

Groton Daily Independent

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Girls Soccer team beats St Thomas More, 5-1

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Church Services

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church: Worship in the church at 8:30 a.m. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/215332349572015/>)

Groton Christian & Missinary Alliance Church: Worship in the church at 10:30 a.m.: (<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonCMA/>)

St. John's Lutheran Church: Worship in the church at 9 a.m. (<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsgroton/>)
Emmanuel Lutheran Church - Worship outside at 9 a.m.

(<https://www.facebook.com/Emmanuel-Lutheran-Church-GrotonSD-ELCA-636505039852208/>)

United Methodist Church: Worship in the Sanctuary at 11 a.m. (<https://www.facebook.com/grotonsdumc>)

Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden, 10:30 a.m. People will stay in their vehicles and listen to the service on their FM radio.

Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont has worship on Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. in the basement.

Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont / Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden - will have a podcast posted. <https://anchor.fm/paul-irvin-kosel>

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Sunday Extras



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

Do not let your adornment be merely outward — arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel — rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 1 Peter 3: 3,4



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RUNNING MATES



KIRK

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email: WaltersWork54@gmail.com

BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Cornelius in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. Whose first chapter begins, "The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth"? 3 *John, Galatians, Hebrews, Jude*

3. What were Gihon, Pison Tigris, and Euphrates as connected with the Garden of Eden? *Cities, Kings, Rivers, Caves*

4. In Revelation 2, what city was said by John to have "Satan's seat"? *Pergamos, Miletus, Patara, Sodom*

5. From Acts 13, where were Paul and Barnabas deserted by Mark? *Jericho, Perga, Athens, Damascus*

6. In 1 Kings, who is given credit for writing 1,005 songs? *Jacob, Solomon, Philip, David*

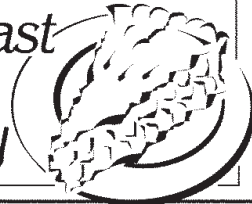
ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) 3 John; 3) Rivers; 4) Pergamos; 5) Perga; 6) Solomon

Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson's Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in bookstores and online.

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Comfort foods

Made fast
and
healthy



by Healthy Exchanges

Blueberry-Raspberry Summer Pie

When you combine fresh blueberries and raspberries, you combine much more than berries. You combine magic!

- 1 (4-serving) package sugar-free vanilla cook-and-serve pudding mix
- 1 (4-serving) package sugar-free raspberry gelatin
- 1/4 cups diet lemon-lime soda
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2/4 cups fresh blueberries
- 3/4 cup fresh red raspberries
- 1 (6-ounce) purchased graham cracker pie crust
- 2 (2 1/2-inch) graham cracker squares, made into crumbs
- 1/2 cup reduced-calorie whipped topping

1. In a large saucepan, combine dry pudding mix, dry gelatin and soda. Cook over medium heat until mixture thickens and starts to boil, stirring often. Remove from heat. Stir in cinnamon. Add blueberries and raspberries. Mix gently just to combine.

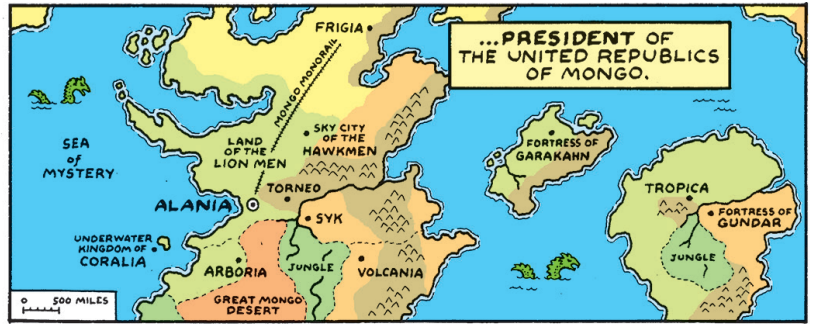
2. Spoon hot mixture into pie crust. Evenly sprinkle graham cracker crumbs over top. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour. When serving, top each piece with 1 tablespoon whipped topping. Makes 8 servings.

• Each serving equals: 162 calories, 6g fat, 1g protein, 26g carb., 213mg sodium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Starch, 1 Fat, 1/2 Fruit.

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FLASH GORDON

8-16
BY JIM KEEFE

UNPREPARED FOR AN ATTACK, MING'S TROOPS ARE OVERWHELMED BY BARIN'S FORCES.

WE SURRENDER!

BARIN...

...I RECOMMEND YOU GET YOUR PRISONERS BACK THROUGH THE SPACE PORTAL AND DO IT QUICKLY.

BLASTER FIRE HAS DAMAGED THE CONTROL CONSOLE...

I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I CAN KEEP THE PORTAL STABLE.

HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO NULLIFY MING'S CHEMICAL WARFARE WEAPONRY?

I'M INTRODUCING THE COUNTERAGENT EVEN AS WE SPEAK. IT'S GOING TO TAKE TIME, THOUGH.

KEEP AT THE CONTROLS. I'M GOING AFTER FLASH.

MING'S TOO TREACHEROUS TO FACE ALONE.

NO. YOUR MEN NEED YOU...

...I'LL GO.

TO BE CONT'D ~

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

BECAUSE UNEVEN LIES MAKE THE GAME HARDER, ALWAYS BE SURE TO FIND A LEVEL AREA FROM WHICH TO DRIVE THE BALL.

DON'T FORGET THAT YOU CAN HIT FROM ANYWHERE UP TO TWO CLUB LENGTHS BEHIND THE MARKERS.

YES (Medium Iron)

NO (Short Iron)

A MEDIUM IRON FROM A LEVEL LIE IS A MUCH HIGHER PERCENTAGE SHOT THAN A WEDGE OR 9-IRON FROM A SEVERE SLOPE.

SO TEE OFF WITH THE CLUB THAT WILL PUT YOU ON THE FLATTEST PART OF THE FAIRWAY.



Vitamin D Deficit After Gastric Bypass

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 72-year-old woman in fair health. I had strong bones until I had gastric bypass surgery. Within two years, I developed osteoporosis. In 2016 my parathyroid hormone level was found to be elevated. However, it has come down over the past year or two from 97.76 to 68.95 pg/mL. The endocrinologist now has me on 8,000 IU of vitamin D-3 per day. My calcium was 9.3 and ionized calcium was 5.0.

Meanwhile, the rheumatologist treating my osteoporosis has prescribed Reclast infusions once per year. I just received my second one this month.

This summer I broke a toe on my right foot with no known trauma. In October I sustained a stress fracture of my left heel bone, again without any known trauma. I am very worried about what all this means to my future bone health. — *L.M.J.*

ANSWER: I suspect you had vitamin D deficiency due to the gastric bypass surgery, which prevents your body from absorbing it efficiently. Without vitamin D, your bones cannot take up calcium as effectively. The parathyroid hormone often will increase in this situation, and this is called “secondary hyperparathyroidism.”

It’s important to note that both your total and ionized calcium levels are normal. Ionized calcium is the active form — some calcium binds to albumin, a major protein in blood. In secondary hyperparathyroidism, the calcium is never high. A high calcium and high parathyroid level always means primary hyperparathyroidism, which almost always comes from a tumor of the parathyroid gland. Unfortunately, I have seen

people whose doctors have confused this point and missed the diagnosis.

With replacement of your vitamin D (at a high-enough dose, you can absorb enough), the PTH level is settling back down to normal, and it would be expected that your bone strength would start going up as well. I would expect your endocrinologist or rheumatologist to follow your bone density through a DEXA scan.

The Reclast (zoledronic acid) is an intravenous bisphosphonate, and it slows down reabsorption of your bone. Between the higher vitamin D and the Reclast, your bones should get better and your risk of fracture will decrease, but it will take time.

DEAR DR. ROACH: In a recent column, you discussed the effect of ibuprofen on men with an enlarged prostate. I am a 78-year-old who runs 15-20 miles per week, with benign prostatic hyperplasia and who also has reduced urinary frequency with occasional use of Advil. As a runner, I have been reluctant to make it a daily regimen because I have read that inflammation is part of the body’s response to tissue damage, which is crucial to the healing process and is important for muscle growth. When ibuprofen’s anti-inflammatory effect reduces symptoms, does it affect the healing process also? Can you comment on the pros and cons for runners? — *B.M.*

ANSWER: High-dose ibuprofen was shown to inhibit muscle protein synthesis following weightlifting exercise. This led to a suspicion that it might impair the gains in muscle strength that are made with exercise. However, a Canadian study showed that moderate doses of ibuprofen (400 mg after exercise) did not impair muscle growth or gains in strength. Using ibuprofen for occasional muscle soreness or for the purpose of reducing prostate inflammation should not adversely affect your performance in running.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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1. Name the song with the same title as a brand of deodorant.
2. Who was Daryl Dragon?
3. What is the name of the Irish singer with the shaved head?
4. Which singer had a Top 10 hit with “Dim All the Lights”?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: “Her name was Magill and she called herself Lil, But everyone knew her as Nancy.”

Answers

1. Nirvana’s “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” 1991. Songwriter Kurt Cobain said he didn’t know that Teen Spirit was the name of a deodorant. Obviously, sales of the deodorant soared.
2. Dragon, aka The Captain, was half of the husband and wife duo Captain & Tennille. And yes, that was his real name. His father, Carmen Dragon, was a famous composer and conductor.
3. That depends on the year, it seems. She was born Sinead O’Connor, but changed her name to Magda Davitt in 2017. In 2018, she changed it to Shuhada’ Sadaqat when she converted to Islam.
4. Donna Summer, in 1979.
5. “Rocky Raccoon,” by the Beatles, in 1968. The song was written in India while the Beatles were studying Transcendental Meditation. The honky-tonk song describes a love triangle between Lil, Rocky and Dan.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT

by Wayne



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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Picture has been added. 2. Boy's sleeve is different. 3. Man has a bow tie. 4. Napkin dispenser is larger. 5. Number of flavors has changed. 6. Partial window sign is missing.

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• Here's a budget stretcher: "Credit goes to my friend for this great butter extender. Whip 1 pound of softened butter and 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Slowly add 1 cup of olive oil. Beat up to 5 minutes to add air and increase volume. Pour into two 1-pint containers and refrigerate. Economical, spreads like soft margarine, tastes great and you get the benefits of olive oil in a natural product." — *S.B., British Colombia, Canada*

• Mix a quarter cup of salt in with two tablespoons of bath wash for a sudsy, refreshing, skin-soothing salt scrub.

• "Before I go to the beach, I freeze an ice-cube tray full of lemonade. Then, we use the cubes in our travel cups. It keeps the lemonade cool, and as it melts (which tends to be quickly), it doesn't water down the drink." — *K.H. in Myrtle Beach, S.C.*

• Some tips for middle or high-

school kids going back to school virtually: Have a designated workspace. This can be as simple as a large tray turned upside down and placed on the end of the bed with a storage ottoman to sit on. It will be better than trying to lay in bed and work.

• Mold on baked goods goes beyond what you can see. The mold puts out "feelers" that are invisible to the naked eye, so if you see mold on your muffin or bread, don't think that you can cut that part off and be done with it. To be safe, throw the whole thing away.

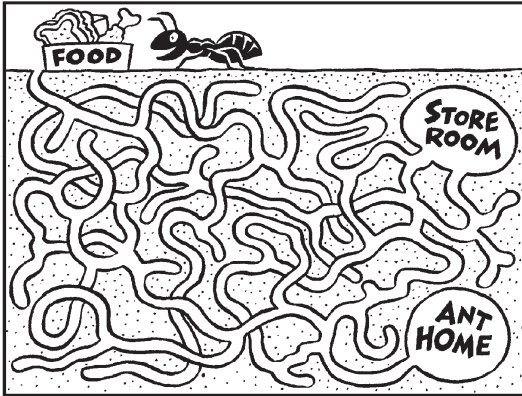
• "I needed an outlet on my porch, so I ran a long extension cord along the edge of the patio and fed it up into a piece of PVC pipe that was left over from a plumbing job. It holds the end of the cord at about outlet height. Whatever works!" — *V.L. in Arizona*

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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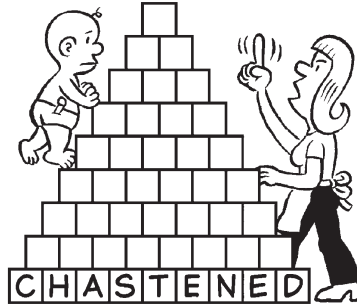
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DON'T GET ANTSY trying to solve this ant maze. See if you can find the route from the food to the ant home in one minute.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



Illustrated by David Coulson

THE PYRAMID OF WORD POWER! Starting with the word CHASTENED at the bottom of our word pyramid, try dropping one letter at a time, as you work your way up, so that the remaining letters at each level spell out a new word. To make the challenge harder, the following helpful hints are not in ascending order:

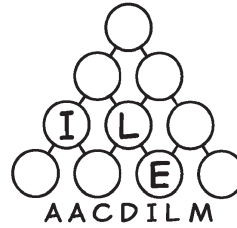
1. A small amount.
2. To be punished.
3. Seized hastily.
4. To have done something.
5. Highest rank.
6. Shouted monotonously.
7. To remove from.
8. Sweet, edible fruit.
9. Present during.

