lost around 80% of its value against the dollar, prices have soared uncontrollably, and much of its middle class has been plunged into poverty. Talks with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout have faltered, and international donors have refused to unlock \$11 billion pledged in 2018, pending major economic reforms and anti-corruption measures.

Left with few choices, Prime Minister Hassan Diab's government — supported by the Iran-backed Hezbollah and its allies — is seeking help from China, an approach that the Shiite militant group strongly supports. He is walking a tightrope.

"Our move toward China is very serious but we are not turning our back to the West," a ministerial official told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to talk to the media. "We are passing through extraordinary circumstances and we welcome whoever is going to assist us."

He said China has offered to help end Lebanon's decades-long electrical power crisis through its state companies, an offer the government is considering.

In addition, Beijing has offered to build power stations, a tunnel that cuts through the mountains to shorten the trip between Beirut and the eastern Bekaa Valley, and a railway along Lebanon's coast, according to the official and an economist.

The U.S., which has historic relations with Lebanon and is a strong backer of its army, said such a move could come at the expense of Beirut's relations with Washington.

The China overtures come at a time when Hezbollah and its allies are increasingly portraying the crisis in Lebanon, which stems from decades of corruption and mismanagement, as one fomented by the U.S. administration. They accuse the U.S. of imposing an informal "financial siege" on Lebanon, partly to put pressure on Hezbollah which Washington and its Gulf Arab allies consider a terrorist organization.

"We know well that there is a big decision to besiege the country. They are preventing any assistance to Lebanon," Diab told a July 2 government meeting, according to his office.

Diab said, without naming any country, that "they are preventing transfers to the country and blocking credit lines to import fuel, diesel, medicine and flour to cut the electricity, starve the Lebanese and make them die without medicine."

"Trying to blame Lebanon's economic crisis on U.S. sanctions is misguided and false," U.S. State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said in response to the accusations.

Earlier this month, Diab received China's ambassador to Lebanon, Wang Kejian, after which Lebanon's industry minister was asked to follow up on possibilities of cooperation. Kejian declined to comment.

Hezbollah has advocated for a bigger role for China and other allies in Lebanon. The group had opposed an IMF program to get Lebanon out of its crisis, fearing it would come with political conditions. But it begrudgingly accepted that Lebanon engage in the negotiations as long as the IMF didn't dictate policy.

Seventeen rounds of talks between the government and the IMF since mid-May have failed to make any progress.

A person familiar with the discussions said it was not an "either-or" choice between China and the IMF, adding that the talks with the IMF are about covering the immediate fiscal deficit, injecting dollars and developing a framework for structural reform, while the discussions with Beijing are about infrastructure projects. The person spoke on condition of anonymity in order to describe the negotiations.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 31 of 65

Lebanon defaulted on its sovereign debt in March, and economist Hasan Moukalled said most Western companies will be reluctant to invest there as long as the country does not reach a deal with the IMF. This is what makes Chinese companies different, he said.

Moukalled, who visited China several times in 2018 and 2019, said the projects that China has offered to work on are worth \$12.5 billion.

The investments can be mutually beneficial. China can gain from close relations with Lebanon, with the country serving as a launch pad for the reconstruction of neighboring Syria, another Beijing ally.

Lebanon's northern port of Tripoli has been expanded in recent years and could be a terminal in China's trillion-dollar "Silk Road" project that's carving a trade route from east Asia to Europe.

Iran has also offered to sell Lebanon oil for Lebanese pounds, but officials in Beirut have been concerned about deals with Tehran because of Western sanctions. The government is in talks with Iraq's government, which is offering to give fuel to Lebanon in return for agricultural products.

"We understand Lebanon is in desperate need for an infusion of cash. They need investors," U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Dorothy Shea told Saudi-owned TV station Al-Hadath. After Lebanon's default in March, "investors are not lining up at the door."

Some people have talked about Lebanon turning east "as if that's the answer to all of Lebanon's economic woes," she said, warning that Chinese investments might come "at the expense of the country's prosperity, stability or fiscal viability, or, of course, on the long-standing relations with the United States."

Russian Ambassador Alexander Zasytkin told the daily al-Joumhouria that Russia, China, Syria, Iran and Iraq can help Lebanon. He added that when the West refused, "the alternative to look east became more persistent."

During a visit to Lebanon last week, Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, head of the U.S. Central Command, was asked about Lebanon and other regional countries looking to China for resources and financing.

"You get what you pay for. That's all I have to say," McKenzie said.

Chaotic protests prompt soul-searching in Portland, Oregon

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Nearly two months of nightly protests that have devolved into violent clashes with police have prompted soul-searching in Portland, Oregon, a city that prides itself on its progressive reputation but is increasingly polarized over how to handle the unrest.

President Donald Trump recently deployed federal agents to "quell" the demonstrations in Portland that began after George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police, shining an unwelcome spotlight as the city struggles to find a way forward. The national attention comes as divisions deepen among elected officials about the legitimacy of the more violent protests — striking at the heart of Portland's identity as an ultraliberal haven where protest is seen as a badge of honor.

"I was born and raised here, and I'm a graduate of the local public school system. I chose to make my livelihood here, I chose to raise my daughter here," said Mayor Ted Wheeler, who has faced criticism from all sides. "And in all the years that I have lived here, I have never seen the community more divided. Nor have I seen it look worse."

Small groups of protesters have set fires, launched fireworks and sprayed graffiti on public buildings, including police precincts and the federal courthouse, leading to nearly nightly clashes with police who have used force that's caused injuries. Similar unrest engulfed many U.S. cities when Floyd died after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed a knee to his neck on May 25. But in Portland, which is familiar ground for the loosely organized, far-left activists known as "antifa," or anti-fascists, the protests never stopped.

Lost in the debate are the downtown businesses racking up millions in property damage and lost sales and the voices of the hundreds of thousands of Portland residents who have stayed off the streets.

"The impact is terrible because what people have seen on the TV ... has scared people who live outside the downtown. They feel it's that way 24 hours a day," said David Margulis, who said the protests have caused sales at his jewelry store to drop more than 50%. "I talk to people, on the phone, who tell me: 'I

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 32 of 65

don't know if I'll ever come downtown again.'"

Soon after Floyd's death, diverse crowds of thousands took to the streets every night for peaceful marches and rallies, filling a bridge that spans the Willamette River on several nights. Smaller groups, however, quickly turned to vandalism.

Police have arrested dozens of people, dispersing protesters with tear gas on multiple occasions. Federal law enforcement officers sent in two weeks ago by Trump to stop the unrest have further inflamed tensions, particularly after one protester was critically injured when a federal agent fired a non-lethal round at his head.

The mayor and police have repeatedly decried the clashes as a destructive distraction from the Black Lives Matter movement and make a sharp distinction between peaceful demonstrators and those bent on engaging with authorities, whom the police call "agitators." Other officials, including several city commissioners, Democratic Gov. Kate Brown and Oregon's House speaker, have criticized the police for being too aggressive.

It's become a cycle of unrest, police response and further outrage.

"Each night's protest is now turning into a protest of the night before's police activity. And so when people say we want this to stop, it can't stop because today's protest will be about what the feds or the Portland Police Bureau did yesterday," said Gregory McKelvey, an activist and critic of the police response.

"There's really this battle that we're having right now — a communications war over who's a 'good protester' and who's a 'bad protester.' And what the police and the mayor are trying to do is turn the city against the people that are out protesting," he said.

Some members of the Black community, which makes up less than 6% of Portland's population, say the continual clashes with police — including in a historically Black part of the city — are distracting from the message of racial justice.

"It's very clear to me that this is not about accomplishing goals. This is about anarchy, and people are taking advantage of the demonstrations for their own reasons that have nothing to do with social justice," said Ron Herndon, a prominent civil rights activist. "Any support you think you could get, you probably have lost from a lot of people because you have negatively impacted their lives."

Jo Ann Hardesty, the first Black woman on Portland's City Council, said protesters don't need to destroy property to effect change but believes the violence is a reaction to a newfound understanding, particularly among white people, about "how abusive the police can be."

Nevertheless, Hardesty, who has dedicated her career to police reform, is confident Portland will come out of this stronger. She's working to get a measure before voters — circumventing the powerful police union — to create an independent police review board. She also led a push last month to cut \$27 million from the police budget.

"We have to all figure out, how do we move the city forward? What we know is that we can't protest forever and ever. And what we know is that people want real change," Hardesty said. "I think the more we invite people in, the less disruption we'll see on our streets."

Follow Gillian Flaccus on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/gflaccus>.

News outlets seek to unseal files on Saints owner Tom Benson

By JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

News outlets including The Associated Press headed to court Wednesday seeking to unseal court records involving the mental competency of billionaire Tom Benson when he rewrote his will to give his third wife ownership of the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans sports franchises.

Public interest in the 2015 case has been heightened, the news organizations argued, by revelations this year that Saints executives engaged in a behind-the-scenes public relations campaign to help the Archdiocese of New Orleans contain the fallout from a clergy abuse crisis.

"Legitimate questions are being raised about the connection between the team and the local Roman

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 33 of 65

Catholic Church," attorneys for the news organizations wrote in a court filing.

Attorneys for Benson oppose the request to unseal the proceedings, contending Benson's privacy concerns continue even after his 2018 death.

Orleans Parish Civil District Judge Kern Reese was expected to hear arguments Wednesday on whether the AP, CNN, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal have the right to be heard in the matter.

Reese closed his courtroom throughout the 2015 trial, known in Louisiana as an interdiction, saying secrecy was needed to protect Benson's medical privacy rights and confidential information about the business operations of the NFL and NBA clubs.

The case involved explosive claims brought by Benson's heirs that the billionaire's third wife, Gayle, manipulated Benson into rewriting his will and isolated him from his friends and family.

Reese dismissed the lawsuit following eight days of testimony, ruling Benson was mentally sound when he ousted his estranged daughter and grandchildren from ownership positions with his teams.

Gayle Benson, a devout Catholic with close ties to Archbishop Gregory Aymond, inherited Benson's business empire and has defended the Saint's public relations work on behalf of the cash-strapped archdiocese, which recently filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

The Saints acknowledged giving church leaders advice on how to handle media attention surrounding the 2018 release of a list naming more than 50 clergy members "credibly accused" of sexual abuse. The team and church leaders have opposed a request by the AP to release thousands of internal emails documenting the public relations work.

Gayle Benson testified during the 2015 interdiction proceedings, but attorneys for Benson argued the trial had "nothing to do with the Archdiocese."

But the news organizations argued that "there has been a continuing public interest in the ownership of the Saints" that increased "because of the actions of Saints personnel under Mrs. Benson's ownership in assisting the Archdiocese of New Orleans."

The privacy concerns that prompted Reese to seal the 2015 case "expired with Mr. Benson's death or diminished significantly," they added.

Trump signs bill, order rebuking China, and slams Biden

By ZEKE MILLER, DEB RIECHMANN and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump signed legislation and an executive order on Tuesday that he said will hold China accountable for its oppressive actions against the people of Hong Kong, then quickly shifted his policy speech into a political one, hurling broadsides against Democratic rival Joe Biden.

The legislation and order are part of the Trump administration's stepped-up offensive against China for what he calls the rising Asian superpower's exploitation of America and its effort to conceal details about the human-to-human transmission of the coronavirus from the world. The almost daily administration attacks on Beijing come as Trump defends his own response to the virus, with cases surging in parts of the United States, and as he works ahead of the election to portray Biden as soft on China.

"So Joe Biden and President Obama freely allowed China to pillage our factories, plunder our communities and steal our most precious secrets," Trump said, adding, "I've stopped it largely."