THE MYSTERIOUS OBJECT! Under the napkin is an object that has 8 corners, 6 sides and 12 edges when it's dry, but has none of these when it's wet. What do you think it is?

Answer: It's a sugar cube.



CHAIN REACTION! Take the seven letters printed below the diagram and place them in the circles so that eight 4-letter words can be read top to bottom along the connecting lines. All the words will begin with the letter in the top circle

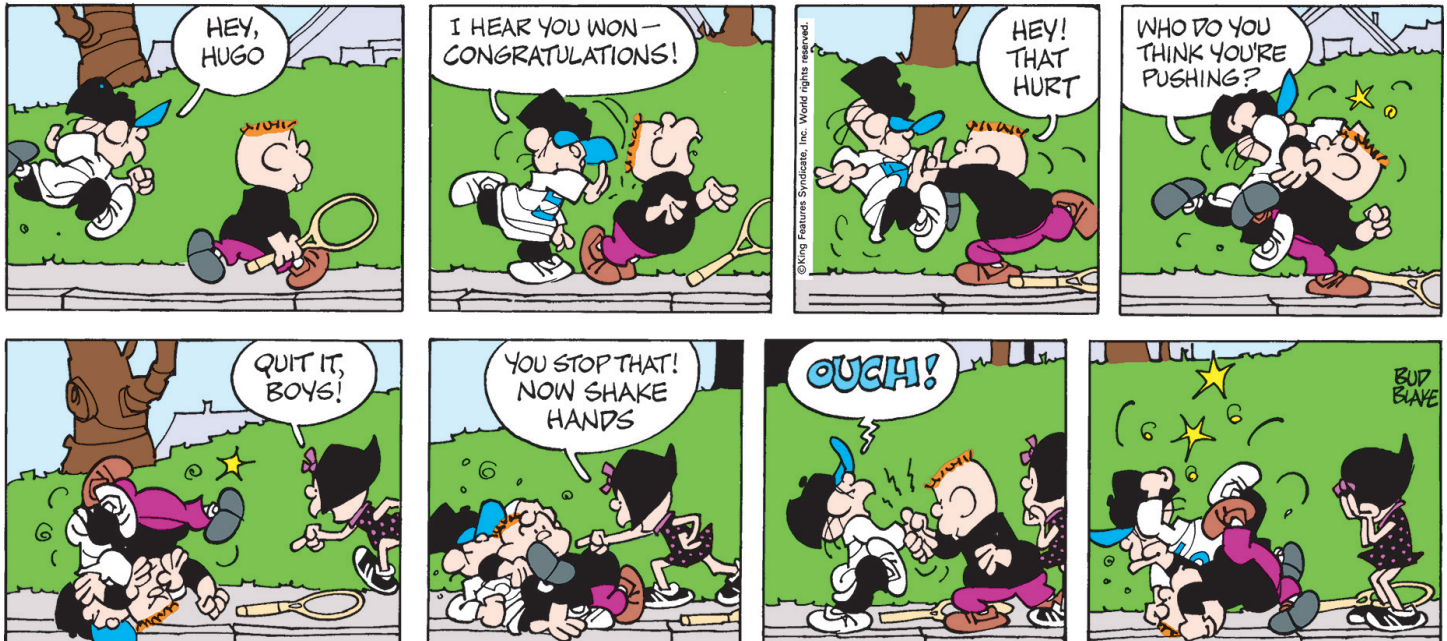


Answers: The words are, top to bottom, left to right: Maid, mail, mall, male, mill, mille, mice, mica.

Answers: (from the bottom up) Chastened, snatched, charned, detach, acted, date, tad, at, a.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Early bird?
- 4 Said "not guilty"
- 8 Molt
- 12 By way of
- 13 Emanation
- 14 Rent
- 15 Work unit
- 16 Whirl
- 17 Long-billed wader
- 18 Sprinter's device
- 21 Many millenia
- 22 Parcel of land
- 23 Allude (to)
- 26 Driver's license datum
- 27 Foundation
- 30 Out of control

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18			19					20				
			21				22					
23	24	25				26				27	28	29
30					31				32			
33				34				35				
			36				37					
38	39	40				41				42	43	44
45					46					47		
48					49					50		
51					52					53		

- 31 "Oklahoma!" baddie
- 32 Stead
- 33 Vat
- 34 Haw partner
- 35 Tureen accessory
- 36 Prohibit
- 37 Emeril's shout
- 38 Extremely exciting
- 45 Plankton component
- 46 Love god
- 47 Dove's remark
- 48 Works with
- 49 New Haven school
- 50 Choose
- 51 Not so much
- 52 Resorts international?
- 53 "The Matrix" role
- 7 Hung
- 8 Half a circus clown's pair
- 9 Vagrant
- 10 — The Red
- 11 Dilbert's worksite
- 19 Stench
- 20 Go a few rounds
- 23 Snitch
- 24 Ostrich's cousin
- 25 Pass (off)
- 26 Total
- 27 Auction action
- 28 Wet wriggler
- 29 Payable
- 31 Football garb
- 32 Genie's home
- 34 Chapeau
- 35 Expires
- 36 Marching-band section
- 37 Half of 49-Across' fight song
- 38 Booty
- 39 Otherwise
- 40 Census statistics
- 41 Snare
- 42 PC picture
- 43 "Unh-unh"
- 44 Attend

DOWN

- 1 Prior nights
- 2 Encircle
- 3 Lady —
- 4 Cleric
- 5 Pea-family plant
- 6 Ms. Brockovich

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

E	G	G		P	L	E	D		S	H	E	D
V	I	A		A	U	R	A		T	O	R	E
E	R	G		S	P	I	N		I	B	I	S
S	T	A	R	T	I	N	G	B	L	O	C	K
			E	O	N		L	O	T			
R	E	F	E	R		S	E	X		B	E	D
A	M	O	K		J	U	D		L	I	E	U
T	U	B		H	E	M		L	A	D	L	E
			B	A	R		B	A	M			
H	E	A	R	T	S	T	O	P	P	I	N	G
A	L	G	A		E	R	O	S		C	O	O
U	S	E	S		Y	A	L	E		O	P	T
L	E	S	S		S	P	A	S		N	E	O

LAFF - A - DAY



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"Our automatic answering service is out of order—this is an actual person speaking."

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

GUIDE TO
SOCIALLY
ACCEPTED
BEHAVIOR:

SNEEZE INTO YOUR SHIRT SLEEVE...

AHHHHHCHOOOO!

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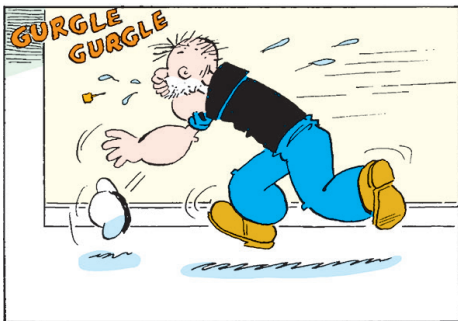
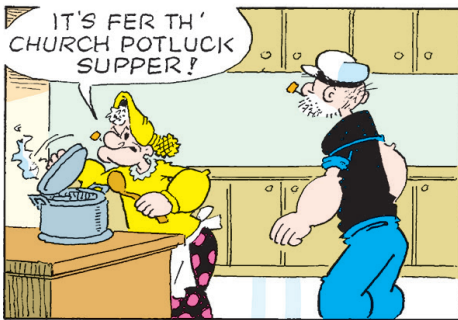
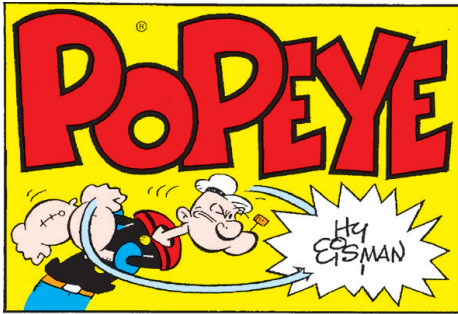
BURP INTO YOUR HOODIE...

BBBBWWWAAP!

KOPERVAS

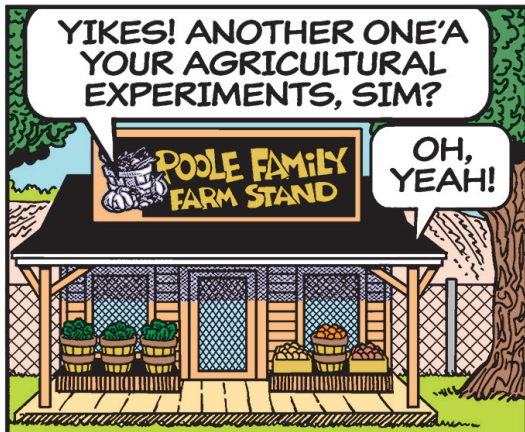
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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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HAL FOSTER'S BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ
Prince Valiant
Our Story:
THE COURAGEOUS BEASTMEN
MAKE FOR THEIR MARAUDING
FOE'S EYES...




...BUT THE BRUTE
IS NOT SO DUMB...



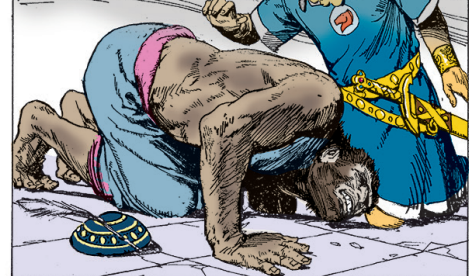
...AND DISMISSES
THE THREE ...



...ONE BY ONE.




VAL DASHES TO NUDDER, WHO HAS FALLEN NEAREST
HIM: "HOW DO YOUR PEOPLE STOP THESE
ABOMINATIONS?"



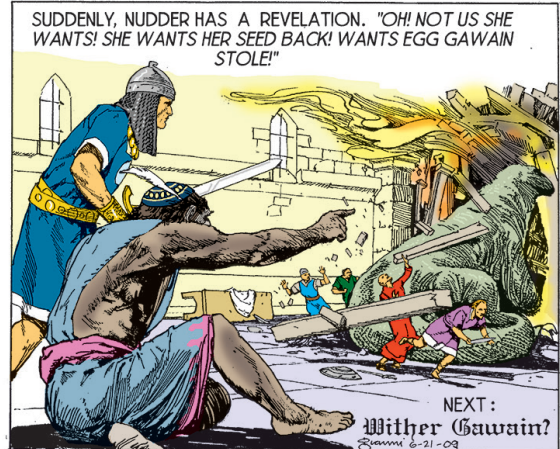
NUDDER SHRUGS, GROGGILY. "MOSTLY WE DON'T.
MOSTLY WE HIDE, AND PRAY TO THE SKY GODS.
HOW DO YOU PEOPLE STOP THEM?"

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"WE DON'T! WE..."
VAL SPUTTERS.
"THEY DON'T
LIVE HERE!
THIS
CREATURE
FOLLOWED
FROM YOUR
ISLAND!
WHY DID IT
FOLLOW YOU?"



SUDDENLY, NUDDER HAS A REVELATION. "OH! NOT US SHE
WANTS! SHE WANTS HER SEED BACK! WANTS EGG GAWAIN
STOLE!"



NEXT:
Wither Gawain?
Gianni 6-21-09

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

I LOVE MESSING
WITH ALEXA...
HAR HAR HAR...



ALEXA?



ALEXA?



ALEXA!!

...AND I LIKE
MESSING
WITH HIM.



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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Social Media Holds Hidden Dangers

Even before the lockdowns brought on by the coronavirus, too many seniors felt isolated. Now it's even worse for many of us with the lack of face-to-face interactions ... and we've turned to social media for connections to others.

There, on Facebook and Twitter, in chat rooms and email lists, we've found friends to talk to and pass the hours of this lockdown. We feel happy to have these people at the other end of the keyboard. It's good for us.

Or maybe not.

The big problem with social media is that we really don't know who is on the other end. The new friend who seems so interested in us might actually be a scammer, just waiting for the right moment to spring the trap and ask for money. How can you refuse, you'll wonder, if someone you've come to know so well asks for help?

Or maybe we've shared too much

information, such as our location or our real name.

Or how about the new friend who sends funny cartoons, one of which might contain a virus that leaves our computer open to hackers?

Add in an election year, and it's all too easy to talk online with people who supposedly share our views. Quite commonly they ask for money or contact info.

Some things to think about:

If you really want to connect with others on social media, create a fake name for it. Learn how to block people and don't add just anybody to your network or list. Don't give out your real name or location, no matter how friendly other people seem.