Trump said that as vice president, Biden advocated for the Paris Agreement addressing climate change; Trump withdrew the U.S. from the accord. "It would have crushed American manufacturers while allowing China to pollute the atmosphere with impunity, yet one more gift from Biden to the Chinese Communist Party," Trump said.

Trump talked up his own tough approach to Beijing, though he spent the early weeks of the pandemic praising Chinese President Xi Jinping. The two nations signed phase one of a trade deal, but since then, relations have soured and Trump told reporters in the Rose Garden that he has no interest in talking to Xi.

The legislation Trump signed into law targets police units that have cracked down on Hong Kong protesters as well as Chinese Communist Party officials responsible for imposing a new, strict national security law widely seen as chipping away at Hong Kong's autonomy. The mandatory sanctions are also required

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 34 of 65

to be imposed on banks that conduct business with the officials.

While he signed the bill into law, Trump issued a statement saying the administration would not view as binding certain sections of the law that the White House believes limit a president's powers to conduct foreign policy.

Lawmakers from both parties have urged Trump to take strong action in response to China's new national security law that erodes the "one country, two systems" framework under which Britain handed Hong Kong over to China in 1997. Hong Kong is considered a special administrative region within China and has its own governing and economic systems.

"This law gives my administration powerful new tools to hold responsible the individuals and the entities involved in extinguishing Hong Kong's freedom," Trump said. "Their freedom has been taken away. Their rights have been taken away, and with it goes Hong Kong in my opinion because it will no longer be able to compete with free markets. A lot of people will be leaving Hong Kong, I suspect."

The executive order he signed did not appear to go beyond his administration's previous determinations that Hong Kong is no longer eligible for preferential treatment from the United States. Trump said the order strikes those privileges but, in fact, the administration already has been in the process of eliminating them for nearly two months.

China called the legislation gross interference in its internal affairs and warned it would respond by imposing sanctions on related American individuals and entities.

"The American side's attempts to obstruct the implementation of Hong Kong's national security law will never succeed," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

It said the law would ensure the long-term stability and prosperity of the semi-autonomous territory.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo first made the determination in late May that China's decision to impose a new national security law in Hong Kong meant the former British territory was no longer a democracy and so was no longer eligible for trade, commercial and other U.S. perks it had enjoyed. Just three days later, when Trump announced the U.S. was withdrawing from the World Health Organization because of Chinese influence, he echoed Pompeo's determination and instructed his administration to immediately begin eliminating the preferences, which it did.

In late June, the administration barred Hong Kong from importing U.S. weapons, saying its purchase of items that have both civilian and military applications would be subject to the same licensing requirements as mainland China. Other actions in the works include suspending an extradition treaty with Hong Kong, something Australia has already done, as well as ending legal cooperation agreements, taxation accords and financial understandings that cover accounting rules for Chinese businesses that work in the U.S.

At the same time, the administration has pressed ahead with travel bans for Chinese, Hong Kong and communist party officials the U.S. believes are responsible for curtailing democracy in Hong Kong.

The administration also also gone after China by imposing travel bans on officials for repressing minorities in western China and hindering foreigners' access to Tibet. On Monday, Pompeo announced that the U.S. had decided to reject outright virtually all Chinese maritime claims in the South China Sea, a determination that could lead to increased tensions in disputed, critical international shipping lanes.

Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire in Washington and Ken Moritsugu in Beijing contributed to this report.

China: US Xinjiang warning 'bad for the whole world'

BEIJING (AP) — China's government has warned it will protect Chinese companies after Washington said enterprises may face legal trouble if they help carry out abuses in the Muslim northwestern region of Xinjiang.

The U.S. warning came amid mounting tension with Beijing over human rights, trade and Hong Kong. It cited complaints of abuses by the ruling Communist Party against ethnic Muslims including mass detention and forced labor.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 35 of 65

The Commerce Ministry accused the U.S. government of meddling in China's affairs. It said Washington was misusing complaints about human rights to "suppress Chinese companies."

"This is bad for China, bad for the United States and bad for the whole world," said a ministry statement. "China strongly urges the U.S. to stop its bad acts," the ministry said. "China will take necessary measures to resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises."

The U.S. warning issued July 1 said companies that handle goods made by forced labor or supply technology that might be used in labor camps or for surveillance might face unspecified "reputational, economic and legal risks."

China has detained an estimated 1 million or more members of its Muslim ethnic minority groups in internment camps. The government describes them as vocational training facilities aimed at countering Muslim radicalism and separatist tendencies. It says those facilities have since been closed, a claim impossible to deny given the restrictions on visits and reporting about the region.

Veterans of the camps and family members say those held are forced, often with the threat of violence, to denounce their religion, culture and language and swear loyalty to Communist Party leader and head of state Xi Jinping.

The U.S. government has imposed sanctions on four Chinese officials including a ban on property transactions with them by Americans. Beijing responded by announcing unspecified sanctions on four U.S. senators who are critics of the ruling party's policies toward ethnic minorities and religious believers.

Ministry of Commerce (in Chinese): www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/ae/ag/202007/20200702982863.shtml

U.S. government advisory: www.state.gov/xinjiang-supply-chain-business-advisory/

Body camera footage of Floyd arrest could show more of story

By STEVE KARNOWSKI and AMY FORLITI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Video from the body cameras of two officers charged in George Floyd's death is being made available for public viewing by appointment on Wednesday, but a judge has so far declined to allow news organizations to publish the footage for wider distribution.

Footage from the body cameras of Thomas Lane and J. Kueng was filed with the court last week by Lane's attorney, but only the written transcripts were made public. A coalition of news media organizations and attorneys for Lane and Kueng have said making the videos public would provide a more complete picture of what happened when Floyd was taken into custody.

Members of the news media and the public are viewing the video Wednesday by appointment at the courthouse. The media coalition, which includes The Associated Press, has said this arrangement is the equivalent of keeping the videos under seal, and the coalition is asking Judge Peter Cahill to allow the media to copy the videos and publish them.

Media attorney Leita Walker said in a court filing that the footage should be made widely available to "all members of the public concerned about the administration of justice in one of the most important, and most-watched, cases this State — perhaps this country — has ever seen."

She also said allowing journalists to copy the footage, watch it multiple times, transcribe it and compare it to the transcripts and to time stamps from widely seen bystander video will help reporters piece together a more complete story.

"As the days of unrest in the Twin Cities showed, it is vitally important that the public have full confidence in the process and outcome of this criminal prosecution," she said.

Floyd, a Black man who was handcuffed, died May 25 after Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, pressed his knee against Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes as Floyd said he couldn't breathe. Chauvin is charged with second-degree murder, third-degree murder and manslaughter. Tou Thao, Lane and Kueng are charged with aiding and abetting both second-degree murder and manslaughter. All four officers were fired.

The body camera videos and transcripts were filed in court last week by Lane's attorney, Earl Gray, as part of a motion to have Lane's case dismissed. Gray said at the time that he wanted the videos to be

made public, telling the Star Tribune that they would show the "whole picture." Gray said the bystander video shows just the last piece of what happened and "is not fair."

Gray's motion highlighted portions of the body-camera video that show Floyd "actively resisting and acting erratic" with officers. It also noted Floyd's "request" to be put on the ground. Gray also argued that Lane didn't have a clear view of what Chauvin was doing.

Kueng's attorney, Tom Plunkett, said in a court filing that he also wants the videos made public. He said releasing information in piecemeal fashion has been catastrophic, leading to incomplete reporting by the media and unfairly portraying evidence in favor of the prosecution.

The video footage could provide a more vivid picture of what happened the night Floyd was arrested on suspicion of passing a fake \$20 bill. The transcripts show Floyd appearing cooperative at times but becoming agitated as he begged not to be put in a squad car, saying repeatedly he was claustrophobic. The transcripts also detailed Floyd thrashing about in the back of the squad car to the point where he injured himself.

The footage will likely also will show what Lane, Kueng and Floyd did during the struggle, rather than what was merely said. It could also pick up on nonverbal cues that are not captured in the transcripts, such as labored breathing, tone of voice or physical reactions.

The video could also show what Chauvin was saying and doing, and how much Lane and Kueng saw. It could also dispel some discrepancies in the two transcripts that Walker, the media attorney, said raise questions about their accuracy.

Tuberville defeats Sessions, wins Alabama Senate GOP primary

By KIM CHANDLER and BILL BARROW Associated Press

MOBILE, Ala. (AP) — Former U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions lost the Republican nomination for his old Senate seat in Alabama to former college football coach Tommy Tuberville on Tuesday, likely ending a long political career with a bitter defeat egged on by President Donald Trump.

Tuberville, 65, beat Sessions in Tuesday's Republican runoff as Sessions fell short in his attempted comeback for a seat he held for two decades before resigning to become Trump's attorney general in 2017.

Familiar to Alabamians from his decade as Auburn University's head football coach, Tuberville won about 60% of the vote, according to unofficial returns, and is now positioned for a robust challenge against Democratic U.S. Sen. Doug Jones. With Alabama's strong GOP tilt, the seat is likely Republicans' best chance for a pickup as they try to maintain their thin Senate majority amid Trump's lagging popularity nationally.

Sessions, 73, was wounded by Trump's criticisms after he recused himself in the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential campaign. The first U.S. senator to endorse Trump during the GOP presidential primary campaign, Sessions insisted throughout his attempted comeback and again in defeat that he was required by law to recuse because he was a potential subject and witness given his campaign ties to the president. "Let me say this about the president and our relationship: I leave with no regrets," Session said on a small stage at a Mobile, Alabama, hotel, with his many grandsons looking on. "I was honored to serve the people of Alabama and I was extraordinarily proud of the accomplishments we had as attorney general." Sessions repeated that he was right to step away from the investigation. "I did the right thing and I saved the president's bacon in the process. Any other action to try to squelch an investigation in that environment would not have worked," he said, adding that it ultimately led to Trump's exoneration. "I leave elected office with my integrity intact."

Sessions was gracious to Tuberville, as well, pledging he'd work to help defeat Jones. "He is our Republican nominee," Sessions said. "We must stand behind him in November."

Yet Sessions' statements of loyalty to Trump and the party have never been enough for the president, who endorsed Tuberville after Alabama's March primary. Trump declared at the time that Sessions had "let our Country down" and that Tuberville would be his "true supporter." Trump continued the broadsides throughout the primary campaign, and he crowed Tuesday evening on Twitter shortly after The Associated Press called the race for Tuberville.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 37 of 65

"Tommy Tuberville WON big against Jeff Sessions," Trump wrote. "Will be a GREAT Senator for the incredible people of Alabama."

Tuberville willingly embraced the dynamics, casting himself as an outsider and calling the former attorney general "weak" and "a disaster." Those digs aside, Tuberville ran a risk-averse campaign, declining media interviews and Sessions' challenges to debate.

In brief remarks to supporters Tuesday night, Tuberville looked to November with a message of cultural conservatism that mixed praise for Trump with accusations that Jones wants liberal "New York values" in Alabama. Without specifics, Tuberville said he'd fight for "the same God-given principles that my father and others members of the Greatest Generation fought for so many years ago."

Jones, an Alabama native and former U.S. attorney known for winning convictions of Ku Klux Klansmen who bombed a Birmingham church and killed four Black girls in 1963, signaled that he won't go down easily. Jones won a 2017 special Senate election aided considerably by Republicans' decision to nominate Roy Moore. The former Alabama chief justice was twice removed from the bench for violating judicial canons and then accused during the Senate campaign of sexually molesting or harassing multiple teenage girls decades earlier.

But Jones argued that he's made the most of his opportunity, pointing to, among other matters, his work securing aid for disaster-ravaged farmers and the families of fallen U.S. troops. "Washington already has plenty of people who fight along partisan lines and nothing much seems to get done," Jones said in a statement, noting that Trump had signed some of his bills. Tuberville's runoff playbook was enough to attract voters like Montgomery County cattle farmer Bruce Alford, who said picking Tuberville was a tough decision.

"I kind of want the new blood in, a little bit of change," said Alford, 40.

Sessions tried to remind voters of his early decision to back Trump and argued he'd be most effective in advancing Trump's agenda. When he wasn't defending his loyalty to the president, Sessions focused on his long history in office and questions about Tuberville's background. "You know me," Sessions told voters days before the runoff.

That was enough to keep retired state employee Jodi McDade in Sessions' camp. The 68-year-old said it was possible to support both Sessions and the president who detests him.

"As much a fan of Donald Trump's as I am, he has a falling out with a lot of people that he just disagrees with," he said. "He may be endorsing Tommy Tuberville today, but then they can have a falling out."

Sessions, once Alabama attorney general and a U.S. attorney under President Ronald Reagan, was elected to the Senate in 1996. That first win was hotly contested. But Sessions wouldn't be seriously challenged again in three subsequent reelection campaigns before Trump picked him as attorney general.

Despite his strength at the ballot box, Sessions was never a heavyweight in the Senate, overshadowed there and back home in Alabama by Sen. Richard Shelby, the state's senior senator who was elected as a Democrat in 1986 and switched parties in 1994 after Democrats lost their majorities on Capitol Hill.

While Shelby relished in bringing as much money back to Alabama as possible, Sessions was a budget hawk who often eschewed the back-slapping, deal-cutting ways of Washington. For years, that made him a relative outlier on Capitol Hill. Then he found a presidential candidate who said many of the same things he'd argued for years about immigration, trade and the ways of Washington. That reality television star turned commander in chief helped raise Sessions to the pinnacle of his public life and, on Tuesday, helped bring it to an almost certain end.

Barrow reported from Atlanta.

Biden's \$2 trillion climate plan aims to reframe debate

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE, ELLEN KNICKMEYER and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Joe Biden released a \$2 trillion plan on Tuesday to boost investment in clean energy and stop all climate-damaging emissions from U.S. power plants by 2035, arguing that dramatic

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 38 of 65

action is needed to tackle climate change and revive the economy.

In remarks near his home in Wilmington, Delaware, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee sought to reframe the politics of climate change. He rebuffed arguments from President Donald Trump and his Republican allies that Democratic plans to invest in clean energy would cost jobs.

"When Donald Trump thinks about climate change, the only word he can muster is 'hoax,'" Biden told reporters. "When I think about climate change, what I think of is jobs."

The climate package added to a series of detailed policy proposals Biden has released, including a \$700 billion plan unveiled last week that would increase government purchasing of U.S.-based goods and invest in new research and development to frame a contrast with Trump, who has struggled to articulate a vision for a second term in the White House.

Biden's proposal on Tuesday didn't go as far as some measures in the Green New Deal, the sweeping proposal from progressives in Congress that calls for achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions across the economy by 2030.

But it does align with a climate bill spearheaded by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in reducing emissions to zero by 2050. And it goes farther than that bill on ridding the nation's power sector from damaging fossil fuel pollution. House Democrats' proposal sets a 2040 deadline for that goal, while Biden's aims to achieve it five years faster.

The proposal would also include progressive priorities such as investment in retrofitting national infrastructure and housing to use and emit less carbon and addressing the disproportionate impact of climate change. Forty percent of the money he wants to spend on clean energy deployment, reduction of legacy pollution and other investments would go to historically disadvantaged communities.

Biden placed a heavy emphasis on updating America's infrastructure, improving energy efficiency in buildings and housing, and promoting production of electric vehicles and conservation efforts in the agriculture industry.

As he spoke about infrastructure on Tuesday, Biden needled the president for what has become a trope that the White House frequently turns to infrastructure when Trump "needs a distraction" from negative news.

"He's never delivered," Biden said. "Never even really tried."

Some of the ideas in the proposal began with Biden's more progressive rivals during the primary, including Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, whose campaign centered on the issue of climate change.

"Joe Biden's modern infrastructure and clean energy plan shows that he's serious about defeating climate change and has a roadmap to become the Climate President that America needs," Inslee said in an email to members of the Progressive Change Campaign Committee, a liberal advocacy group.

The proposals could open Biden to attacks from Trump that he will hurt coal and gas industries in critical states such as Pennsylvania and Texas, where Democrats are growing more bullish about their prospects.

Trump used a White House event on Hong Kong on Tuesday to attack Biden on an array of issues, including trade and the environment.

"As vice president, Biden was a leading advocate of the Paris Climate accord, which was unbelievably expensive to our country," Trump said. "It would have crushed American manufacturers while allowing China to pollute the atmosphere with impunity, yet one more gift from Biden to the Chinese Communist Party."

Biden's proposal seemed designed to avoid antagonizing independents or moderate Republicans considering backing him.

The plan makes no mention of banning dirtier-burning coal or prohibiting fracking, a method of extracting oil and gas that triggered a natural gas boom in the United States over the last decade. The issue is especially sensitive in some key battleground states such as Pennsylvania.

Some progressives have called for outright bans on the practice. Biden's plan instead describes cutting back on burning oil, gas and coal, and doing better at capturing emissions, through more efficient vehicles, public transport, buildings and power plants.

And instead of a ban on climate-damaging fossil fuels, he embraced carbon capture technologies to catch coal and petroleum pollution from power plant smokestacks.

Biden also backed nuclear power, unlike some of his Democratic primary opponents. He called for pumping up research on still-developing power technologies like hydrogen power and grid-size storage to stash power from solar and wind, overcoming a key drawback of those carbon-free energy sources now.

Biden would spend \$2 trillion over four years to promote his energy proposals, a significant acceleration of the \$1.7 trillion over 10 years he proposed spending in his climate plan during the primary.

The proposal doesn't include specifics on how it would be paid for. Senior campaign officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss strategy said it would require a mix of tax increases on corporations and the wealthy and deficit spending aimed at stimulating the economy.

The officials said that many of the energy measures would be included in the first stimulus package Biden plans to bring to Congress but that some could be achieved through executive action.

"These are the most critical investments we can make for the long-term health and vitality of both the American economy and the physical health and safety of the American people," Biden said Tuesday as he tried to build a sense of urgency around the issue.

Jaffe reported from Washington and Knickmeyer reported from Oklahoma City. Associated Press writer Amer Madhani in Washington contributed to this report.

In virus era, back-to-school plans stress working parents

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — For generations, school has been an opportunity for American children to learn and make friends. For many parents today, though, it's something that's elemental in a very different way: a safe place that cares for their children while they are at work — or a necessity for them to be able to work at all.

The outbreak of the coronavirus this year, and the upending of society it has produced, have caused these views of school in American life to collide in ways that have thrown millions of parental lives into disarray. Now, President Donald Trump is demanding that schools reopen in the fall. But with the virus resurging widely, many working parents see no good options.

"I don't have the benefit of a husband or other family members to care for my son," says Michelle Brinson, who works full time for a Nashville nonprofit while raising her 11-year-old alone.

At 50, and with underlying health conditions, Brinson says she is "terrified" of contracting COVID-19. She is worried that if her son goes back to school, he could bring the virus home to her. "If I'm dead or on a ventilator," she says, "what good am I to him?"

This isn't the first time American schools have closed — or talked about it — because of an epidemic. It happened in 1918 with the so-called Spanish Flu and in the 1930s and 1950s with polio outbreaks.

But the nature of school has changed fundamentally since the 1950s, education historian Jonathan Zimmerman says. School used to teach basic skills and citizenship, but extensive schooling wasn't necessary for many jobs.

"The whole structure of the economy changed postwar, and formal education became a prerequisite for self-sufficiency in a way it never had before," he said. Schools have also become de facto social service agencies, providing necessities like free meals and mental health services.

That's where the conflict lies. To ask a parent — particularly one trying to parent alone — to work full time while supervising education and daytime meals is a formula for stress and unreasonable expectations.

Rebecca Witte can attest to that. For Witte, the experience of working from home while also helping her two children wrap up kindergarten and second-grade from home is not one she wants to repeat.

As a spokeswoman for the Kansas Department of Corrections during a coronavirus outbreak that infected more than 900 inmates, she recalls her kids coming in screaming one day while she was being interviewed. Her husband, a school principal, shared the schooling responsibilities but was also busy helping teachers at his school shift to virtual learning.

"Trying to work, it was hard," Witte said. "It will be interesting to see what the plan is in the fall. ...I am

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 40 of 65

hopeful they won't be home full time with me trying to teach and work."

Before the virus, Brinson says, she "went into work every single day, and my son went to school and he had aftercare with the YMCA." Brinson was totally unprepared when schools closed in March. She ended up taking her son into the office until she received permission to work from home. Now her employer is pressuring her to come back in.

Brinson acknowledges that online schooling was a disaster and they eventually gave up. A visit to an attorney's office to draw up a will marks one of the only times she has left home since mid-March.

In many ways, Brinson and Witte are lucky. Their jobs offer some flexibility.

Taryn Walker, a single mother, has been relying on her two teenagers to care for her 5-year-old while she works as an administrative assistant. Her job never shut down, and she can't work from home.

Her youngest daughter didn't go outside for three months as the virus tore through their New York City neighborhood. She knows the girl misses her friends; her birthday party got canceled, too. The situation has also strained Walker financially as her grocery bill rises. "Because they are home all day, I'm paying two or three times the amount I did before," she says.

But Walker also doesn't feel safe sending the kids back to school. "I feel like I have been managing to work through this entire pandemic by being very careful," she says.

Elizabeth Ananat, an economics professor at Barnard College and a former Obama economic adviser, has been surveying a group of 1,000 hourly service workers since fall. "What we've found, she says, "is that working families with young children ... are particularly harmed by this crisis."

Parents need to work to put food on the table but also need to care for their children. And they can't afford to get sick. Those strains existed before, but the lack of school and other child-care programs and the deadly nature of the virus are compounding the pressures.

"The whole thing is obviously a mess. It's a disaster," she says.

Federal stimulus money for businesses and the unemployed has helped, although not everyone who was eligible was able to get it, Ananat says. But now much of that is running out.

"Employers haven't gotten more money. They're pressuring people to come back to work. But school systems don't have a plan to make that happen," Ananat says. With the virus on the upswing, "even if schools do open, it's not clear how many will feel safe sending their children back," she says.

In Florida and Texas, both states with spiking case numbers, officials are requiring school districts to offer in-person schooling to those who want it. Texas' guidance for schools includes a recommendation to space desks six feet apart and, if that's impossible, "plan for more frequent hand washing and/or hand sanitizing" and "consider whether increased airflow from the outdoors is possible."

That's not good enough for Vicky Li Yip, whose children are 5, 8 and 10. She works from her Houston home, and says online schooling has been exhausting, even with her husband helping out. But with her city becoming a national hot spot, she has been considering what it would mean for her children to face possible exposure every day.

"It brings tears to my eyes just to say it," Li Yip said. "To think that I would have to tell the kids, when they see their grandparents: 'You can't hug them.'"

Heather Hollingsworth in Mission, Kansas, and Acacia Coronado in Austin, Texas, contributed to this report.

First COVID-19 vaccine tested in US poised for final testing

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

The first COVID-19 vaccine tested in the U.S. revved up people's immune systems just the way scientists had hoped, researchers reported Tuesday -- as the shots are poised to begin key final testing.

"No matter how you slice this, this is good news," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government's top infectious disease expert, told The Associated Press.

The experimental vaccine, developed by Fauci's colleagues at the National Institutes of Health and Moderna Inc., will start its most important step around July 27: A 30,000-person study to prove if the shots really are strong enough to protect against the coronavirus.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 41 of 65

But Tuesday, researchers reported anxiously awaited findings from the first 45 volunteers who rolled up their sleeves back in March. Sure enough, the vaccine provided a hoped-for immune boost.