Focus on an area of social media with a narrow, safe focus such as pets, cooking or gardening.

Better yet, call up a few people you already know and ask if they'd like to meet for online games, such as chess, or just chatting. They might feel just as isolated as you do and welcome your overture.

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1. What caused Chicago Cubs slugger Sammy Sosa to spend time on the disabled list with a sprained lower back ligament in 2004?

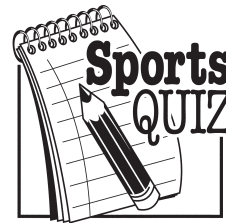
2. What sports video game, published by Nintendo in 1987, included athletes named Glass Joe, Soda Popinski, Don Flamenco and King Hippo?

3. What sportscaster was “traded” from Disney’s ESPN/ABC to NBC Sports in 2003 for intellectual property rights to cartoon character Oswald the Lucky Rabbit?

4. In 2004, businessman Bill Davidson became the first owner in American sports history to have two championship teams in the same calendar year. What were they?

5. The 1988 NFC Divisional Play-off game between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Chicago Bears at Soldier Field is popularly known by what moniker?

6. What Miami Hurricanes defensive back broke up a Nebraska Corn-



by Ryan A. Berenz

huskers two-point conversion pass attempt to seal the 31-30 upset win for Miami in the 1984 Orange Bowl?

7. What dominant Russian wrestler did American Rulon Gardner beat to win the Greco-Roman gold medal at the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympics?

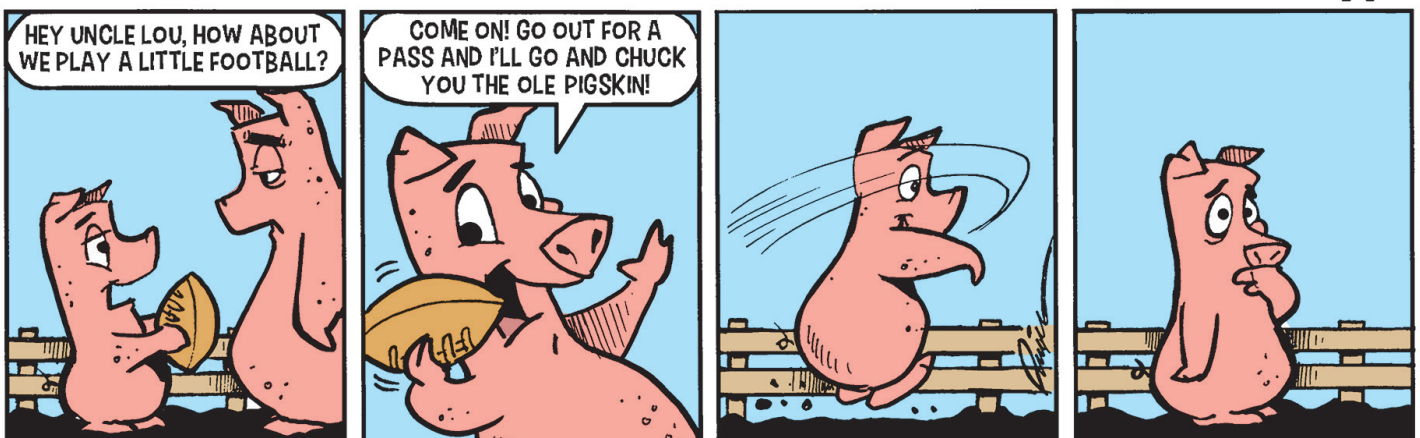
Answers

1. Violent sneezing.
2. “Mike Tyson’s Punch-Out!!”.
3. Al Michaels.
4. The Detroit Pistons and Tampa Bay Lightning.
5. The Fog Bowl.
6. Kenny Calhoun.
7. Aleksandr Karelin.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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CONGRESSMAN
DUSTY JOHNSON
Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



Local Services Matter

The last several months continue to serve as a reminder of services critical to all Americans. Two of those services have been on the forefront of my mind recently: The United States Postal Service and local newspapers.

Each are important for different reasons – the USPS plays a vital role in delivering medications and other essential goods, and our local newspapers work day in and day out to keep South Dakotans informed of what’s happening both locally and nationally.

In recent weeks, there has been a lot of discussion about the postal service. I want to make one thing clear – I’m a strong supporter of our post offices. I’ve signed onto legislation that would prevent any action to privatize the postal service and supported a resolution stating the USPS should take all appropriate measures to ensure a 6-day mail delivery service. Earlier, this year I voted in favor of a \$10 billion loan to the USPS through the CARES Act.

The reality is, however, the postal service has been in trouble for a number of years, and has lost money for the last 13 years. Last year USPS lost almost \$9 billion. Congress needs to prioritize ways to fix it, but I’m wary about any drastic changes in service so close to the presidential election and during a pandemic. I do support additional funds being given to the postal service, but it shouldn’t be a blank check, especially considering its revenues are up this year. Congress needs to do more than just throw money at the problem – that’s a cop out Congress utilizes far too often. I’m confident we can maintain a strong postal service even during a pandemic.

Like most industries, local media hasn’t been immune from the financial impact of COVID-19. A slowdown of advertisements and subsequent layoffs continue to threaten our ability to maintain a free press. A free and vibrant press is a necessity for our democracy, which is why along with my Democrat colleague Rep. Collin Peterson, I introduced the Preserving Readership and Information of Newspapers for Tomorrow (PRINT) Act this week.

The PRINT Act would make the cost of print production of local print media eligible for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) much like rent and salaries are included in the program as it is right now. Currently, local media is eligible for the PPP, but printing costs are not forgivable under the program guidelines. This bill will help alleviate some of the burden our print shops are facing.

As Congress continues to debate Coronavirus relief for communities and industries across our nation, we need to keep in mind that local services matter. I’ll continue to remind my colleagues of the importance of these services as I head back to Washington this week.

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South Dakotans are Bolstering the American Food Supply Chain

During the month of August, Congress traditionally takes an extended break from Washington to spend time at home to hear firsthand from their constituents, and this year is no different. It's an opportunity for me to travel the state and hear directly from you about the issues you care about. While this year looks a little different – with many events like Dakotafest, county fairs and concerts being canceled, and others being held virtually– I've enjoyed the opportunity to visit with a number of South Dakotans in our first couple weeks of August.

Most recently, I was in the Wall area to meet with local ranchers to update them on legislation we've been working on to correct some of the ongoing issues plaguing the cattle market. I also stopped by a local meat processing facility and got to meet with Ken Charfauros, who has been the owner of Wall Meat Processing since 2017.

Ken is a veteran of the Air Force. His last duty station was at Ellsworth Air Force Base before retiring after 30 years and 13 deployments post-9/11. While stationed at Ellsworth, he fell in love with the Black Hills and decided to make West River his home. From the moment he and his partner, Janet Niehaus, took over Wall Meat Processing, they sought ways to update the 50-plus year facility and help bring more local beef and pork to the area. Locally-raised meat products are sold right at Wall Meat Processing or can be found at the Red Rock Restaurant a few blocks down the street, a restaurant Ken and Janet also own.

Ken also helped start a program to bring locally-raised and processed beef to school lunch programs, which was launched a couple years ago. It's an opportunity for our South Dakota students to get high-quality, nutritious meat while also opening up new opportunities for local ranchers. Today, 10 schools participate in the program, including schools in Wall, Kadoka, New Underwood and elsewhere. They've had a lot of success in the few years they've owned Wall Meat Processing, and during our visit they told me they hope to expand the facility in the near future.

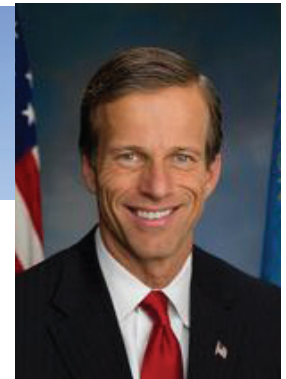
It is processors like Ken who would benefit from legislation I've introduced that would pave the way for meat and poultry products that pass state inspection standards to be sold across state lines. It's important to note that state meat inspection standards are required by law to be "at least equal" to federal inspection standards. This would help to open up new markets for South Dakota's top quality meat and poultry products at a time when our food supply chain is under stress.

Additionally, South Dakota cattle producers are put at a competitive disadvantage due to unfair labeling requirements in our country. There is a loophole in our laws that allows for beef from overseas to be labeled as a "Product of the U.S.A." if it undergoes any type of processing here. It's just not right. It's unfair to both our hardworking American producers as well as to consumers, who deserve transparency in what they're buying. I've introduced a bill with Senator John Thune to close that loophole so we can make sure only beef that has been born, raised and slaughtered here can have a "Product of the U.S.A." label. I'm also working on legislation requiring the U.S. Trade Representative to enter into negotiations that would allow for Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling to be reinstated without the threat of tariffs. These common sense proposals will help improve the prices our cattle producers can get for their products.

In order to establish a fair cattle market for producers, real, vigorous price discovery is also needed. I've introduced legislation with Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa that would require a minimum of 50 percent of a meat packer's weekly volume of beef slaughter be purchased on the open or spot market. Our legislation will provide much-needed transparency to the cattle industry to make sure producers are paid fairly for their product.

In the Senate, I'll continue prioritizing ways to strengthen our food supply chain and support South Dakota producers. As I continue my August travels across the state, I look forward to meeting with more people like Ken, who run small businesses that are vital to their local economies, who are deeply involved in their communities, and who would benefit from less government intrusion and more common sense on federal policies.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



A Little Bit of Commonsense Goes a Long Way

"I've always thought that when we Americans get up in the morning, when we see bacon, eggs, toast, and milk on our breakfast table, we should give thanks that our farmers are survivors. You are the real miracle workers of the modern world – keepers of an incredible system based on faith, freedom, hard work, productivity, and profit – a system that feeds us and sustains millions of the world's hungry."

When President Reagan delivered that message to the American people in 1982, the U.S. agriculture economy was in the throes of a severe recession. South Dakota's farmers and ranchers are familiar with adversity, and while today's agriculture economy technically isn't in a recession, technicalities don't matter. Times are really tough, and an already sluggish agriculture economy has been accentuated by the hurdles of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Farm and ranch families know I'm in their corner, no matter the circumstances. While the farm bill is one of the best chances to enact meaningful and long-term policy changes, it only comes around every five years, at the earliest. Conditions in farm country can change on a dime, though, which means we don't have the luxury of sitting around and waiting for the next farm bill to come around. I'm always learning from and listening to South Dakota's agriculture community and acting when necessary.

In 2019, many producers throughout the Great Plains, including South Dakota, weren't able to plant their fields due to extreme weather events. Given the reality of a late planting season, many producers turned to cover crops on their prevented plant acres, of which there were nearly 4 million acres in South Dakota alone. While it's a good option for producers, a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Risk Management Agency rule prohibited haying or grazing prevented plant acres prior to November 1 each year without a reduction in producers' prevented plant payments.

Anyone who's spent a fall or winter in South Dakota knows that by the time November rolls around, we've likely already encountered frost or snow – not exactly the kind of weather that's conducive to growing crops outdoors. Having a single date for every corner of the country just doesn't make sense. I've repeatedly delivered that message to USDA, and after working with them for several months last year, they moved up the haying and grazing date to September 1, which is far more manageable for our producers.

USDA's administrative change only applied to 2019, but if the arbitrary, late-in-season date didn't make sense last year, why does it make sense this year or any year going forward? On March 12, 2020, I introduced the Cover Crop Flexibility Act of 2020 to provide a permanent and common-sense solution to this problem. My bill would eliminate the arbitrary November 1 date restriction and allow producers to hay or graze cover crops on prevented plant acres outside of the primary nesting season, which ends August 1 each year in South Dakota.

Until Congress is able to act on my legislation, I asked USDA to simply extend the change they made in 2019 through the 2020 planting season. While we ran into a bit of resistance at first, we kept pressure on USDA leadership, who ultimately relented.

On August 17, USDA announced it would allow producers with excess moisture and flooding to hay, graze, or chop cover crops on prevented plant acres beginning September 1 in Beadle, Brown, Brule, Campbell, Clark, Codington, Day, Edmunds, Faulk, Hand, Hanson, Hyde, McPherson, Marshall, Potter, Roberts, Sanborn, Spink, and Walworth counties.

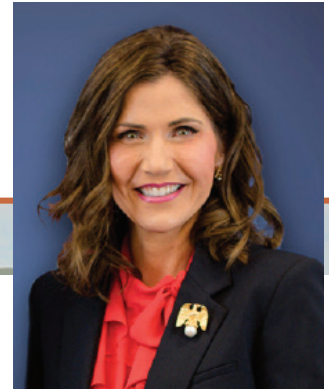
I'm glad producers were ultimately given a reprieve this year, but the fact that USDA has made this change two years in a row highlights the importance of passing my Cover Crop Flexibility Act. Common-sense should prevail on this issue, and I can assure South Dakota producers that I'll be pushing for its passage to avoid similar obstacles next year and beyond.