Those early volunteers developed what are called neutralizing antibodies in their bloodstream -- molecules key to blocking infection -- at levels comparable to those found in people who survived COVID-19, the research team reported in the New England Journal of Medicine.

"This is an essential building block that is needed to move forward with the trials that could actually determine whether the vaccine does protect against infection," said Dr. Lisa Jackson of the Kaiser Permanente Washington Research Institute in Seattle, who led the study.

There's no guarantee but the government hopes to have results around the end of the year -- record-setting speed for developing a vaccine.

The vaccine requires two doses, a month apart.

There were no serious side effects. But more than half the study participants reported flu-like reactions to the shots that aren't uncommon with other vaccines -- fatigue, headache, chills, fever and pain at the injection site. For three participants given the highest dose, those reactions were more severe; that dose isn't being pursued.

Some of those reactions are similar to coronavirus symptoms but they're temporary, lasting about a day and occur right after vaccination, researchers noted.

"Small price to pay for protection against COVID," said Dr. William Schaffner of Vanderbilt University Medical Center, a vaccine expert who wasn't involved with the study.

He called the early results "a good first step," and is optimistic that final testing could deliver answers about whether it's really safe and effective by the beginning of next year.

"It would be wonderful. But that assumes everything's working right on schedule," Schaffner cautioned.

Moderna's share price jumped nearly 15 percent in trading after U.S. markets closed. Shares of the company, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, have nearly quadrupled this year.

Tuesday's results only included younger adults. The first-step testing later was expanded to include dozens of older adults, the age group most at risk from COVID-19. Those results aren't public yet but regulators are evaluating them. Fauci said final testing will include older adults, as well as people with chronic health conditions that make them more vulnerable to the virus — and Black and Latino populations likewise affected.

Nearly two dozen possible COVID-19 vaccines are in various stages of testing around the world. Candidates from China and Britain's Oxford University also are entering final testing stages.

The 30,000-person study will mark the world's largest study of a potential COVID-19 vaccine so far. And the NIH-developed shot isn't the only one set for such massive U.S. testing, crucial to spot rare side effects. The government plans similar large studies of the Oxford candidate and another by Johnson & Johnson; separately, Pfizer Inc. is planning its own huge study.

Already, people can start signing up to volunteer for the different studies.

People think "this is a race for one winner. Me, I'm cheering every one of them on," said Fauci, who directs NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

"We need multiple vaccines. We need vaccines for the world, not only for our own country."

Around the world, governments are investing in stockpiles of hundreds of millions of doses of the different candidates, in hopes of speedily starting inoculations if any are proven to work.

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Maxwell denied bail on Epstein-related sex abuse charges

By LARRY NEUMEISTER and TOM HAYS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Jeffrey Epstein's former girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell, will remain behind bars until trial after she was denied bail Tuesday as a risk to flee rather than face charges she recruited girls for the financier to sexually abuse more than two decades ago.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 42 of 65

Two Epstein accusers implored the judge to keep the British socialite detained after she pleaded not guilty to the charges during a video court hearing in Manhattan.

U.S. District Judge Alison J. Nathan said even the most restrictive form of release would be insufficient to ensure Maxwell would not flee, particularly now that she knows a conviction could result in up to 35 years in prison.

As the judge explained her reasoning for denying bail, Maxwell dropped her head repeatedly, appearing dejected. At one point, she appeared to wipe a tear from underneath one eye as she sat alone in a room at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, where she has been housed since last week.

Maxwell, 58, has been held without bail since her July 2 arrest at her million-dollar New Hampshire estate, where prosecutors say she refused to open the door for FBI agents, who busted through to find her in an interior room. Her lawyer, Mark S. Cohen, told the judge that Maxwell was in her pajamas and had followed security protocol calling for her to retreat to her room if any disturbance occurred outside.

The judge rejected Cohen's claim that Maxwell was hiding from the public and the media after getting threats rather than investigators when she bought a \$1 million mansion late last year.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Alison Moe said Maxwell posed as a journalist, "Jen Marshall," when she purchased the New Hampshire estate.

"She has the ability to live off the grid indefinitely," Moe said, citing Maxwell's wealth and extensive international ties, along with citizenship in the U.S., the United Kingdom and France.

She said Maxwell was vague about her finances after her arrest because "she cannot remember off the top of her head how many millions of dollars she has."

And she rejected Cohen's contention that prosecutors were engaging in "spin" by twisting facts to portray his client in the worst light.

"It is not dirt. It is not spin," Moe said. Prosecutors, she said, planned to hold Maxwell accountable for "chilling conduct" when Maxwell recruited at least three girls, one as young as 14, for Epstein to abuse between 1994 and 1997.

As part of the government's presentation, Moe read aloud a statement by one female accuser while another, Annie Farmer, by phone urged the court to detain Maxwell. Farmer said Maxwell was a "sexual predator who groomed and abused me." She said Maxwell "lied under oath and tormented her survivors."

An indictment alleged that Maxwell groomed the victims to endure sexual abuse and was sometimes there when Epstein abused them. It also alleged she lied during a 2016 deposition in a civil case.

Epstein killed himself in August 2019, several weeks after he was also confronted by two accusers, including Farmer, at a bail hearing. They insisted he remain in jail while awaiting sex trafficking charges that alleged he abused girls at his Manhattan and Florida mansions in the early 2000s.

In court papers, Maxwell's lawyers argued that Epstein's death left the media "wrongly trying to substitute her for Epstein — even though she'd had no contact with Epstein for more than a decade, had never been charged with a crime or been found liable in any civil litigation, and has always denied any allegations of claimed misconduct."

Maxwell's lawyers pushed to have her released on \$5 million bail. They said she "vigorously denies the charges, intends to fight them, and is entitled to the presumption of innocence."

The judge set a trial date for July 2021.

Afterward, some accusers praised the decision to keep Maxwell detained.

In a statement, Virginia Roberts Giuffre said she was "thrilled."

"Without Ghislaine, Jeffrey Epstein would not have been able to fulfill his sick desires," Giuffre said. "Ghislaine preyed on me when I was a child. As with every other of her and Jeffrey Epstein's victims, I will have to live with what she did to me for the rest of my life. The rest of her life should be spent behind bars."

Jennifer Araoz, who says Epstein raped her when she was 15, said in a statement that she was "once again able to take another breath as Ghislaine Maxwell will be in jail until at least her trial date next July."

She added: "Knowing that she is incarcerated for the foreseeable future allows me, and my fellow survivors, to have faith that we are on the right path."

Trump administration rescinds rule on foreign students

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Facing eight federal lawsuits and opposition from hundreds of universities, the Trump administration on Tuesday rescinded a rule that would have required international students to transfer or leave the country if their schools held classes entirely online because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The decision was announced at the start of a hearing in a federal lawsuit in Boston brought by Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. U.S. District Judge Allison Burroughs said federal immigration authorities agreed to pull the July 6 directive and “return to the status quo.”

A lawyer representing the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said only that the judge’s characterization was correct.

The announcement brings relief to thousands of foreign students who had been at risk of being deported from the country, along with hundreds of universities that were scrambling to reassess their plans for the fall in light of the policy. With the policy rescinded, ICE will revert to a directive from March that suspended typical limits around online education for foreign students.

ICE did not immediately comment on the decision.

Harvard President Lawrence Bacow called it a “significant victory.”

“While the government may attempt to issue a new directive, our legal arguments remain strong and the Court has retained jurisdiction, which would allow us to seek judicial relief immediately to protect our international students should the government again act unlawfully,” Bacow said in a statement.

MIT’s president said his institution also stands ready “to protect our students from any further arbitrary policies.”

“This case also made abundantly clear that real lives are at stake in these matters, with the potential for real harm,” President L. Rafael Reif said in a statement. “We need to approach policy making, especially now, with more humanity, more decency — not less.”

Under the policy, international students in the U.S. would have been forbidden from taking all their courses online this fall. New visas would not have been issued to students at schools planning to provide all classes online, which includes Harvard. Students already in the U.S. would have faced deportation if they didn’t transfer schools or leave the country voluntarily.

Even if an outbreak had forced colleges to move all their classes online during the semester, international students would have been forced to transfer to a school with campus instruction or leave the country.

Immigration officials issued the policy last week, reversing the earlier guidance from March 13 telling colleges that limits around online education would be suspended during the pandemic. University leaders believed the rule was part of President Donald Trump’s effort to pressure the nation’s schools and colleges to reopen this fall even as new virus cases rise.

The policy drew sharp backlash from higher education institutions, with more than 200 signing court briefs supporting the challenge by Harvard and MIT. Colleges said the policy would put students’ safety at risk and hurt schools financially. Many schools rely on tuition from international students, and some stood to lose millions of dollars in revenue if the rule had taken hold.

Harvard and MIT were the first to contest the policy, but at least seven other federal suits had been filed by universities and states.

The unexpected decision was welcome news to students across the nation who had been on edge.

“I feel relief,” said Andrea Calderon, a 29-year-old biology graduate student from Ecuador. “It would have been a very big problem if I had to leave the country right now.”

The City College of New York student said returning home would have made it much harder to finish her thesis and pursue a Ph.D. Internet access at home in Ecuador is spotty, she said, and going through the process to come back to the U.S. in the future would be too expensive.

Rahul Lobo, 19, from Goa on the west coast of India, said he feels “an immeasurable amount of relief.”

“As it is, we’re living in very uncertain times, and the recent ICE policy just made things even more

uncertain," said Lobo, a rising junior at the University of Notre Dame. "Suddenly I wasn't worrying about whether I could get back to campus, but more whether I would even be able to finish my degree in four years."

The American Council on Education, which represents university presidents, applauded ICE's pullback of the rule. The group called the policy "wrongheaded" and said it drew unprecedented opposition from colleges.

"There has never been a case where so many institutions sued the federal government," said Terry Hartle, the group's senior vice president. "In this case, the government didn't even try to defend its policymaking."

Many opponents, however, were hesitant to call it a closed case. Massachusetts' Democratic attorney general, who is leading a separate lawsuit against the policy, warned that the Trump administration may attempt again to impose limits on international students.

"This is why we sue. The rule was illegal and the Trump Administration knew they didn't have a chance," Maura Healey said on Twitter. "They may try this again. We will be ready."

Harvard and MIT argued that immigration officials violated procedural rules by issuing the guidance without justification and without allowing the public to respond. They also argued that the policy contradicted ICE's March 13 directive telling schools that existing limits on online education would be suspended "for the duration of the emergency."

The suit noted that Trump's national emergency declaration has not been rescinded and that virus cases are spiking in some regions.

Immigration officials, however, argued that they told colleges all along that any guidance prompted by the pandemic was subject to change. They said the rule was consistent with existing law barring international students from taking classes entirely online. Federal officials said they were providing leniency by allowing students to keep their visas even if they study online from abroad.

AP reporters Carolyn Thompson in Buffalo and Sophia Tareen in Chicago contributed to this report.

Justice Ginsburg treated in hospital for possible infection

WASHINGTON (AP) — Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was being treated for a possible infection and was expected to stay in the hospital for a few days following a medical procedure, the Supreme Court said in a statement Tuesday.

The court said that the 87-year-old Ginsburg went to a hospital in Washington on Monday evening after experiencing fever and chills. She then underwent a procedure at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore on Tuesday afternoon to clean out a bile duct stent that was placed last August when she was treated for a cancerous tumor on her pancreas.

The statement said the justice "is resting comfortably and will stay in the hospital for a few days to receive intravenous antibiotic treatment."

Ginsburg spent a night in the hospital in May with an infection caused by a gallstone. While in the hospital, she participated in arguments the court heard by telephone because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Ginsburg, who was appointed by President Bill Clinton and joined the court in 1993, has been treated four times for cancer. In addition to the tumor on her pancreas last year, she was previously treated for colorectal cancer in 1999 and pancreatic cancer in 2009. She had lung surgery to remove cancerous growths in December 2018.

Speaking at a news conference in the Rose Garden on Tuesday evening, President Donald Trump was asked about Ginsburg. He said he hadn't heard she had been hospitalized. "I wish her the best. I hope she's better," he said.

Florida virus deaths surge, vaccine research moves forward

By TERRY SPENCER and ADAM GELLER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida (AP) — Florida surpassed its daily record for coronavirus deaths Tuesday amid rising global worries of a resurgence, even as researchers announced that the first vaccine tested in the U.S. had worked to boost patients' immune systems.

Florida's 132 additional deaths topped a state mark set just last week. The figure likely includes deaths from the past weekend that had not been previously reported.

The new deaths raised the state's seven-day average to 81 per day, more than double the figure of two weeks ago and now the second-highest in the United States behind Texas.

The worrisome figures were released just hours before the news about the experimental vaccine, developed by the National Institutes of Health and Moderna Inc.

"No matter how you slice this, this is good news," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government's top infectious disease expert, told The Associated Press.

Key final testing of the vaccine will start around July 27, tracking 30,000 people to prove if the shots really work in preventing infection. Tuesday's announcement focused on findings since March in 45 volunteers.

With the virus spreading quickly in the southern and western U.S., one of the country's top public health officials offered conflicting theories about what is driving the outbreak.

"We tried to give states guidance on how to reopen safely. ...If you look critically, few states actually followed that guidance," Dr. Robert Redfield, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday in a livestream interview with the editor of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Redfield said people in many states did not adopt social distancing and other measures because they hadn't previously experienced an outbreak. But he went on to say, without explanation, that he didn't believe the way those states handled reopening was necessarily behind the explosive rise in virus cases. He offered a theory that infected travelers from elsewhere in the country might have brought the virus with them around Memorial Day.

CDC officials said that there are various possible explanations, and that Redfield was offering just one.

Doctors in Florida have predicted more deaths as daily reported cases have surged from about 2,000 a day a month ago to a daily average of about 11,000, including a record 15,000 on Sunday. The state recorded 9,194 new cases Tuesday.

Marlyn Hoilette, a nurse who spent four months working in the COVID-19 unit of her Florida hospital until testing positive recently, said hospitals are so desperate for staff to return to work they are not following guidelines that call for two negative tests first.

"Nurses are getting sick, nursing assistants are getting sick and my biggest fear is that it seems we want to return folks to work even without a negative test," said Hoilette, who works at Palms West Hospital in Loxahatchee, Florida. "It's just a matter of time before you wipe the other staff out if you're contagious, so that is a big problem."

Word of the rising toll in Florida came as Arizona officials tallied 4,273 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19.

The state, which became a virus hot spot after Gov. Doug Ducey relaxed stay-at-home orders and other restrictions in May, reported 3,517 patients hospitalized because of the disease, a record high. Arizona's death toll from COVID-19 rose to 2,337, with 92 additional deaths reported Tuesday.

Redfield urged Americans to wear masks to help contain the virus.

"At this critical juncture when COVID-19 is resurging, broad adoption of cloth face coverings is a civic duty, a small sacrifice reliant on a highly effective low-tech solution that can help turn the tide," he and two colleagues wrote, in an editorial published online Tuesday by the journal of the American Medical Association.

In Britain, officials announced they will require people to wear face masks starting July 24, after weeks of dismissing their value.

"We are not out of the woods yet, so let us all do our utmost to keep this virus cornered and enjoy summer safely," British Health Secretary Matt Hancock told lawmakers in the House of Commons.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 46 of 65

French President Emmanuel Macron said masks will be required by Aug. 1, after recent rave parties and widespread backsliding on social distancing raised concerns the virus may be starting to rebound.

Even Melania Trump, whose husband President Donald Trump resisted wearing a mask or urging anyone else to do so, called on people to step up precautions.

"Even in the summer months, please remember to wear face coverings & practice social distancing," she said Tuesday in a posting on her Twitter account. "The more precaution we take now can mean a healthier & safer country in the Fall."

Meanwhile, officials in the Australian state of Queensland said those breaking quarantine rules could face up to six months in jail.

With higher fines and the threat of jail time, "I hope that will demonstrate to the public just how serious we are about enforcing these measures," Queensland Deputy Premier Steven 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.

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.

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.

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.

Geller reported from New York. Associated Press reporters from around the world contributed.

Timing of Carlson's vacation familiar to Fox News viewers

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Maybe the trout will be running this week for Fox News' Tucker Carlson.

Either way, the vacation he announced on Monday and says was planned in advance should be familiar to Fox viewers who are used to seeing its personalities go away to cool off when the heat is on. Before leaving, he spoke to his fans about his show's former top writer, who resigned after CNN found he had written a series of racist and repugnant tweets under a pseudonym.

His fishing trip is at least the sixth example in a little more than three years of a Fox star's vacation in close proximity to a controversy about their work.

In only one case — Bill O'Reilly's trip to Europe following reports of sexual misconduct settlements with women — did the vacation become permanent.

Carlson said that the online comments by former writer Blake Neff were wrong, but had nothing to do with his show. He also criticized the "ghouls beating their chests in triumph at the destruction of a young man."

Then he said he was going to spend the next four days trout fishing. Brian Kilmeade will fill in.

"Long planned, this is one of those years where if you don't get it in now, you are probably not going to," Carlson said.

A Fox representative confirmed the vacation was planned before the Neff story broke.

A devoted angler, Carlson last August said he was "headed to the wilderness" to fish with his son after

addressing criticism of his comments that white supremacy was not a problem in the United States.

That vacation drew a ribbing from Comedy Central's Trevor Noah.

"The timing seems suspicious, but who knows — maybe lots of people leave for fishing vacations on Wednesday night at 9 p.m.," Noah said on "The Daily Show."

Laura Ingraham left for what was described as "a pre-planned vacation with her kids" in 2018 during an advertiser backlash to her comments mocking a Parkland school shooting survivor.

Jesse Watters departed on a brief insta-vacation with his family in 2017 when he was criticized for comments about Ivanka Trump that some critics saw as lewd. Sean Hannity had a lengthy Memorial Day break in 2017 when facing some advertiser restiveness about his promotion of a discredited theory about the death of a Democratic party operative. He addressed suspicions about the timing by saying it was an annual break.

O'Reilly said he was looking forward to a breather around the time his name was in the headlines in the spring of 2017.

"I grab some vacation because it's spring and it's Easter time," he said on the air. "Last fall I booked a trip that should be terrific."

He promised to tell viewers all about it when he got back.

No such luck. He was fired the same day he was photographed in Rome shaking the hand of Pope Francis.

Associated Press researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York contributed to this story.

Care home refused free tests. Now, nearly everyone has virus

By MATTHEW BROWN and AMY BETH HANSON Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — It was meant to be a last line of defense to protect the most vulnerable as the coronavirus spread across the United States: Montana officials offered free testing in May for staff and residents at assisted living and long-term care facilities.

But not all of them followed through, according to state data, including a facility in Billings, Montana's largest city, that cares for people with dementia and other memory problems. The virus has infected almost every resident there and killed eight since July 6, accounting for almost a quarter of Montana's 34 confirmed deaths. Thirty-six employees also have tested positive.

While Montana's rates of confirmed infections and deaths are much lower than other parts of the country, the outbreak at Canyon Creek Memory Care illustrates that even the most simple and common-sense preventive measures have sometimes gone unused during the pandemic, allowing the virus to sweep through elderly care facilities with devastating results.

"I don't see that there's good justification for just not testing. You're operating in the dark," said Chris Laxton, executive director of the Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine, which represents more than 50,000 long-term care professionals.

Nursing homes became the first places with fatal outbreaks in the U.S. Six of Montana's earliest deaths were tied to infections acquired at another nursing home, but the state initially avoided the widespread early outbreaks seen elsewhere in the nation.

Canyon Creek was among 45 of 289 assisted living and long-term care facilities that initially declined Montana's call for testing.

"My impression is that the facilities believed they had all protocols in place to keep their residents safe, were doing everything possible, and there was no need (to test) because of so few cases in their area," said Rose Hughes, executive director of the Montana Health Care Association, which represents long-term care facilities.

Canyon Creek's operator, Koelsch Communities of Olympia, Washington, hasn't directly said why it turned down free testing at the facility, which has seen 55 positive cases among the 59 people who lived there when the deaths began. The company says it declined to test residents after three with symptoms in April and May were put in quarantine but tested negative.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 48 of 65

The first positive cases — a staff member and a resident — were discovered in late June, just days after Gov. Steve Bullock lifted some restrictions on care facilities. As the outbreak escalated, the Democrat issued a statewide emergency rule that made testing of staff and residents a condition for facilities to receive visitors.

Koelsch Communities, which operates in eight states, has confirmed cases in at least 13 of its 39 facilities and had reported 11 deaths in other places prior to the Montana outbreak. Five of the deaths happened in late June at El Rio Memory Care in Modesto, California.

Company spokesman Chase Salyers said those living at Canyon Creek who aren't infected are kept separate and that testing of staff and residents will continue.

Older people and those with preexisting conditions are more vulnerable to the respiratory virus. According to a tally by The Associated Press, more than 58,000 COVID-19 deaths have involved nursing homes and other long-term care facilities. That is over 40% of the nation's more than 135,000 deaths.

There are no federal testing requirements, and rules differ widely among states.

To be effective, testing needs to occur before an outbreak, include residents and staff, and be repeated periodically because staff come and go, said Albert Munanga, an affiliate faculty member at the University of Washington's nursing school and regional health director for Era Living retirement communities.

Pam Donovan, whose father is a Canyon Creek resident, said "the jury's still out" on whether the facility should have done testing earlier and whether it would have helped.

Richard Donovan, a retired sheriff's deputy and coroner, initially tested negative in early July when the outbreak began but developed symptoms days later and was taken to a hospital Thursday, Pam Donovan said. His test came back positive Friday, she said.

Donovan said the only plausible reason to decline free testing would be the difficulty swabbing residents with dementia.

"That's the only thing I can think of, putting myself in their shoes," she said. "I don't know if they'll ever say what their reason was."

Administrators at some Montana facilities that declined the testing in May and June said the invasive nasal procedure would frighten dementia patients or make them uncomfortable. They noted their communities had few cases at that point, and they were disinfecting surfaces, washing hands and wearing masks. Some weren't allowing visitors.

Ashley Samples, administrator at Bee Hive Homes in Columbia Falls, said a concern was false positives. "I think if there was a more sure way to do it, I think we absolutely would have," she said.

Bee Hive's facilities are still on lockdown, staff have their temperatures taken and wear masks, and visits happen through open windows, Samples said.

Hyalite Country Care Assisted Living in Bozeman initially decided not to test residents, partly based on the state's low infection numbers. Owner LeAnn Bunn said she's now reconsidering.

More than a dozen other facilities have agreed to test residents and staff following the Canyon Creek outbreak and the governor's directive, health officials said.

Testing began in mid-May and not all the facilities that have signed on have completed it, health officials said.

For Pam Donovan, it was through a window in an emergency room last week that she saw her father for the first time since visits were suspended in March.

Richard Donovan turned 88 on Monday. A nurse put on protective equipment and entered his room to hold a phone to his ear when his daughter called. Pam Donovan said it was heartbreaking and that she couldn't understand what he was saying.

"It's so difficult when you can't see them yourself," she said.

Hanson reported from East Helena, Montana.

Jimmy Fallon, 'Tonight' show return to studio, sans audience

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The studio is largely empty, but Jimmy Fallon is out of his home and back to the "Tonight" show stage.