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SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR
KRISTI NOEM



By the Numbers: South Dakota's COVID-19 Response

We're coming up on six months since South Dakota started our fight against COVID-19. I've worked hard to provide South Dakotans with the best information possible to make the best decisions for themselves, their loved ones, and – in turn – their communities. And that's something that I couldn't do alone; it's been a team effort since day one.

Nearly every state government agency has been involved in our efforts, but our Department of Health has been particularly stellar in the work that they've done. I also need to thank our three major healthcare systems: Avera, Monument, and Sanford. They've gone above and beyond and collaborated in ways I've never seen before, and the state is far better off for their efforts.

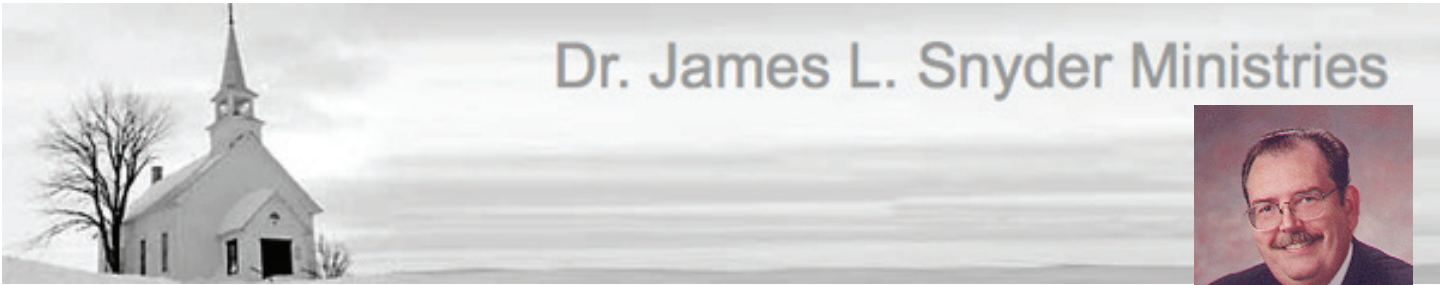
I'm proud of the work we've done together, and I wanted to share with you some stats that demonstrate what we've accomplished so far:

- We've identified over 10,000 cases of COVID-19 and notified over 30,000 close contacts.
- More than 120,000 people have tested negative for COVID-19.
- Our COVID-19 hotline has responded to over 36,000 calls. In addition, the Department of Health's call center has received over 9,000 calls.
- The COVID.sd.gov website has received almost 7.3 million unique visits since it was launched on January 27th.
- We've distributed over 500,000 N-95 respirators and over 1,000,000 surgical masks from the state stockpile to healthcare providers statewide.
- The Department of Health has hosted over 70 webinars for healthcare professionals, long-term care facilities, and laboratories.
- We've tested over 18,500 nursing home and assisted living center residents and staff, as well as almost 1,000 residents and staff of congregate living facilities as part of our mass-testing efforts.
- We've assisted all 9 tribes in the state in their mass testing efforts.
- The Department of Health and the Department of Education have hosted ten informational sessions for school superintendents and school nurses and have been hosting daily webinars for schools since August 10th.
- We've provided technical assistance to 195 businesses in the state.
- The Department of Health has conducted 55 hotspot calls with local communities.
- The Department of Health has conducted 152 focused infection control surveys of nursing homes and assisted living centers.
- My office and the Department of Health have hosted over 110 media briefings.

Our fight isn't over. We will continue to see cases in the months to come. We'll keep our focus on taking smart steps and exercising personal responsibility to protect the most vulnerable among us. As I've told you many times, together, we will get through this. Together, we're proving that we can.

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Oh, for a Life like My Kitty

The other night the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I were watching the news on TV. All it showed was riots, looting, and chaos, which has become the normal. When will they ever get back to broadcasting good news?

After a while, I heard a deep sigh on the other side of the room, and somebody say, "What's wrong with people?"

Being a veteran husband, I knew that was not a question I was supposed to respond to with a very logical answer. I knew the person asking that question was not looking for any response from me. I kept from looking in her direction.

Although I did not say it aloud, I did have to agree with her that we are living in some very crazy and chaotic times. Oh, if only I could go back and live in the 60s again with those hippies!

I just let that go, realizing that there is no way to answer such an inquiry. People will do what people will do. Many of those people are not good people.

Thinking about this, I remembered a little change that came into our house about a month ago.

Getting up one morning as I looked out the glass doors onto the back porch, I saw a little kitty looking at me. It could not have been more than a month old. I had no idea where this little kitty came from. I assumed it was just passing through, and the mama was somewhere around the corner.

As my wife came into the kitchen, I said, "Look at that little kitty on the porch. Isn't it cute?"

Even before she looked, she said very sternly, "Don't you dare feed that kitten."

I think the problem between husbands and wives is that husbands can hear, but have a hard time listening. I am sure I heard what she said, but it never registered in my brain. Of course, nothing really registers in my brain.

I began sneaking out little bits of treats for this little kitty, and to my surprise, it stayed around for a month so far.

After getting up in the morning, I would go to the glass door, look out, and sitting in front of the door looking at me was the kitty. It would look at me, then turn and look at the food dish, which was empty at the time, and then look back at me and meow.

I have as many problems with a little kitty's meow as I do with a Girl Scout's brown eyes when they are selling cookies.

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Trying to do it with as much sleuthfulness as possible to keep my little secret from my wife, I fed the little kitty every morning and evening. Sherlock Holmes, I am not, but somebody in our residence comes very close to that.

Of course, my little secret was discovered.

One afternoon I went out to sit on the porch with the kitty two have a conversation.

The kitty lay down, facing me, and I began our little conversation.

“What do you think all of this nonsense and chaos and looting that’s going on in the world today?

The little kitty yawned a big yawn and stretched like it was getting ready to go to sleep. It acted as if it had no idea what I was talking about. It was very calm, cool, and collected and seemed to be enjoying resting on the back porch.

“What do you think about all this mask-wearing people are doing today? Do you understand what that’s all about?”

Nonchalantly, the kitty laid his head down on its paws and closed its eyes as though it was no concern.

I had more questions I asked the little kitty and got the same answers.

Then, the little kitty stood up, looked at me, looked over at the food dish, looked back at me, and softly meowed.

Although the kitty was not too interested in my questions, it was interested in her question, “When are you going to put food in my dish?”

I got some food, put it in the dish, and watched as the little kitty ate. Watching her, I could not help but be just a wee bit jealous. This little kitty had no idea what was going on in the world and could live on my back porch as though nothing in the world was wrong.

All that concerned this kitty was having her dish filled with food.

That little kitty’s world is one of peace, serenity, and “kitty food.” Nothing else had her attention for the least bit of time.

I have tried talking to this kitty about the latest news that was happening in the world and how nervous everybody was and how much fear there was, and it never influenced her one bit.

After all, no matter how bad the world was out there, this little kitty could not fix the problems. The only problem this kitty could fix was conning me into giving her food every morning and evening.

Sitting there, watching the kitty, I thought of a verse of Scripture. “Put them in fear, O Lord: that the nations may know themselves to be but men” (Psalm 9:20).

That kitty knows that it is a “kitty.” Today’s problem is that people do not realize they are “but men” and do not have the solution for the world’s problems.

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#181 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Same old, same old. 46,300 new cases, 0.8% increase, bringing us to 5,679,700 total cases. Hospitalization levels are finally dropping in southern California; Los Angeles is now at the lowest level since April when things were pretty darned good in the state. It should be noted their transmission rate is still too high, so they're not out of the woods yet. Still, statewide, their positivity rate is down in the 6% range, nearing that goal of 5% or below; and the reduced hospitalization number is a good step if everyone can hold things together a while longer. Another previously hard-hit state, New Jersey, reports its lowest hospitalization numbers since late March; New York is at its lowest rate since mid-March. And Mississippi's hospitalization number dropped below 1000 yesterday for the first time in two months; that's about 25% below their peak. They also have a way to go, but seem to be moving in the right direction.

Seven-day average new cases have risen in North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois. South Dakota and Wyoming show the largest increases, South Dakota by 58% and Wyoming by 50%. Much of the rest of the country is making at least modest progress, and we are, nationwide, considerably down since the peak late last month with seven-day average new cases nearly 9000 lower today.

There were 994 new deaths today, 0.6% increase, bringing us to 176,229 total deaths. The seven-day average of deaths dropped below 1000 for the first time since late July.

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington, one of the pre-eminent modelers for this pandemic, released a new projection yesterday, and you really do not want to look at it. They're projecting daily death numbers will decrease throughout next month and then climb back up, likely to almost 2000 per day by early December—and they warn that, "depending on what our leaders do," it could be worse—a lot worse, maybe as many as 6000 per day. They're projecting 310,000 deaths by December, which wouldn't take much of an uptick from current numbers to achieve.

This pandemic seems to be having another kind of victim—rural hospitals, which weren't in such hot shape even before there was a Covid-19. Eighteen rural hospitals closed last year, and more than 170 have closed in the last 15 years. Here's what we know about those closures: They result in higher mortality in their populations served, and it doesn't take long for the effect to show up. Death rates go up around 6% in the communities surrounding a newly-closed rural hospital. Let add to that the pandemic. These populations served by rural hospitals include higher proportions of people with obesity, diabetes, hypertension, asthma, and other underlying health issues. Let's also consider that rural residents run older, sicker, and poorer than those in urban areas, all of these characteristics also risk-factors for Covid-19, and you have a troubling picture.

Maggie Elehwany, vice president of government affairs with the national Rural Health Association mentions that hundreds of rural hospitals were already "just trying to keep the doors open." And when the pandemic struck, they lost around 70% of their income as patients numbers plummeted for emergency room visits, doctor's appointments, and elective procedures; those are the things that pay the bills. Some hospitals borrowed ahead from Medicare, but the patients are still avoiding routine care, so there's no income to use in repaying those loans, which come due soon. There are 1300 small critical-access hospitals in rural areas, and 859 of them took those loans. I'm going to guess many of them are in pretty bad shape at the moment. Some of them may yet get a surge in coronavirus cases, and if so, that will likely put them out of business, taking jobs, community income, and community health with them. Once again, this pandemic isn't only causing new problems, it is revealing long-standing ones, ones we've been ignoring for too long.

Just a month ago, I mentioned here a large-scale experiment planned for Germany, a research concert, designed to study transmission at large events. I described it thus: "Attendees will wear contact-tracing devices and use fluorescent hand sanitizer that is visible under ultraviolet light so researchers can track who is how close to whom and which surfaces are most touched. There will actually be three different concerts over the course of the day. For one, things will be done just as they have in the past before the pandemic; in another, they will enter through eight entrances instead of two, and every other seat will be blocked off; and in yet another, there will strict social distancing and a 2000-person limit. The purpose is

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to learn more about how transmission occurs at these events and to determine how large gatherings can be safely resumed."

Well, today was the day, and the concert is now history. Professor Michael Gekle, the dean of The University of Halle's medical faculty and a professor of physiology, said the experiment was conducted to prepare authorities to more safely conduct events in the future. He told CNN, "There is no zero risk if you want to have life. We want to give the politicians a tool in order to decide rationally whether to allow such an event or not. That means they will have to have the tool to predict how any additional infected people such an event will produce."

The experiment was conducted in a region of Germany where there is a very low prevalence of the virus to minimize risks to participants. All of the volunteers were tested 48 hours prior to participation and wore masks throughout. Despite the precautions, the researchers did not get as many volunteers as they'd initially planned; it appears people were nervous about participating in such a large group. Nonetheless, there were some 1500, the researchers say the experiment went well, and they had enough people involved to collect solid data. Stefan Moritz, who led the study, said, "We were satisfied with the numbers. We have good data quality." They will do mathematical modeling and evaluate the various interventions applied. Results are expected in four to six weeks with full conclusions ready by the end of the year.

We've talked about gatherings and family events several times over the past several months. I have an unhappy example for you, a wedding in Maine. There were only 65 in attendance at the event, a small wedding by most standards these days, yet it apparently was not small enough. Two weeks to the day after the happy couple walked down the aisle, one of their guests had died, and 365 individuals, attendees and their contacts, have been tested. There are 32 positives (26 confirmed and 6 probables) so far, ranging in age from 4 to 78, including seven children; officials are still awaiting results on 103 of them.

Callie Evans and Audri Williams are teachers and cheerleading coaches at Monroe Comprehensive High School in Albany, Georgia, and they started the school year teaching remotely due to the coronavirus. They were concerned their students were feeling a lot of uncertainty about the unfamiliar experience, so they found a way to connect with them right from the start: They got together with the cheer squad (in masks) and made a remix of Jack Harlow's hit song, "What's Poppin'?" about the start of school, then posted it on Instagram for students. I recommend finding it and watching; it's great fun, and at least in this old white lady's fairly ignorant opinion, these teachers have some pretty solid skills as rappers.