The NBC late-night host returned to NBC's Rockefeller Center headquarters Monday, saying he hoped he could provide his audience with a little more "normal" during the coronavirus pandemic.

"I'm here to show you that there is a light at the end of the tunnel if we keep each other safe," Fallon said.

Fallon, along with other late-night hosts, have been working remotely the past few months of months. The coronavirus pandemic shutdown TV and film production in March for safety reasons. New York has slowly been reopening as other parts of the country are now feeling the full effects of the epidemic.

He began his show with a filmed piece showing him "walking" to work, pulling down his mask so a Rockefeller Center security guard knew he was indeed an employee.

His backup band, the Roots, were in place. Studio crew members wore face shields and masks. Everyone there had tested negative for COVID-19, he said. There was no audience.

Fallon was dressed more informally, with a sweater instead of a suit.

"Normalcy, any type of normalcy, feels great," he said. "So hopefully we can put a smile on your face an hour every night and let you sit back and relax while we try to bring you a little bit of normal."

Guests, including New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Charlize Theron, weren't in the studio as the celebrity interviews continued remotely.

Representatives for Stephen Colbert's "Late Show" and Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" with Trevor Noah both said plans were in the works to return to studios but put no timetable on it.

Whether inmate mentally fit for execution could cause delay

By MICHAEL TARM and ROXANA HEGEMAN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The man next on the list to be executed by the federal government after a nearly 20-year hiatus ended this week may have a better chance of avoiding lethal injection, legal experts say, because he suffers from dementia and so, his lawyers say, can no longer grasp why he's slated to die.

Wesley Ira Purkey, convicted of a gruesome 1998 kidnapping and killing, is scheduled for execution Wednesday at the U.S. Penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana, where Daniel Lewis Lee was put to death Tuesday after his own 11th-hour legal bids failed.

Lee, who was convicted of killing an Arkansas family in a 1990s plot to build a whites-only nation, was the first of four condemned men scheduled to die in July and August despite the coronavirus pandemic raging both inside and outside prisons.

Purkey, 68, of Lansing, Kansas, would be the second, but his lawyers were still expected to press for a ruling from the Supreme Court on his competency.

"This competency issue is a very strong issue on paper," said Robert Dunham, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center. "The Supreme Court has halted executions on this issue in the past. At a minimum, the question of whether Purkey dies is going to go down to the last minute."

Lee's own execution went forward a day late. It was scheduled for 4 p.m. Monday, but the Supreme Court only gave the green light in a narrow 5-4 ruling early Tuesday.

The issue of Purkey's mental health arose in the runup to his 2003 trial and when, after the verdict, jurors had to decide whether he should be put to death in the killing of 16-year-old Jennifer Long in Kansas City, Missouri. Prosecutors alleged that he raped and stabbed her, dismembered her with a chainsaw, burned her, then dumped her ashes 200 miles (320 kilometers) away in a septic pond in Kansas. Purkey was separately convicted and sentenced to life in the beating death of 80-year-old Mary Ruth Bales, of Kansas City, Kansas.

But the legal questions of whether he was mentally fit to stand trial or to be sentenced to die are different from the question of whether he is mentally fit enough now, in the hours before his scheduled execution, to be put to death.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 50 of 65

Purkey's lawyers argue he clearly is not, saying in recent filings that he suffers from advancing Alzheimer's disease.

"He has long accepted responsibility for the crime that put him on death row," one of this lawyers, Rebecca Woodman, said. "But as his dementia has progressed, he no longer has a rational understanding of why the government plans to execute him."

Purkey believes his planned execution is part of a vast conspiracy involving his own attorneys, Woodman said. In other filings, they describe delusions that people were spraying poison into his room and that drug dealers implanted a device in his chest meant to kill him.

While various legal issues in Purkey's case have been hashed, rehashed and settled by courts over nearly two decades, the issue of mental fitness for execution can only be addressed once a date is set, according to Dunham, who also teaches law school courses on capital punishment. A date was only set last year.

"Competency is something that is always in flux," so judges can only assess it in the weeks or days before a firm execution date, he said.

In a landmark 1986 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution prohibits putting someone to death who lacks a reasonable understanding of why he is being executed. It involved the case of Alvin Ford, who was convicted of murder but whose mental health deteriorated behind bars to the point where, according to his lawyer, he believed he was pope.

Legal standards as to whether someone has a rational understanding of why an execution is taking place can be complex, Dunham explained.

"I could say I was Napoleon," he said. "But if I say I understand that Napoleon was sentenced to death for a crime and is being executed for it — that could allow the execution to go ahead."

Purkey's mental issues go beyond Alzheimer's, his lawyers have said. They say he was subject to sexual and mental abuse as a child and, at 14, was diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, and psychosis.

Last week, three mental health organizations urged U.S. Attorney William Barr to stop Purkey's execution and commute his sentence to life in prison without possibility of parole. The letter — signed by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Mental Health America and the Treatment Advocacy Center — said that executing mentally ailing individuals like Purkey "constitutes cruel and unusual punishment and does not comport with 'evolving standards of decency.'"

The mother of the teen he killed, Glenda Lamont, told the Kansas City Star last year she planned to attend the execution.

"I don't want to say that I'm happy," Lamont said. "At the same time, he is a crazy mad man that doesn't deserve, in my opinion, to be breathing anymore."

The runup to Lee's execution demonstrated that a lot can still happen before Purkey's scheduled one.

On Monday, hours before Lee was set to be put to death, a U.S. District Court judge put the execution on hold over concerns from death row inmates on how executions were to be carried out, and an appeals court upheld it, before the Supreme Court overturned it early Tuesday.

If prison officials get the go-ahead to execute Purkey, he would be put to death by lethal injection, as Lee was, and in the same small room at the Terre Haute prison.

Hegeman reported from Wichita, Kansas. Associated Press writers Mike Balsamo in Terre Haute, Indiana, and Mark Sherman and Colleen Long in Washington contributed to this report.

'Mythbusters' star Grant Imahara dies from brain aneurysm

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Grant Imahara, the longtime host of Discovery Channel's "Mythbusters," died from a brain aneurysm, the network said Tuesday.

Imahara died Monday at the age of 49.

"We are heartbroken to hear this sad news about Grant," the network said in a statement. "He was an important part of our Discovery family and a really wonderful man. Our thoughts and prayers go out to

his family.”

Along with his “MythBusters” fame, Imahara was known for starring on Netflix’s “White Rabbit Project.” He became popular in Hollywood for his talents in electronics and recently showcased his creation of a fully animatronic Baby Yoda.

Discovery said on its website that Imahara dedicated his life to using his skills to make people smile. The network said he was one of the few trained operators for the famed R2-D2 droid from the Star Wars franchise and engineered the Energizer Bunny’s popular rhythmic beat.

Former “MythBusters” co-host Adam Savage delivered a heartfelt message about Imahara on social media.

“I’m at a loss. No words,” Savage on Twitter. “I’ve been part of two big families with Grant Imahara over the last 22 years. Grant was a truly brilliant engineer, artist and performer, but also just such a generous, easygoing, and gentle PERSON. Working with Grant was so much fun. I’ll miss my friend.”

Kari Byron and Tory Belleci were co-hosts with Imahara on “Mythbusters” and “White Rabbit Project.” Both said they are heartbroken and stunned by the recent death of their colleague and friend.

“Heartbroken and in shock tonight. We were just talking on the phone. This isn’t real,” said Bryon on Twitter. She posted a series of photos of Imahara and said the two just had a phone conversation.

“I just cannot believe it,” Belleci said. “I don’t even know what to say. My heart is broken. Goodbye buddy.”

Loughlin, Giannulli want \$1M bail cut in college scam case

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — “Full House” actor Lori Loughlin and her fashion designer husband, Mossimo Giannulli, want their bail cut from \$1 million to \$100,000, telling a judge they will not flee ahead of their sentencing in the college admissions bribery case.

In a court filing on Monday, lawyers for the famous couple who admitted to paying half a million dollars to get their daughters into the University of Southern California as fake crew recruits also asked the judge to remove the requirement that their bonds be secured by a lien on their house. The defense said prosecutors have agreed to their request.

“There is no indication that Defendants will flee rather than face sentencing,” Loughlin and Giannulli’s attorneys wrote.

On Tuesday, another California couple also pleaded guilty to participating in the bribery scheme.

Diane Blake and Todd Blake from Ross, California, appeared before a Boston federal court judge via video conference because of the coronavirus pandemic and admitted to paying \$250,000 to get their daughter into USC with fake volleyball credentials.

Under their plea deals, Diane Blake has agreed to serve six weeks in prison, while Todd Blake has agreed to serve four months. The Blakes are scheduled to be sentenced in November. Emails seeking comment were sent to their lawyers.

The Blakes are the 27th and 28th parents to plead guilty in the case dubbed “Operation Varsity Blues.” They were among dozens of wealthy parents, athletic coaches and others arrested last year in the case that shocked the education and entertainment worlds.

In a stunning reversal, Loughlin and Giannulli pleaded guilty in May after insisting for more than a year that they were innocent. The judge said at the time that he will decide whether to accept the deals after considering the presentencing report, a document that contains background on defendants and helps guide sentencing decisions.

Loughlin and Giannulli are scheduled to be sentenced on Aug. 21. If the judge accepts their plea deals, Loughlin will be sentenced to two months in prison and Giannulli will be sentenced to five months.

The first trial for several parents fighting the charges is scheduled for October.

Philadelphia protesters sue city over tear gas, use of force

By MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Three civil rights lawsuits filed in Philadelphia on Tuesday accuse the city of using military-level force that injured protesters and bystanders alike during peaceful protests against racial inequality and police brutality.

One lawsuit accuses Philadelphia police of lobbing tear gas and firing rubber bullets at protesters indiscriminately as they marched peacefully on a city highway. Another accuses the police of using tanks, tear gas, pepper spray and rubber bullets in an African American business and residential district, at times injuring people in or near their own homes.

"They were just opening fire on anybody they saw, for hours and hours, regardless of any conduct or justification," said Bret Grote, legal director of the Abolitionist Law Center, who called the police response to demonstrations that rocked the city in May and June reckless.

"They were shooting children. They were shooting old people. They were shooting residents on their own street. They were gassing the firefighters," he said.

The lawsuits, involving more than 140 plaintiffs, were filed the same day the city announced the resignation of Philadelphia Managing Director Brian Abernathy. The suits were filed by the law center, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and civil rights lawyers in the city.

Both the city and the police department declined to comment directly on the lawsuits. However, Mayor Jim Kenney, in a statement, said the city is conducting an independent review of both situations and will hold police accountable.

"I am highly concerned about what transpired on both I-676 and 52nd Street and I fully regret the use of tear gas and some other use of force in those incidents," Kenney said.

Kenney and Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw had previously apologized for using tear gas in the June 1 demonstration on the interstate, saying they relied on incorrect information. They also announced a temporary moratorium on its use in most cases. Abernathy on Tuesday said his decision to resign was not related to the city's handling of the protests, but added that the city needs more diverse voices "at every level of government."

Videos show Philadelphia police that day firing tear gas at dozens of protesters trapped on the roadway, forcing some to climb up a steep embankment and over a concrete wall and fence to escape.

The protests were among those that erupted nationwide after the death of George Floyd, who died after a Minneapolis police officer put his knee on his neck for several minutes to pin him to the ground.

"In response to protests and a national conversation about police accountability and an end to a long history of police brutality, the Philadelphia Police Department reacted with more brutality," said lawyer Jonathan Feinberg, who was involved in the litigation and works for the civil rights firm Kairys, Rudovsky, Messing, Feinberg and Lin LLP.

"Our firm dates back to 1971. We cannot recall a single episode in which the Philadelphia police used munitions like this in a peaceful protest," Feinberg said.

Shahidah Mubarak-Hadi, a plaintiff, said her 3- and 6-year old children were hurt after police fired tear gas at their home in West Philadelphia, where they were inside seeking refuge during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Officers violated the sanctity of our home, without forethought, senselessly firing tear gas around our residence while we were inside," she said. "My children and I no longer feel safe in our own house."

They live near the 52nd Street business corridor, the heart of a predominantly Black neighborhood rocked by clashes between police and protesters on May 31. The police response, lawyers said in a press release, violated their clients' First Amendment right to free speech and assembly, Fourth Amendment ban on excessive force and 14th Amendment ban on racially discriminatory policing.

"In what many witnesses described as a war zone in an otherwise peaceful, residential community, police officers in tanks traveled away from West Philadelphia's business corridor and down residential side streets for hours, chasing residents into their homes and indiscriminately firing canisters of tear gas at them," they said.

This story has been corrected to say the litigation involves civil rights lawsuits, not class-action lawsuits.

First federal execution in 17 years; another set Wednesday

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (AP) — The federal government on Tuesday carried out its first execution in almost two decades, killing by lethal injection a man convicted of murdering an Arkansas family in a 1990s plot to build a whites-only nation in the Pacific Northwest.

The execution of Daniel Lewis Lee came over the objection of the victims' relatives and following days of legal delays, reviving the debate over capital punishment during a time of widespread social unrest. And the Trump administration's determination to proceed with executions added a new chapter to the national conversation about criminal justice reform in the lead-up to the 2020 presidential election.

Just before he died at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, Lee, professed his innocence.

"I've made a lot of mistakes in my life, but I'm not a murderer," said Lee, 47, of Yukon, Oklahoma. "You're killing an innocent man."

The government is scheduled to execute two more men this week, including Wesley Ira Purkey on Wednesday for the killing of a Kansas City teenager in 1998. But legal experts say the 68-year-old Purkey, who suffers from dementia, has a greater chance of avoiding that fate because of his mental state.

The decision by the Bureau of Prisons to move forward with executions — the first since 2003 — has drawn scrutiny from civil rights groups and the wider public. Relatives of Lee's victims sued to try to halt it, citing concerns about the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed more than 135,000 people in the United States and is ravaging prisons nationwide.

Critics argued the government was creating a manufactured urgency for political gain. One of Lee's lawyers, Ruth Friedman, said it was "beyond shameful that the government, in the end, carried out this execution in haste."

But Attorney General William Barr said, "Lee finally faced the justice he deserved. The American people have made the considered choice to permit capital punishment for the most egregious federal crimes, and justice was done today in implementing the sentence for Lee's horrific offenses."

Barr had said earlier that the Justice Department had a duty to carry out the sentences, partly to provide closure to the victims' families and others in the communities where the killings happened.

However, relatives of those killed by Lee in 1996 argued he deserved life in prison rather than execution. They wanted to be present to counter any contention the execution was being done on their behalf but said concern about the coronavirus kept them away.

Lee's lawyers tried multiple appeals to halt the execution, but ultimately the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 early Tuesday that it could move forward. He died at 8:07 a.m. EDT.

The victims' relatives noted Lee's co-defendant and the reputed ringleader, Chevie Kehoe, received a life sentence.

Kehoe, of Colville, Washington, recruited Lee in 1995 to join his white supremacist organization, known as the Aryan Peoples' Republic. Two years later, they were arrested for the killings of gun dealer William Mueller, his wife, Nancy, and her 8-year-old daughter, Sarah Powell, in Tilly, Arkansas, about 75 miles (120 kilometers) northwest of Little Rock.

At a 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 the victims, sealed trash bags with duct tape on their heads to suffocate them, taped rocks to their bodies and dumped them in a nearby bayou.

A U.S. District Court judge had put a hold on Lee's execution on Monday, over concerns from death row inmates on how executions were to be carried out, and an appeals court upheld it, but the high court overturned it.

On Tuesday morning, Lee had a pulse oximeter on a finger of his left hand, to monitor his oxygen level, and his arms, which had tattoos, were in black restraints, IV tubes coming through a metal panel in the wall.

He breathed heavily before the drug was injected and moved his legs and feet. As the drug was being administered, he raised his head to look around. In a few moments, his chest was no longer moving.

Lee was in the execution chamber with two Bureau of Prisons officials, a U.S. marshal and his spiritual adviser, described by a prisons spokesperson as an "Appalachian pagan minister." They and Lee didn't wear masks.

One of the senior prison officials announced Lee's time of death, and the curtain closed.

There have been two state executions in the U.S. since the pandemic forced shutdowns nationwide in mid-March — one in Texas and one in Missouri, according to the Death Penalty Information Center. Alabama had one in early March.

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.

Since then, the Justice Department has continued to approve death penalty prosecutions and federal courts have sentenced defendants to death.

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 the review had been completed, allowing executions to resume. He approved a new procedure for lethal injections that replaces the three-drug combination previously used in federal executions with one drug, pentobarbital. This is similar to the procedure used in several states, including Georgia, Missouri and Texas.

State executions have fallen steadily since the 2003 federal execution, according to data compiled by the Death Penalty Information Center. States put to death 59 people in 2004 and 22 in 2019.

Associated Press writers Mark Sherman and Colleen Long in Washington and Michael Tarm in Chicago contributed to this report.

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 a controversial state directive that sent thousands of recovering coronavirus patients into nursing homes was "not a significant factor" in some of the nation's deadliest nursing home outbreaks.

Scientists, health care professionals and elected officials assailed the report released last week for flawed methodology and selective stats that sidestepped 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 major 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.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 55 of 65

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 homes that were virus free? 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?

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

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 56 of 65

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.

Wait 'til next year: Giving up on 2020, looking toward 2021

By SOPHIA ROSENBAUM Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — This was supposed to be the year of the comeback for Boysie Dikobe, a South African dancer recovering from his second hip replacement and gearing up to get back on stage when the coronavirus hit.

Dikobe, a 29-year-old dancer who performs with a traveling drag ballet troupe that tours globally, says his first thought was: "2020 is canceled."

It's barely halfway over, and Dikobe is part of a global choir wishing for 2020 to end. No Olympics, no awards shows, no weddings, no summer camp, no graduations. Nothing to look forward to except a new Netflix show or your newfound love of regrowing scallions or baking bread.

Now it's all about 2021 — the year when everything, and maybe nothing, happens.

The coronavirus pandemic has brought tectonic change to almost every part of life — how we live, where we live, where we work, what we do for work, what it means to be a kid, what family means, what is important. There was a months-long moment where the world was on pause, causing many to dig into existential questions: What is my purpose? Where do I belong?

That's what Dikobe found himself doing as he quarantined in his small New York apartment contemplating his future — both personal and professional. Would he ever perform on stage again, or would he have to retire before an opportunity arrived? The more he considered it, the more he found himself thinking: "2020 is not canceled, actually. It's an awakening."

Leslie Dwight, a 23-year-old writer, wondered the same thing in a poem she wrote that was endlessly shared on social media about a week after the May 25 death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police. "2020 isn't canceled, but rather, the most important year of them all," she wrote.

But why do we even say things like "2020 is canceled" and "New year, new me"? Experts who study human behavior say the human desire to pin failures, hopes and dreams on a period of time like a calendar year has primitive roots connected to our attachment to routine.

"Because we missed our spring, summer isn't really summer because it only comes after a complete spring," says Stuart Patterson, chairperson of the Shimer Great Books School at North Central College. "The only opportunity to reset is next spring. Everything else we're doing this year is going to be drained of significance because they don't have the proper sequence."

It's like when Hamlet declares that "time is out of joint," Patterson says.

How do we measure a year — a question about the passage of time that has a whole song devoted to it in the Broadway musical "Rent"? With seasons, milestones, rituals, events. So when a year is stripped of all of those moments, people feel lost and put hope in the future to manage expectations, psychologists and social scientists say.

Every calendar year brings a cycle of hope. January is when we'll finally commit to our diet, quit smoking, become the person we always wanted to be. We believe in the power of change and promise ourselves: "This is our year," as one reveler proclaimed just after the ball dropped in Times Square.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 57 of 65

Some people admit defeat by January's end, while other ambitions continue for a few more months. In April, many start focusing on summer. By November, most have thrown in the towel, vowing that the upcoming year is actually their year.

But that hope never fully dies out. It just gets recalibrated and refocused on a new target and soars again. "Hope," the poet Emily Dickinson wrote, "is the thing with feathers."

If not for hope, why would data show that most of the 6,253 respondents to a recent WeddingWire survey have postponed their planned 2020 nuptials to next year, but only 7% have canceled their wedding? Weddings are different from holidays in that, for many, it is an event that only happens once. Thus an even greater emphasis on making it special.

Like millions of other couples planning to get married this summer, Kerry Anne Perkins and Michael Gordon were devastated as March slouched into April. They realized they would have to cancel their dream wedding on Memorial Day weekend, which marked five years since the Philadelphia couple first met.

"Every day felt heavier and heavier and heavier," Perkins recalls, saying she had frequent breakdowns and couldn't bring herself to officially cancel the wedding.

They wound up having a microwedding June 6. As they did their first look, a massive Black Lives Matter demonstration arrived at Philadelphia's Logan Square. Photos of the couple holding hands, fists raised, with thousands of people surrounding them went viral.

"We were really just a symbol of the things the world needs more of, especially in 2020," Perkins says. "There's a pandemic and all of the changes and the things that we're hearing and seeing, people need hope. People need love. And people need unity."

While Gordon says he knows they were lucky, he has advice for others planning milestones: Take a breath, think about what's really important and find the special.

"In my mind, it has to get better," Perkins says. "I'm hopeful. I think 2021 is going to be a year of rebirth."

Deborah Serani, a psychologist in the New York City area, said hope has disappointed many this year but will help us endure the pandemic and thrive. "Hope," she says, "requires us to look at the present situation and regard it for what it is, and plan for its betterment."

No one knows what 2021 will bring. Nobody knows what the "new normal" will look like. Will there be wedding ceremonies featuring every person a couple has ever met, packed stadiums, concert venues with thousands of people crooning the same tune? Will the now-2021 Summer Olympics happen? Will awards shows be back? Will we even care?

There are no clear answers. But there is hope.

Sophia Rosenbaum is an editor on the East Regional Desk of The Associated Press. Follow her on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/sophrosenba>

Burger King addresses climate change by changing cows' diets

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writer

Burger King is staging an intervention with its cows.

The chain has rebalanced the diet of some of the cows by adding lemon grass in a bid to limit bovine contributions to climate change. By tweaking their diet, Burger King said Tuesday that it believes it can reduce a cow's daily methane emissions by about 33%.

Cows emit methane as a by-product of their digestion, and that has become a potential public relations hurdle for major burger chains.

Greenhouse gas emissions from the agriculture sector made up 9.9% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in 2018, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Of that amount, methane emissions from livestock (called enteric fermentation) comprised more than a quarter of the emissions from the agriculture sector.

With an over-the-top social media campaign that teeters between vulgarity and science (sprinkled with more vulgarity), Burger King is banking on the heightened awareness of climate change and its re-

sponsibility to limit its own role.

According to a recent poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, about two out of three Americans say corporations have a responsibility to combat climate change. The gravitational pull of climate change is increasingly finding its way onto national political stage.

Potential customers are also cutting down on the amount of meat they consume, citing both environmental and dietary concerns. Burger King and rival McDonald's have added meat alternatives to their menus.

Two years ago McDonald's said it was taking steps to cut the greenhouse gases it emits. It tweaked the manner in which the beef in its Big Macs and Quarter Pounders was produced. The company said at the time that it expected the changes to prevent 150 million metric tons (165 million tons) of greenhouse gas emissions from being released into the atmosphere by 2030.