The Instagram post said, "We are in for a wild ride this school year, but let's make the best of it! What better way to release all of the anxiety, doubts & fears of the school year than to dance & turn up What's poppin' 20-21 School Year, Let's get it!" Evans explained, "We just wanted to kind of motivate them and engage them and make sure they were excited about what was to come, even though it was unknown." She added, "Because Albany was impacted dramatically by COVID-19, we wanted to basically just motivate not just our students, our teachers, but our community. We wanted to show them how important it is to overcome adversity, to push through no matter what."

I'd say mission accomplished; the students are pretty fired up for the year. The teachers are pleased with that result. Williams: "So I was just happy because that was our icebreaker. . . . We wanted to do something that would motivate the kids as well as the teachers." And as further evidence that sometimes the good guys really do win, the original artist, Harlow, saw the video and was in touch with them to tell them how impressed he was with their work, presenting them each with a \$1000 gift card for their efforts. Given what teachers get paid, this is a nice little bonus for a couple of teachers who are clearly willing to go above and beyond expectations.

Be well. I'll be back tomorrow.

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COVID CASES OVER THE WEEKS WORLDWIDE

3 Weeks Ago

2 Weeks Ago

Last Week

This Week

Total Confirmed	Global Cases	Global Cases	Global Cases
17,859,763	19,668,394	21,367,163	23,235,028
4,620,502 US	4,998,802 US	5,357,396 US	5,668,564 US
2,707,877 Brazil	3,012,412 Brazil	3,317,096 Brazil	3,582,362 Brazil
1,750,723 India	2,153,010 India	2,526,192 India	3,044,940 India
849,277 Russia	885,718 Russia	915,808 Russia	954,328 Russia
503,290 South Africa	553,188 South Africa	583,653 South Africa	607,045 South Africa
434,193 Mexico	475,902 Mexico	516,296 Peru	576,067 Peru
407,492 Peru	471,012 Peru	511,369 Mexico	556,216 Mexico
357,658 Chile	376,870 Colombia	445,111 Colombia	533,103 Colombia
306,752 Iran	371,023 Chile	383,902 Chile	395,708 Chile
306,181 Colombia	326,712 Iran	342,813 Spain	386,054 Spain
Global Deaths	Global Deaths	Global Deaths	Global Deaths
685,179	727,523	768,952	805,176
154,449 deaths US	162,430 deaths US	169,432 deaths US	176,371 deaths US
93,563 deaths Brazil	100,477 deaths Brazil	107,232 deaths Brazil	114,250 deaths Brazil
47,472 deaths Mexico	52,006 deaths Mexico	55,908 deaths Mexico	60,254 deaths Mexico
46,278 deaths United Kingdom	46,651 deaths United Kingdom	49,036 deaths India	56,706 deaths India
37,364 deaths India	43,379 deaths India	46,791 deaths United Kingdom	41,509 deaths United Kingdom
35,146 deaths Italy	35,203 deaths Italy	35,392 deaths Italy	35,430 deaths Italy

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Aug. 12	Aug. 13	Aug. 14	Aug. 15	Aug. 16	Aug. 17	Aug. 18
Minnesota	61,839	62,303	62,993	63,723	64,413	65,152	65,716
Nebraska	29,030	29,244	29,660	29,988	30,241	30,372	30,563
Montana	5,104	5,268	5,407	5,541	5,659	5,750	5,792
Colorado	51,441	51,756	52,219	52,538	52,838	53,176	53,370
Wyoming	2,584	2,600	2,627	2,694	2,730	2,789	2,829
North Dakota	7885	7970	8171	8322	8444	8587	8647
South Dakota	9713	9815	9897	10,024	10,118	10,274	10,360
United States	5,141,879	5,197,749	5,248,172	5,314,116	5,357,396	5,403,218	5,444,115
US Deaths	164,545	166,038	167,092	168,458	169,432	170,052	170,559
Minnesota	+323	+464	+690	+730	+690	+739	+564
Nebraska	+334	+214	+416	+328	+253	+131	+191
Montana	+87	+164	+139	+134	+118	+91	+42
Colorado	+402	+315	+463	+319	+300	+338	+194
Wyoming	+19	+16	+27	+67	+36	+59	+40
North Dakota	+172	+85	+201	+151	+122	+143	+60
South Dakota	50	+102	+82	+127	+94	+156	+86
United States	+47,314	+55,870	+50,423	+65,944	+43,280	45,822	+40,897
US Deaths	+1,080	+1,493	+1,054	+1,366	+974	+620	+507
	Aug. 19	Aug. 20	Aug. 21	Aug. 22	Aug. 23		
Minnesota	66,061	66,618	67,308	68,133	68,867		
Nebraska	30,825	31,040	31,348	31,626	31,780		
Montana	5,846	5,956	6,072	6,216	6,376		
Colorado	53,631	53,901	54,230	54,586	54,883		
Wyoming	2,850	2,909	2,940	3009	3009		
North Dakota	8782	8968	9242	9504	9736		
South Dakota	10,443	10,566	10,691	10,884	11,135		
United States	5,482,823	5,530,247	5,576,089	5,628,070	5,668,564		
US Deaths	171,833	173,193	174,290	175,467	176,371		
Minnesota	+345	+557	+690	+825	+734		
Nebraska	+262	+215	+308	+278	+154		
Montana	+54	+110	+116	+144	+160		
Colorado	+261	+270	+329	+356	+297		
Wyoming	+21	+59	+31	+69	----		
North Dakota	+135	+186	+274	+262	+232		
South Dakota	+83	+123	+125	+193	+251		
United States	+38,708	+47,424	+45,842	+51,981	+40,494		
US Deaths	+1,274	+1,360	+1,097	+1,177	+904		

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August 22nd COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

A woman in her 70s from Hutchinson County is the latest person to die from the COVID-19 virus. It is the first death in that county. North Dakota had three more deaths.

Meanwhile the positivity rate in Brown County has dropped to 4.8 percent. South Dakota's edged up to 9.4 percent and North Dakota edged up to 12.9 percent. Harding County was put back on the fully recovered list while Jerauld and Jones counties dropped off. The two largest counties in the state, Minnehaha and Pennington, make up 36 percent of today's cases. The remaining 74 percent is spread over 40 counties reporting positive cases.

Locally, Edmunds County had three positive and one recovered case and now have seven active cases. Brown County had 16 positive and five recovered with 82 active cases. Marshall County had one recovered so they have four active cases. McPherson County had one positive case and now have three active ones. Spink County doubled its active numbers with five new cases and now 10 active ones. Sixteen more were admitted to the hospital, but the hospital bed capacity barely changed, if at all, for those using COVID-19 patients.

Just remember, you can take any set of numbers and skew it any way you want. Just pay attention to the numbers of your own county. Smokey Bear once said, "Only you can prevent forest fires." I would say that only you can protect yourself. Examine your surroundings and ask if you need to be there or want to be there. Be smart and protective.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +16 (537) Positivity Rate: 4.8%
Recovered: +5 (452)
Active Cases: +11 (82)
Total Tests: +336 (6528)
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (23)
Deaths: 0 (3)
Percent Recovered: 84.1% (-1.1)

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report
COVID-19 Daily Report, August 22:

- 6,876 tests (2,026)
- 9,736 positives (+262)
- 7,698 recovered (+127)
- 135 deaths (+3)
- 1,633 active cases (+132)

South Dakota:

Positive: +251 (11,135 total) Positivity Rates: 9.4%
Total Tests: 2667 (175,126 total)
Hospitalized: +3 (951 total). 66 currently hospitalized (up 16 from yesterday)
Deaths: +1 (160 total)
Recovered: +86 (9,435 total)
Active Cases: +164 (1,540)

Percent Recovered: 84.7 -1.1

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 3% Covid, 52%
Non-Covid, 46% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 3% Covid, 68% Non-Covid,
29% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 12% Non-Covid,
83% Available

Fully recovered from positive cases (Gained Harding, lost Jerauld, Jones): Bennett 6-6, Harding 2-2, Jackson 12-11-1, Hyde 3-3, Mellette 24-24, Miner 15-15, Perkins 4-4, Tripp 20-20.

The following is the breakdown by all counties. The number in parenthesis right after the county name represents the number of deaths in that county.

Aurora: +1 positive (2 active case)
Beadle (9): +7 positive, +1 recovered (27 active cases)
Bennett: Full Recovered
Bon Homme: +2 positive, 1 recovered (23 active cases)
Brookings (1): +5 positive, +3 recovered (27 ac-

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tive cases)

Brown (3): +16 positive, +5 recovered (82 active cases)

Brule: +2 positive (5 active cases)

Buffalo (3): 5 active cases

Butte (1): +2 positive (9 active cases)

Campbell: 1 active case

Charles Mix: +1 positive, +1 recovered (18 active cases)

Clark: 2 active cases

Clay (1): +10 positive, +2 recovered (25 active cases)

Codington (1): +12 positive, +6 recovered (66 active cases)

Corson: +1 recovered (21 active cases)

Custer: +10 positive, +1 recovered (37 active case)

Davison (2): +2 positive (8 active cases)

Day: 6 active cases

Deuel: +1 positive, +2 recovered (9 active cases)

Dewey: +2 positive (28 active cases)

Douglas: 4 active cases

Edmunds: +3 positive, +1 recovered (7 active cases)

Fall River: +1 recovered (2 active cases)

Faulk (1): +1 recovered (1 active case)

Grant: +1 positive, +1 recovered (9 active cases)

Gregory: 1 active case

Haakon: 1 active case

Hamlin: +4 positive, +1 recovered (18 active cases)

Hand: +1 positive (3 active cases)

Hanson: +1 positive, +1 recovered (3 active cases)

Harding: +1 recovered (FULLY RECOVERED)

Hughes (3): +3 positive, +2 recovered (15 active cases)

Hutchinson (1): +1 death, (6 active cases)

Hyde: 1 active case

Jackson (1): Fully Recovered

Jerauld (1): +1 positive (1 active case)

Jones: +1 positive (1 active case)

Kingsbury: 3 active cases

Lake (6): +2 positive, +1 recovered (5 active cases)

Lawrence (1): +10 positive, +3 recovered (35 active cases)

Lincoln (2): +13 positive, +9 recovered (119 active cases)

Lyman (3): +1 positive (7 active cases)

Marshall: +1 recovered (4 active cases)

McCook (1): +2 positive, +2 recovered (7 active cases)

McPherson: +1 positive (3 active cases)

Meade (1): +14 positive, +2 recovered (55 active cases)

Mellette: Fully Recovered

Miner: Fully Recovered

Minnehaha (69): +56 positive, +24 recovered (501 active cases)

Moody: +2 positive (6 active cases)

Oglala Lakota (2): +3 positive, +1 recovered (19 active cases)

Pennington (33): +34 positive, +9 recovered (151 active cases)

Perkins: 1 active cases

Potter: +1 positive (3 active cases)

Roberts (1): +1 positive (11 active cases)

Sanborn: Fully Recovered

Spink: +5 positive (10 active cases)

Stanley: 4 active cases

Sully: +1 positive (4 active cases)

Todd (5): 6 active cases

Tripp: Fully Recovered

Turner: +3 positive (16 active cases)

Union (4): +1 positive, +2 recovered (21 active cases)

Walworth: +3 positive (13 active cases)

Yankton (3): +9 positive, +5 recovered (46 active cases)

Ziebach: +6 positive (17 active cases)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	396	0
10-19 years	1006	0
20-29 years	2509	2
30-39 years	2169	6
40-49 years	1648	7
50-59 years	1624	18
60-69 years	983	29
70-79 years	430	26
80+ years	370	72

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	5542	82
Male	5593	78

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	41	39	406	0	Minimal
Beadle	612	576	1968	9	Moderate
Bennett	6	6	551	0	None
Bon Homme	38	16	883	0	Substantial
Brookings	174	146	2990	1	Moderate
Brown	537	452	4945	3	Substantial
Brule	50	45	787	0	Minimal
Buffalo	109	102	666	3	None
Butte	26	15	855	1	Minimal
Campbell	4	3	105	0	None
Charles Mix	115	97	1548	0	Substantial
Clark	17	15	420	0	Minimal
Clay	152	126	1503	1	Moderate
Codington	207	140	3119	1	Substantial
Corson	52	31	590	0	Substantial
Custer	74	37	849	0	Substantial
Davison	106	96	2537	2	Moderate
Day	30	24	686	0	Moderate
Deuel	28	19	443	0	Substantial
Dewey	64	36	2401	0	Substantial
Douglas	20	16	430	0	Minimal
Edmunds	25	18	440	0	Minimal
Fall River	23	21	1051	0	Minimal
Faulk	29	27	211	1	Minimal
Grant	39	30	771	0	Moderate
Gregory	8	7	419	0	Minimal
Haakon	3	2	304	0	None
Hamlin	40	22	706	0	Substantial
Hand	13	10	321	0	Moderate
Hanson	21	18	234	0	Minimal
Harding	2	2	59	0	Minimal
Hughes	105	89	1928	3	Moderate
Hutchinson	35	28	952	1	Minimal

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Hyde	4	3	149	0	Minimal
Jackson	12	11	489	1	Minimal
Jerauld	40	38	279	1	None
Jones	3	2	63	0	None
Kingsbury	17	14	602	0	Minimal
Lake	107	96	1007	6	Moderate
Lawrence	100	64	2277	1	Moderate
Lincoln	781	660	7535	2	Substantial
Lyman	93	83	1011	3	Minimal
Marshall	13	9	491	0	Minimal
McCook	39	31	687	1	Moderate
McPherson	10	7	232	0	None
Meade	152	96	2158	1	Moderate
Mellette	24	24	399	0	None
Miner	15	15	264	0	None
Minnehaha	4875	4304	29999	70	Substantial
Moody	36	30	684	0	Minimal
Oglala Lakota	163	142	3007	2	Minimal
Pennington	1028	844	11715	33	Moderate
Perkins	6	5	199	0	None
Potter	4	1	312	0	Minimal
Roberts	89	77	1958	1	Moderate
Sanborn	13	13	244	0	None
Spink	34	24	1236	0	Minimal
Stanley	20	16	283	0	Minimal
Sully	7	3	94	0	Minimal
Todd	76	67	2360	5	Moderate
Tripp	20	20	632	0	None
Turner	68	52	999	0	Moderate
Union	232	207	2101	4	Moderate
Walworth	30	17	830	0	None
Yankton	175	122	3381	3	Substantial
Ziebach	44	27	382	0	None
Unassigned	0	0	10358	0	

As COVID-19 cases rise, experts question effectiveness of contact tracing in S.D.

Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

Editor's note: This article was produced through a partnership between South Dakota News Watch and the Solutions Journalism Network, a national non-profit group that supports rigorous journalism about responses to problems.

Public health experts are questioning the extent and effectiveness of contact-tracing efforts in South Dakota and across the country, arguing that an inadequate number of investigators and lags in testing times have reduced the efficacy of the tracing process.

Contact tracing aims to reduce the spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19, by quickly identifying people who may have been exposed to the virus. Investigators question people who test positive for the virus and then try to determine who else they may have come in contact with. Those people are then warned to isolate, watch for symptoms and get tested if they feel sick.

The process is seen as a critical tool in the fight against COVID-19 and other diseases such as tuberculosis because it can break or slow the cycle of transmission from one person to another.

When combined with high rates of testing and social distancing, contact tracing has been shown to slow the spread of COVID-19 and speed up the ability of countries such as South Korea, Singapore and Germany to safely re-open their national economies.

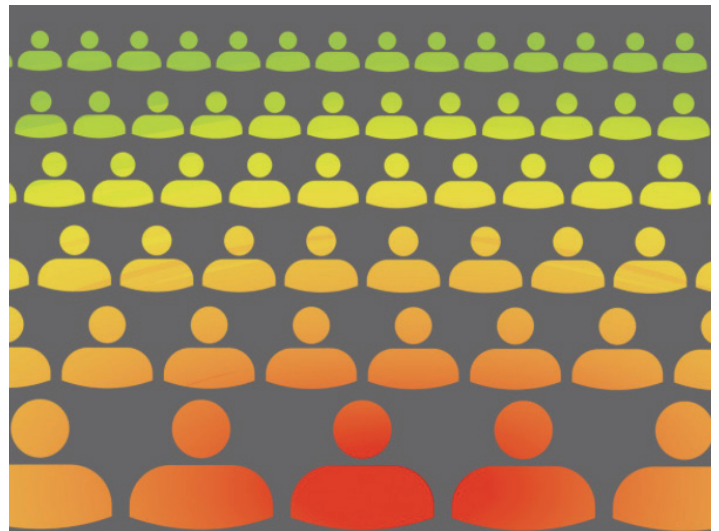
Investigating COVID-19 cases has taken on heightened importance in South Dakota in recent weeks as the state has seen a surge in its number of new cases. On Aug. 20, South Dakota reported 125 new cases of the disease and had the nation's second-highest rate of transmission, according to state and federal data.



Travis Porco

"[Contact tracing] is great because it can be a tool for protecting vulnerable people, we can find a lot of asymptomatic carriers and get them out of disease circulation. It's a big help, but it's not going to reduce the need, unfortunately, for masks and social distancing."

-- Travis Porco, University of California



The state also reported on Aug. 20 that at least two dozen COVID-19 cases were related to the Sturgis motorcycle rally, including two notices about the potential for significant public exposures, and school districts and colleges were already reporting cases among students just days into the new academic

year.

South Dakota Department of Health leaders say their contact-tracing efforts are keeping up with the increasing caseload. The state's goal is to make contact with everyone who tests positive for COVID-19 in South Dakota within 24 hours of the department being notified of the new case.

The 131 contact tracers now working for the health department are making initial contacts with known COVID-19 patients within about 15 hours on average, said Cassie Deffenbaugh, who leads the contact-tracing team. The state contact-tracing workforce has grown to five times its pre-pandemic size since March, and has been able to identify 35,000 close contacts of coronavirus patients during the pandemic so far. Deffenbaugh said she is confident that the state's contact tracers would be able to keep up with the virus.

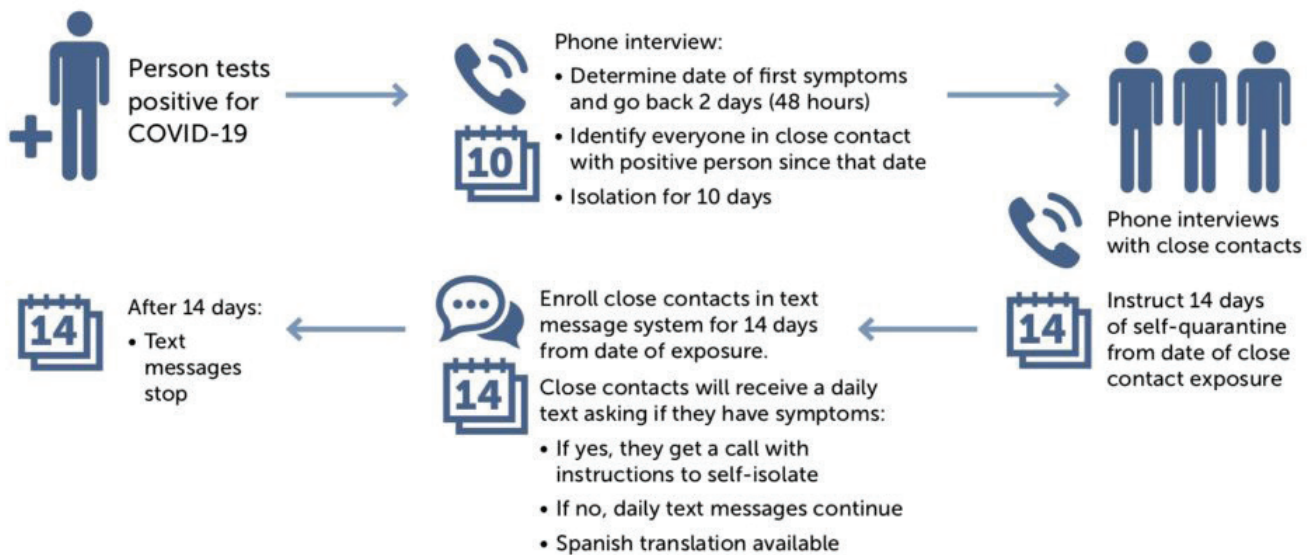
"We are adequately staffed to be able to support our current workload," Deffenbaugh said. "We are constantly assessing to make sure we are adequately staffed at this time and that we will be moving forward."

But some disease researchers say the contact-tracing workforce is not widespread enough in South Dakota to handle the rising number of cases. Without increased availability of COVID-19 testing and speedier test result reporting — along with extensive social-distancing and increased mask usage — experts worry that contact tracers likely will be overwhelmed and the benefits of the process will be muted.

"I don't think that we can afford, at this point, for contact investigation to stop the epidemic alone. It

COVID-19 CONTACT TRACING

WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOU'VE HAD CLOSE CONTACT WITH A POSITIVE CASE



DEFINITIONS

CONTACT TRACING: helps to find people exposed to a positive case of COVID-19 so they can be quarantined to stop further spread.

CLOSE CONTACT: six feet or less for more than fifteen minutes at a time

ISOLATION: separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.

SELF-QUARANTINE: separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.



ANSWER the CALL
to slow the spread of COVID-19

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would have to be done at such a national scale with such speed and efficiency, that I don't think that's feasible," said Travis Porco, an ophthalmological biostatistician and disease transmission researcher at the University of California at San Francisco who has been studying contact tracing since the pandemic began. "We really just don't have a single magic bullet at this point, we need a little bit of everything to try to turn the tide."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention told Congress, in June, that the country needed a minimum of 100,000 contact tracers to adequately manage the COVID-19 pandemic.

But an Aug. 7 survey of state health departments conducted by Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and National Public Radio found that there were just 41,122 contact tracers actively working in the U.S. Adding 59,000 more contact tracers to the workforce would cost billions of dollars, CDC officials said.

The Johns Hopkins/NPR survey also found that just three states — Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont — had enough contact tracers on staff to adequately track their COVID-19 cases. Three additional states — Montana, Michigan and Hawaii — would have enough contract tracers if they would bring in reserve staff. The South Dakota health department did not participate in the survey.

A News Watch analysis of the Contact Tracing Workforce Estimator created by the Fitzhugh Mullan Institute for Health Workforce Equity at George Washington University shows the state would need 638 contact tracers in order to adequately cover the average number of new cases found between Aug. 4 and Aug. 18. Hiring several hundred more contact tracers could cost millions of dollars and could likely take months.

Contact tracing can be an essential public health tool for managing a pandemic, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Aggressively tracking down and identifying who, how and when people become infected with COVID-19 and then selectively quarantining people who have been in contact with or have been diagnosed with the virus can break chains of transmission. Breaking the chain of transmission can prevent widespread outbreaks, reducing both the number of deaths from the disease and its negative economic effects.

"Contact tracing is useful because it allows us to help people at direct risk of infection, rather than only being able to act in ways that help the whole community, which helps us use broad actions like shelter-in-place more sparingly, and also ensures that we can direct our time and attention to where they're needed most," said Eric Lofgren, an epidemiologist and assistant professor at Washington State University.

South Korea, for example, was once second only to China in the severity of its COVID-19 problem. But an aggressive, nationwide contact-tracing campaign, combined with high levels of testing, have helped contain outbreaks and keep the number of new cases under control. Since the beginning of July, the country of 50 million has seen an average of fewer than 60 new cases per day.



Testing for COVID-19 is taking place at several hospitals and clinics across South Dakota, including the Oyate Health Center in Rapid City.

Photo: Bart Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch

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In one well publicized incident, South Korea's investigators identified a popular nightclub in the country's capital, Seoul, as the source of a potential COVID-19 outbreak after someone at the nightclub tested positive for the virus. Contact tracers used surveillance cameras, credit card records and personal interviews to track transmission from the nightclub to a student, a taxi driver and someone who worked at a warehouse with 4,000 employees, all before they could spread the disease further. The outbreak was capped at 156 cases.

The South Korean economy, meanwhile, has remained largely open, though heavily impacted by declines in export trade due to the pandemic. South Koreans are still going to restaurants and bars and using air travel for vacations.

Contact tracing can also help identify people at the most risk from COVID-19 due to old age or a pre-existing health condition such as diabetes early so they can be monitored more closely and provided health care more quickly when needed. Contact tracing is also about the only way to find people who are carrying the virus but aren't displaying symptoms so they can be quarantined, Porco said. Any delay in testing people or in getting test results will reduce the value of contact tracing because infected people have more time to spread the illness to more people.

"What contact tracing gives you, if it's done well, is the chance to out run the epidemic a little bit," Porco said. "If you find a case fast enough. And you can find their contacts, you could intervene."

Investigating disease transmissions through contact tracing is not a new concept in South Dakota. It has been common practice in the public health field for decades as an effective tool for helping to control the spread of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis or measles and even sexually transmitted infections such as syphilis or HIV.

Prior to the pandemic, the SDDOH employed 21 contact tracers officially known as Disease Intervention Specialists. After the pandemic began, the health department spent an additional \$1.2 million on contact tracing and added 110 contact tracers, known as COVID Intervention Specialists. They are spread out among health department offices in Aberdeen, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls and Watertown. Increased funding for contact tracing came as part of federal pandemic relief efforts such as the CARES Act.