Burger King worked with scientists at the Autonomous University at the State of Mexico and at the University of California, Davis to test and develop its formula of adding 100 grams of lemongrass leaves to the cows' daily diets. Preliminary tests indicate that the lemongrass leaves help the cows release less methane as they digest their food.

On Tuesday, Burger King introduced its Reduced Methane Emissions Beef Whopper, made with beef sourced from cows that emit reduced methane, in select restaurants in Miami, New York, Austin, Portland and Los Angeles, while supplies last.

UK, France move to extend rules on face coverings in public

By DANICA KIRKA and PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain and France moved Tuesday to make face coverings compulsory in more places as both countries try to get their economies going while at the same time seeking to prevent further coronavirus outbreaks.

Following days of procrastination and mixed messages, British Health Secretary Matt Hancock said the wearing of face coverings will be mandatory in shops and supermarkets in England from July 24.

On the other side of the English Channel, amid signs of a slight virus resurgence in France, President Emmanuel Macron said he also wants to require masks inside all indoor public spaces by Aug. 1.

Britain and France previously took a more relaxed attitude to face coverings than many other European nations, recommending masks but not requiring them. Germany, Spain, Italy and Greece already require masks to be worn in enclosed spaces.

But with their economies reeling after months-long lockdowns, French and U.K. government leaders were anxious to try to persuade people to spend again — hopefully without spreading the virus. Weeks of indecision made way for new rules that came into view virtually overnight.

Britain's Hancock told lawmakers in the House of Commons Tuesday that face covers can help workers and shoppers alike.

"In recent weeks, we have reopened retail and footfall is rising," he said. "We want to give people more confidence to shop safely and enhance protection for those who work in shops."

People in England already have to wear face coverings on public transport and in hospital settings.

Anyone not wearing a face covering in the additional environments outlined by the government could be fined 100 pounds (\$125,) and shops can refuse entry to anyone failing to comply. Children under 11 and those with certain disabilities will be exempt.

The new requirement only applies to England. The other nations of the U.K. — Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland — can determine their own public health policies, and Scotland already requires masks in shops.

Hancock stressed that wearing a face covering complements other accepted strategies aimed at keeping a lid on the pandemic, such as washing hands and abiding by social distancing rules.

"We cannot let our progress today lead to complacency tomorrow," he said.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who in April spent a week in the hospital being treated for COVID-19, began wearing a bright blue mask in public last week. The change in policy followed.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 59 of 65

In an interview with French television networks marking Bastille Day, France's Macron said "the best prevention" against the virus is masks, social distancing and hand washing.

Recent rave parties in France and widespread backsliding on social distancing — even within Macron's presidential palace and other government facilities — have raised concern lately, so the government has been weighing tougher mask guidance.

"We have signs that (the virus) is picking up a bit," Macron said, noting that France's virus reproduction rate is inching past 1 again, meaning each infected person is infecting at least one other.

British authorities are hoping the public will comply with the new requirement. 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.

British 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 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."

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

"Lack of strong evidence of their effectiveness should not be considered a problem but the evidence is accumulating that they have a part to play in reducing transmission and also in protecting the wearer," said Keith Neal, an epidemiologist at the University of Nottingham.

Angela Charlton in Paris contributed to this report.

Tom Bergeron, Erin Andrews exit 'Dancing With the Stars'

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The dance has ended for "Dancing With the Stars" hosts Tom Bergeron and Erin Andrews.

ABC said in a statement that the show is looking to "embark on a new creative direction" and host Bergeron "departs the show with our sincerest thanks and gratitude for his trademark wit and charm that helped make this show a success."

No replacements were named.

Bergeron has hosted "Dancing With the Stars" since its premiere in 2005.

He took to Twitter to announce his departure. "It's been an incredible 15-year run and the most unexpected gift of my career," he wrote. "I'm grateful for that and for the lifelong friendships made."

Last year, Bergeron made waves when he expressed his unhappiness that former White House press secretary Sean Spicer was among the contestants for the fall season.

Bergeron tweeted that he earlier told producers he hoped the new season would be a "joyful respite from our exhausting political climate" and urged them not have any "divisive bookings." Producers apparently disagreed. "We can agree to disagree, as we do now, but ultimately it's their call," Bergeron wrote.

Former contestants tweeted their goodbyes, with Bindi Irwin saying that spending time with Bergeron "was one of my favorite parts" of the show and Lea Thompson saying there's no show without Bergeron. "They might as well cancel it."

The finale that season — No. 28 — ended with Hannah Brown and Alan Bersten taking the trophy but scored a new low in total viewers among the show's previous finales. Still, the final show was the most watched program on broadcast television that week with 7.7 million total viewers.

The network on Monday also said farewell to Andrews, who originally competed as a contestant back in 2010 and returned as co-host in 2014. "Her signature sense of humor has become a hallmark of the show," the statement read.

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. Poorer countries that sign up to the initiative would theoretically get vaccines at the same time to cover 20% of their populations, but they would be obligated to immunize people according to an ethical distribution framework set by the United Nations.

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.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 61 of 65

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.

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.

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White House virus task force member says ‘none of us lie’

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, JILL COLVIN, JONATHAN LEMIRE and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — A top member of the White House coronavirus task force said Tuesday that “none of us lie” to the public, an accusation President Donald Trump had retweeted, and that while kids need to be back in school as Trump insists, “we have to get the virus under control.”

Adm. Brett Giroir’s comment came a day after Trump shared a Twitter post from a former game show host who, without evidence, accused government medical experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among others, of “lying.”

Trump himself has at times disregarded the advice of his medical experts on the task force and contin-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 62 of 65

ues to play down the threat from the virus as it spikes across the country, forcing some states to slow or reverse steps to reopen their economies.

Asked on NBC's "Today," whether the CDC and other doctors are lying, Giroir allowed that mistakes have been made and that public guidance is updated when more is learned about the virus, "but none of us lie. We are completely transparent with the American people."

Trump has said on several occasion that the virus will "just disappear." Giroir said that is unlikely "unless we take active steps to make it disappear." He appealed to people to wear masks, practice social distancing and to avoid bars and other tightly packed areas.

With U.S. virus cases spiking and the death toll mounting, the White House has worked to undercut its most trusted coronavirus expert, playing down the danger as 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, onetime 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 CDC 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 Monday in a talk with the dean of Stanford's medical school, 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, 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 — who is not a doctor — has aggressively championed despite contradictory evidence on its efficacy and safety.

Asked by NBC News if he was bothered by the White House's treatment of Fauci, Giroir didn't answer directly but said "none of us are always right and that's just the way things are."

Giroir also appeared to disagree with Trump and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, who have been pressuring schools to fully open in the fall, even going as far to threaten those that remain closed with the loss of some federal funds.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 63 of 65

Giroir said it was important to "get the virus under control" first. "And if we get the virus under better control, clearly kids can get back into school safely," he said.

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.

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.

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.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 64 of 65

"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 arbitration 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.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, July 15, the 197th day of 2020. There are 169 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 15, 1799, French soldiers in Egypt discovered the Rosetta Stone, which proved instrumental in deciphering ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs.

On this date:

In 1834, the Spanish Inquisition was abolished more than 3 1/2 centuries after its creation.

In 1870, Georgia became the last Confederate state to be readmitted to the Union. Manitoba entered confederation as the fifth Canadian province.

In 1913, Augustus Bacon, D-Ga., became the first person elected to the U.S. Senate under the terms of the recently ratified 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, providing for popular election of senators.

In 1918, the Second Battle of the Marne, resulting in an Allied victory, began during World War I.

In 1975, three American astronauts blasted off aboard an Apollo spaceship hours after two Soviet cosmonauts were launched aboard a Soyuz spacecraft for a mission that included a linkup of the two ships in orbit.

In 1976, a 36-hour kidnap ordeal began for 26 schoolchildren and their bus driver as they were abducted near Chowchilla, California, by three gunmen and imprisoned in an underground cell. (The captives escaped unharmed; the kidnappers were caught.)

In 1983, eight people were killed when a suitcase bomb planted by Armenian extremists exploded at the Turkish Airlines counter at Orly Airport in Paris.

In 1985, a visibly gaunt Rock Hudson appeared at a news conference with actress Doris Day (it was later revealed Hudson was suffering from AIDS).

In 1996, MSNBC, a 24-hour all-news network, made its debut on cable and the Internet.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 012 ~ 65 of 65

In 1997, fashion designer Gianni Versace (ver-SAH'-chay), 50, was shot dead outside his Miami Beach home; suspected gunman Andrew Phillip Cunanan (koo-NAN'-an), 27, was found dead eight days later, a suicide. (Investigators believed Cunanan killed four other people before Versace in a cross-country rampage that began the previous March.)

In 2002, John Walker Lindh, an American who'd fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan, pleaded guilty in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, to two felonies in a deal sparing him life in prison.

In 2016, Donald Trump chose Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, an experienced politician with deep Washington connections, as his running mate.

Ten years ago: After 85 days, BP stopped the flow of oil into the Gulf of Mexico using a 75-ton cap lowered onto the well earlier in the week. The Securities and Exchange Commission announced that Goldman Sachs & Co. would pay a record \$550 million penalty to settle charges that the Wall Street giant had misled buyers of mortgage investments. Argentina became the first Latin American country to legalize same-sex marriage.

Five years ago: Vigorously challenging his critics, President Barack Obama launched an aggressive and detailed defense of a landmark Iranian nuclear accord during a White House press conference, rejecting the idea that the agreement left Tehran on the brink of a bomb and arguing the only alternative to the diplomatic deal was war.

One year ago: Avowed white supremacist James Alex Fields Jr. was sentenced to life in prison plus 419 years for killing one and injuring dozens of others when he deliberately drove his car into a crowd of anti-racism protesters during a rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. Despite widespread criticism over a weekend tweet, President Donald Trump renewed his call for four Democratic congresswomen of color to get out of the U.S. "right now." Former Chinese premier Li Peng, a hardliner who imposed martial law during the 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protests, died at 90.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Patrick Wayne is 81. Rhythm-and-blues singer Millie Jackson is 76. Rock singer-musician Peter Lewis (Moby Grape) is 75. Singer Linda Ronstadt is 74. Rock musician Artimus Pyle is 72. Arianna Huffington, co-founder of The Huffington Post, is 70. Actress Celia Imrie is 68. Actor Terry O'Quinn is 68. Rock singer-musician David Pack is 68. Rock musician Marky Ramone is 68. Rock musician Joe Satriani is 64. Country singer-songwriter Mac McAnally is 63. Model Kim Alexis is 60. Actor Willie Aames is 60. Actor-director Forest Whitaker is 59. Actress Lolita Davidovich is 59. Actress Shari Headley is 57. Actress Brigitte Nielsen is 57. Rock musician Jason Bonham is 54. Actress Amanda Foreman is 54. Rock musician Phillip Fisher is 53. Rhythm-and-blues singer Stokley (Mint Condition) is 53. Actor-comedian Eddie Griffin is 52. Actor Reggie Hayes is 51. Actor-screenwriter Jim Rash is 49. Rock musician John Dolmayan is 48. Actor Scott Foley is 48. Actor Brian Austin Green is 47. Rapper Jim Jones is 44. Actress Diane Kruger is 44. Actress Lana Parrilla (LAH'-nuh pa-REE'-uh) is 43. Rock musician Ray Toro (My Chemical Romance) is 43. Actress Laura Benanti is 41. Actor Travis Fimmel is 41. Rhythm-and-blues singer Kia Thornton (Divine) is 41. Actor Taylor Kinney is 39. Actor-singer Tristan "Mack" Wilds is 31. Actress Medalion Rahimi is 28. Actor Iain Armitage (TV: "Big Little Lies" "Young Sheldon") is 12.