Every person who tests positive for SARS-COV-II, the virus that causes COVID-19, is supposed to be investigated by the state's contact-tracing team, Deffenbaugh said. The contact tracing process begins when DOH is notified that someone has tested positive for the virus. South Dakota state law requires healthcare providers to notify the state immediately when they suspect someone has a respiratory illness such as COVID-19.

The state's goal is to make contact with a person who has tested positive for the COVID-19 virus within 24 hours of the department being notified of the test. The initial contact includes some education on COVID-19 and what to expect from the disease as well as how to avoid spreading the disease to others.

Contact tracers can even help people find places to self isolate if quarantining in their home isn't feasible, Deffenbaugh said. So far, the health department has helped 48 people find a place to quarantine outside their home.

But the most important thing contact tracers do is identify a COVID-19 patient's close contacts, which includes anyone the patient had been within six feet for 15 minutes or more up to 48 hours before showing symptoms. The interview includes questions about the patient's workplace, social gatherings, activities and home life.

The idea is to collect as much contact information on a patient's close contacts as possible and then notify each close contact to alert them of the possible exposure. The patient's close contacts are then advised to self isolate, monitor themselves for symptoms and get tested for the disease if symptomatic.

"Ultimately, our goal is to do everything that we can to help them identify the people that may have been exposed," Deffenbaugh said. "People are very good at working with us and ultimately they care about the people that they may have exposed."

Once the investigation has been completed, each contact is supposed to be enrolled in a daily monitoring program so contact tracers can follow-up via text message or phone calls to ask about symptoms and

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provide resources for quarantining or isolating. Monitoring lasts until a person is deemed recovered from COVID-19 or fails to develop symptoms for up to 14 days after being exposed.

Sometimes a contact-tracing investigation reveals that someone spent time at a crowded event or a bar and can't provide information on everyone they came into close contact with, Deffenbaugh said. When that happens, the state issues an alert with the date, time and location of the potential exposure. Recent examples include notices issued on Aug. 18 and 20 after a person who spent time in a Sturgis saloon and a tattoo parlor worker tested positive for COVID-19. On Aug. 14, the state issued an alert after a person who attended a concert at the Sioux Empire Fairgrounds in Sioux Falls tested positive for the virus.

Contact tracing is an expensive, resource-intensive process. It requires many people making many contacts by phone and aggressively investigating every new COVID-19 case thoroughly and quickly. Testing for the virus must be conducted quickly and results from tests must be turned over to health departments in a timely fashion. Tests for the virus also need to be widely available to anyone, not just those displaying symptoms, Porco said.

"Contact investigation, if done well, is very intensive. It takes a lot of resources," Porco said.

For all of its importance, contact tracing has a number of shortfalls. For one thing, contact tracing in South Dakota relies on people to answer phone calls, often from strange numbers. In today's world of random robo-calls and phone scammers, that can be a big ask, Deffenbaugh said.

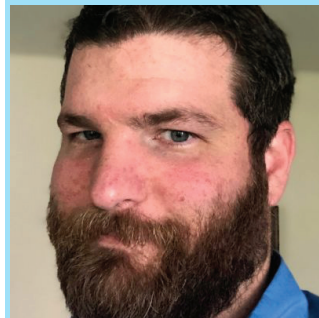
"We do have instances where we may not be able to get a hold of someone; that is one of the challenges we have," Deffenbaugh said. "Obviously there are a lot of unknowns, [but] as we're doing our case investigations, we are identifying those contacts."

Because contact tracing is such an expensive, time-consuming activity, public health agencies can struggle to scale up their efforts when disease transmission rates are high. Transmission rates and case numbers are high enough now, Porco said, that there is likely no way to bring enough new contact tracers online fast enough to slow the spread of the virus.

Some areas should consider another lock down, Porco said, and testing availability as well as the speed of testing need to be improved. The use of masks and social distancing could be improved, he said.

"[Contact tracing] is great because it can be a tool for protecting vulnerable people, we can find a lot of asymptomatic carriers and get them out of disease circulation," Porco said. "It's a big help. But it's not going to reduce the need, unfortunately, for masks and social distancing."

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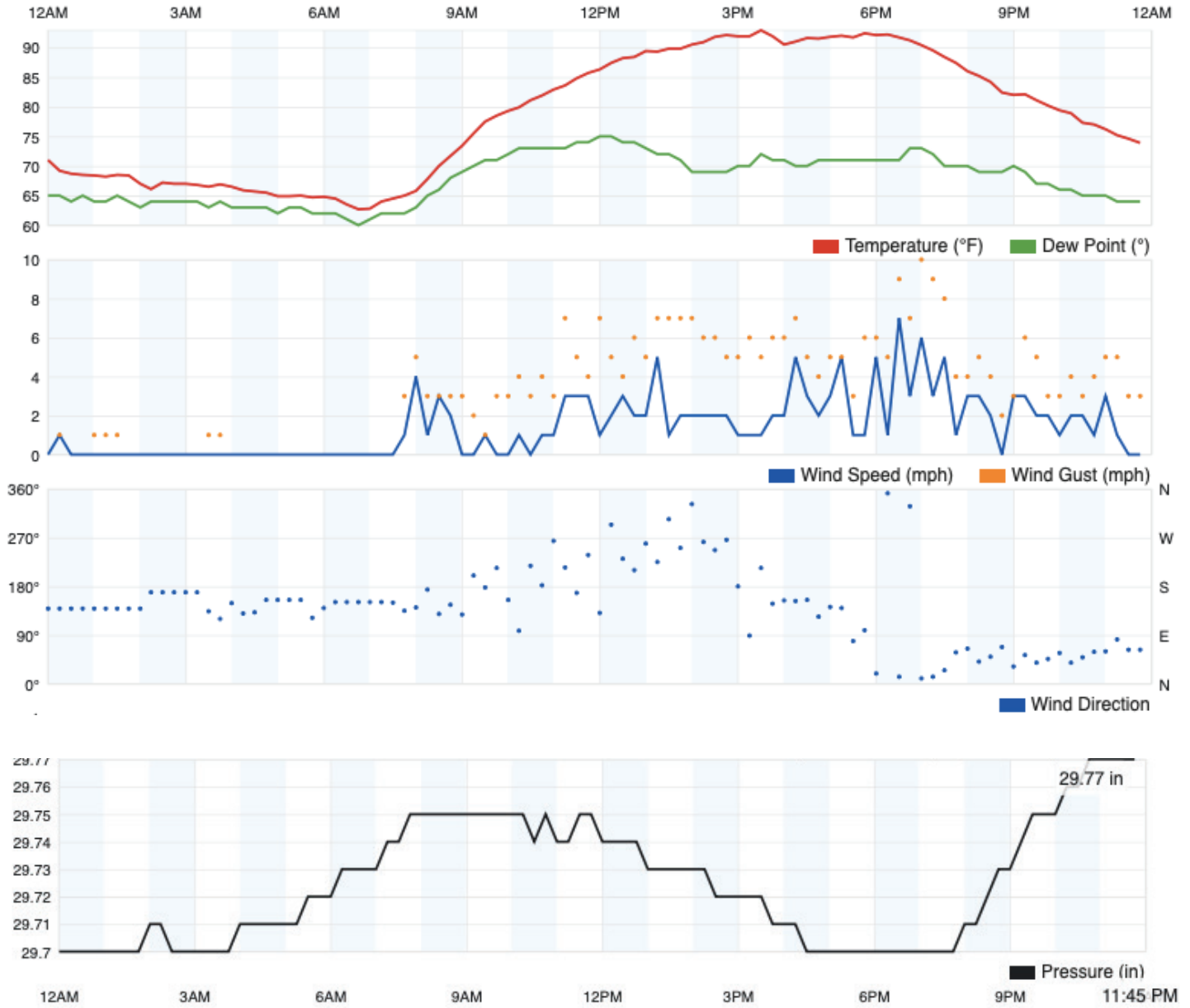
NICK LOWREY

Nick Lowrey, based in Pierre, S.D., is an investigative staff reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A South Dakotan for more than 20 years, he is a former editor of the Pierre Capital Journal.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Patchy Fog then Sunny	Slight Chance T-storms then Mostly Clear	Hot	Mostly Clear	Hot	Mostly Clear	Hot
High: 94 °F	Low: 65 °F	High: 92 °F	Low: 68 °F	High: 97 °F	Low: 68 °F	High: 91 °F

Today's Forecast

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
Aberdeen, SD weather.gov/abr f t

Late Afternoon This Evening



A Few Showers or Storms

Hot and Hazy. Highs in the 90s.
Isolated showers and thunderstorms, mainly over central and far northern South Dakota from late afternoon into the evening. A couple of storms could become strong or severe.

Hot and Hazy. Highs in the 90s. Most of the region will remain dry through Wednesday. Still, isolated showers and thunderstorms will be possible, mainly over central and far northern South Dakota from late this afternoon into the evening. If storms do develop, a couple of the storms could become strong or severe.

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Today in Weather History

August 23, 1960: Lightning and damaging winds caused damage to occur from Hand and Sanborn Counties to Marshall and Roberts Counties. A small airplane was destroyed, and the high winds broke windows in Miller. Also, roofs, TV antenna, utility lines, and trees were damaged in Kingsbury and Marshall Counties.

August 23, 1998: Winds gusting to 65 mph in and around Milbank, in Grant County, took the roof off a mobile home and wrapped it around a utility pole. The people inside the mobile home were uninjured. The Summit Dairy Barn had sustained significant damage. The high winds also blew a shed and a large tennis court fence down. Several trees along with many large tree branches were down all over town. Strong winds were also reported in Day and Roberts Counties. Winds of 60 mph also downed many tree branches north of Watertown.

1724: An event is known as the "Great Gust of 1724" occurred on this day. Almost all tobacco and much of the corn crops were destroyed by this violent tropical storm, which struck the Chesapeake Bay. Intense floods of rain and a huge gust of wind were seen on the James River. Some homes were wrecked, and several vessels were driven ashore. The storm was likely followed by a second hurricane just five days later causing rain for many straight days that caused the Virginia floods of 1724.

1933: A hurricane made landfall near Nags Head, North Carolina and tracked up the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake-Potomac hurricane moved over Norfolk, Virginia, and Washington, DC. A seven-foot tide flooded businesses in Norfolk, Virginia. Described in the American Meteorological Society's August 1933 weather review as "one of the most severe storms that have ever visited the Middle Atlantic Coast."

1992: While South Florida residents were preparing for Hurricane Andrew, folks in western Montana were dealing with early season snowfall. Some snowfall amounts include 8.3" in Great Falls, 6.2" in Helena, and 5.1" in Cut Bank. This snowfall is the first significant snowfall on record in western Montana in August.

2005: Hurricane Katrina formed from Tropical Depression Twelve over the southeastern Bahamas. Katrina would become the costliest (\$81.2 billion) and one of the most deadly hurricanes (1,836 lives) in U.S. history. 1906 - Thunderstorms deluged Kansas City, MO, with six inches of rain during the early morning, including nearly three inches in thirty minutes. (The Kansas City Weather Almanac)

1921 - Denver, CO, was drenched with 2.20 inches of rain in one hour, a record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1933 - The Chesapeake-Potomac hurricane moved over Norfolk VA and Washington D.C. A tide seven feet above normal flooded businesses in Norfolk, and damage in Maryland was estimated at seventeen million dollars. (David Ludlum)

1970 - Dry thunderstorms ignited more than one hundred fires in the Wenatchee and Okanogan National Forests of Washington State. Hot, dry, and windy weather spread the fires, a few of which burned out of control through the end of the month. More than 100,000 acres burned. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front brought autumn-like weather to the Northern and Central Plains Region. Afternoon highs were in the 50s and 60s across parts of Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska that just two days earlier were in the 90s or above 100 degrees. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rain in New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced hail an inch in diameter, wind gusts to 64 mph, and 2.62 inches of rain at Tucson AZ resulting in three million dollars damage. Cool weather prevailed in the northeastern U.S. Hartford CT reported a record low of 42 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced heavy rain with flash flooding in West Virginia. Pickens, WV, reported 4.80 inches of rain in 24 hours. Evening thunderstorms in Mississippi deluged Alta Woods with 4.25 inches of rain in less than an hour. Thunderstorms also produced heavy rain in southeastern Kentucky, and flooding was reported along Big Creek and along Stinking Creek. The Stinking Creek volunteer fire department reported water levels 12 to 14 feet above bankfull. Fort Worth TX hit the 100 degree mark for the first time all year. Strong winds ushering cool air into northwest Utah gusted to 70 mph, raising clouds of dust in the salt flats. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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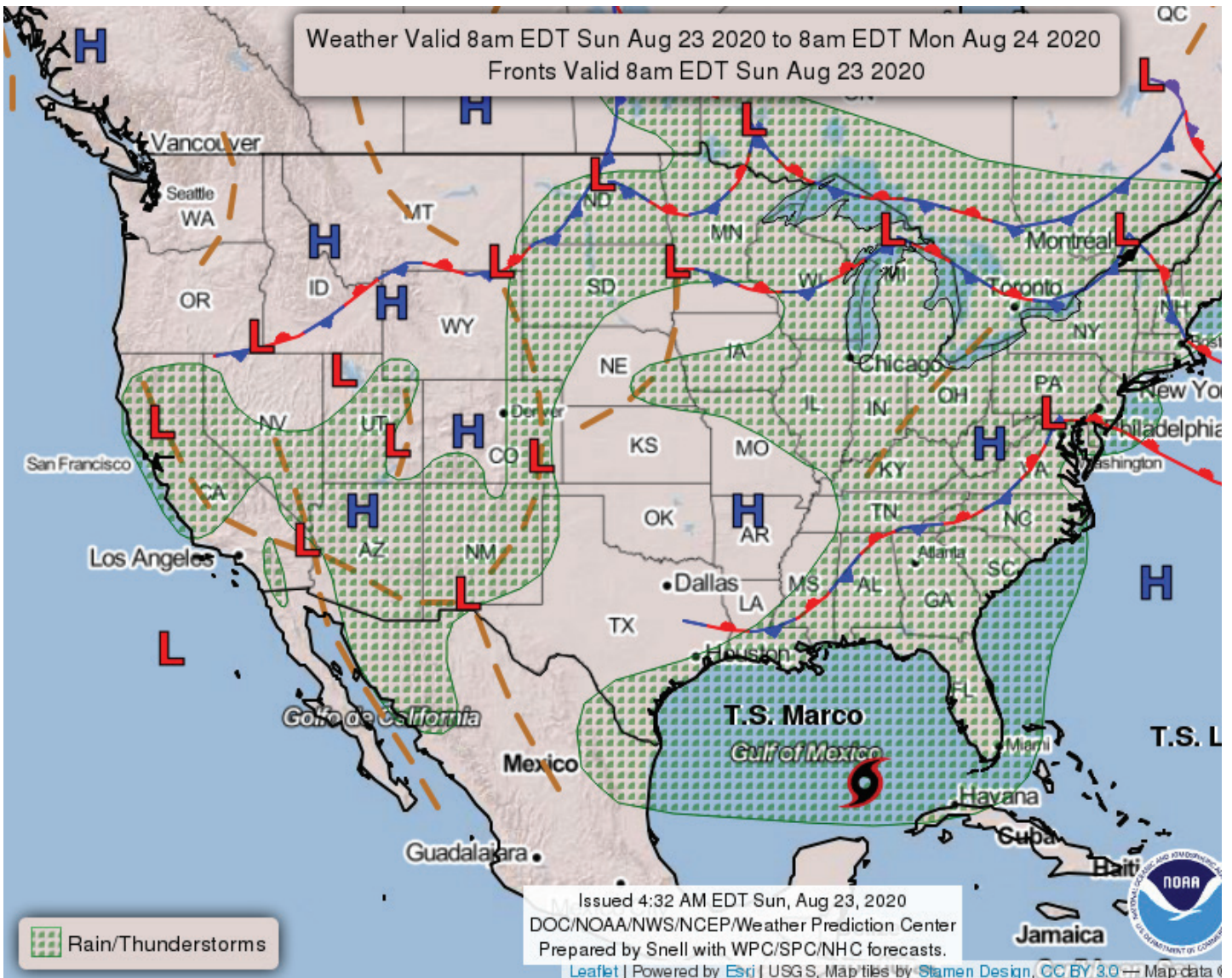
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 93 °F at 3:32 PM
Low Temp: 63 °F at 6:42 AM
Wind: 10 mph at 6:51 PM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 106° in 2003
Record Low: 39° in 1942, 1987
Average High: 81°F
Average Low: 55°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 1.72
Precip to date in Aug.: 1.24
Average Precip to date: 15.58
Precip Year to Date: 11.75
Sunset Tonight: 8:28 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:45 a.m.



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NO CUSHION FOR HIS CROSS

A missionary told the story of watching a man, dressed like Jesus, carrying a cross through crowded streets during Easter week. He was intrigued by the scene and got as close to the man as possible. He wanted to observe him more carefully so he could tell the story to others. When he finally was a few feet from him, he noticed that under his garment was a pillow that cushioned the weight of the cross so it would not hurt or cause him pain.

We must never forget the weight of the cross that Jesus carried on our behalf. Picture, if you can, the scene: the heat of the day, the blood streaming down His face from the crown of thorns, and stripes down His back from the horrible beatings He endured before the nails were driven through His hands and feet, crowds laughing and taunting, alone and abandoned by His trusted friends and followers.

Too often we look at an empty cross and forget the reality of the cross and what it cost Jesus and His Father. Our religion has become a religion of convenience - not of conviction.

We have glamorized the cross as an object of art and made it into a piece of jewelry that adorns the necks of people who do not know or want to know the story of the extreme cost of our redemption. To many it is simply an ornament - something worn but not born. Jesus said, "If you want to be my follower, then shoulder your cross and follow me closely." No pillow required.

Prayer: Help us, Father, through Your Spirit, to understand the cost and value of our salvation. May we accept our part of the cost by shouldering our cross with You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. Mark 8:34

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2020 Groton SD Community Events

- **CANCELLED** Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- **CANCELLED** Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
- **CANCELLED** Fireman's Fun Night (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- **POSTPONED** Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
- **CANCELLED** Father/Daughter dance.
- **CANCELLED** Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
- **CANCELLED** Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
- 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
- 09/12-13/2020 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In at the Groton Airport north of Groton
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
- 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/31/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
- 11/14/2020 Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
- 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

01-19-26-27-32

(one, nineteen, twenty-six, twenty-seven, thirty-two)

Estimated jackpot: \$126,000

Lotto America

01-33-45-48-49, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 4

(one, thirty-three, forty-five, forty-eight, forty-nine; Star Ball: five; ASB: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$2 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$57 million

Powerball

19-30-36-42-66, Powerball: 14, Power Play: 3

(nineteen, thirty, thirty-six, forty-two, sixty-six; Powerball: fourteen; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$29 million

Sioux Falls police investigating fatal stabbing

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police in Sioux Falls are investigating a fatal stabbing.

The Argus Leader reported police found a woman with a stab wound on the city's northwest side late Friday night. Police said in a news release Saturday that the woman has died, although the release didn't say when or if she was taken to a hospital.

Authorities haven't released her name or age pending notification of family. It's unclear if investigators have any suspects.

Her name and age haven't been released and it's unclear if investigators have any suspects.

South Dakota sets new COVID-19 case records

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota has recorded a record increase in daily COVID-19 cases.

The state Department of Health reported 251 confirmed cases on Saturday. The number of active cases climbed to 1,540, another record.

The Sioux Fall Argus Leader reported the previous record for daily confirmed cases was 249 set on May 9 and the previous record for active cases was 1,393 set May 11. That record was attributed to an outbreak at the Smithfield Foods plant in Sioux Falls. The state hasn't identified a specific reason for the current spike, although it comes as schools reopen and in the wake of the Sturgis motorcycle rally.

The state has now seen 11,135 confirmed cases since the pandemic began in March and 160 deaths.

Iran retrieves data, cockpit talk from downed Ukraine plane

By NASSER KARIMI Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran has retrieved some data, including a portion of the cockpit conversations, from the Ukrainian jetliner that was accidentally downed by the Revolutionary Guard forces in January, killing all 176 people on board, an Iranian official said Sunday.

That's according to a report on the website of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization, which described the official's remarks as part of the final report that Tehran plans to issue on the shutdown of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752.

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The development comes months after the Jan. 8 crash near Tehran. Iranian authorities had initially denied responsibility, only changing course days later, after Western nations presented extensive evidence that Iran had shot down the plane.

The shutdown happened the same night Iran launched a ballistic missile attack targeting U.S. soldiers in Iraq, its response to the American drone strike that killed Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad on Jan. 3.

At the time, Iranian troops were bracing for a U.S. counterstrike and appeared to have mistaken the plane for a missile. Iran, however, has not acknowledged that, only saying that after the missile attack, its air defense was sufficiently alert and had allowed previously scheduled air traffic to resume — a reference to the Ukrainian plane being allowed to take off from Tehran amid such an unprecedented crisis.

The Ukrainian passenger plane was apparently targeted by two missiles. The plane had just taken off from Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport when the first missile exploded, possibly damaging its radio equipment. The second missile likely directly struck the aircraft, as videos from that night show the plane exploding into a ball of fire before crashing into a playground and farmland on the outskirts of the Iranian capital.

For days after the crash, Iranian investigators combed the site, sifting through the debris of the plane.

The head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization, Capt. Touraj Dehghani Zangeneh, said on Sunday that the plane's black boxes have only 19 seconds of conversation following the first explosion, though the second missile reached the plane 25 seconds later. The report quoting him did not elaborate.

He said the first missile explosion sent shrapnel into the plane, likely disrupting the plane's recorders. He did not reveal any details of the cockpit conversation that was retrieved.

Representatives from the U.S., Ukraine, France, Canada, Britain and Sweden — countries whose citizens were killed in the crash — were present during the process to gather data from the recorders, Zangeneh said.

In the months since the downing of the plane, Iran has struggled with vast domestic economic problems and a major health crisis. It has the Middle East's largest and deadliest outbreak of the coronavirus, with more than 358,000 confirmed cases, including 20,643 deaths. The Iranian government is also grappling with both crushing U.S. sanctions, as well as the Trump administration's push to impose so-called "snapback" sanctions on Iran over what Washington says is Iran's violation of the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

Last month, an initial report from the Iranian investigation said that a misaligned missile battery, miscommunication between troops and their commanders and a decision to fire without authorization all led to the fatal downing of the jetliner.

That report said the surface-to-air missile battery that targeted the Boeing 737-800 had been relocated and was not properly reoriented. Those manning the missile battery could not communicate with their command center, they misidentified the civilian flight as a threat and opened fire twice without getting approval from ranking officials, it said.

Western intelligence officials and analysts believe Iran shot down the aircraft with a Russian-made Tor system, known to NATO as the SA-15. In 2007, Iran took the delivery of 29 Tor M1 units from Russia under a contract worth an estimated \$700 million. The system is mounted on a tracked vehicle and carries a radar and a pack of eight missiles.

The initial report did not say why the Guard moved the air defense system, though that area near the airport is believed to be home to both regular military and bases of the paramilitary force.

It also noted that the Ukrainian flight had done nothing out of the ordinary up until the missile launch, with its transponder and other data being broadcast. The aircraft's black boxes were brought to Paris in July, to France's BEA accident investigation agency, where they are being examined.

"Data recovery activity was all done with the aim of safety and preventing similar incidents," Zangeneh said, adding an appeal against "any political use of the process."

Later in the day, Iranian state TV quoted Zangeneh as saying the data showed the Ukrainian plane was on the right flight path. After 19 seconds of the first explosion, the communication system of the black boxes was cut, he said.

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Planes carry two different flight recorder devices, called black boxes — the flight data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder.

“All three crew in the cockpit were controlling the flight until the very last,” Zangeneh said. He added that Iran’s airspace is now “safe and ready” for international flights.

Associated Press writers Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and Elaine Ganley in Paris contributed to this report.

California ‘dream house,’ decades in the making, is in ashes

By ADAM BEAM and NOAH BERGER Associated Press

VACAVILLE, Calif. (AP) — When he closes his eyes at night, Hank Hanson hears sirens in his dreams -- a byproduct of living nearly 30 years in the wildfire-prone wilderness of Northern California between San Francisco and Sacramento.

But about 1 a.m. Wednesday, Hanson knew he wasn’t dreaming when he looked to the hills above his home.

The ridge line, where he and his wife in daylight tracked the sun’s shifting seasonal paths, was lit up as if someone had strung lights across it and plugged it in.

“It started pouring toward us like a waterfall,” Hanson, 81, said.

The fire was one of the more than 500 wildfires ignited across California this week from what state firefighting officials are calling a “lightning siege” — summer thunderstorms that produce little or no rain but have prompted nearly 12,000 lightning strikes across sun-scorched terrain.

More than 13,700 firefighters are battling the blazes, the most severe of which are focused in Northern California west of the state capital in Sacramento and east of the San Francisco Bay.

The extraordinary reach of the flames has pushed firefighting resources to the point “we have not seen in recent history,” said Shana Jones, chief of the Sonoma-Lake-Napa unit of the state Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

With firefighting crews stretched thin, there was no evacuation warning for Hanson and his neighbors.

Luckily, Hanson was awake because his electricity was out and the stifling 95-degree (35C) temperature prevented him from sleeping.

He quickly woke up his wife, and the two raced in their diesel truck down the road. The air rang with car horns as people desperately tried to wake up their neighbors.

Hanson and his wife made it to a hotel room in the nearby community of Fairfield, grateful they were alive. They found out later that their house was destroyed by the fire.

The house was really two houses. The first was a small redwood home originally built in Vacaville in the 1930s but later moved to the property. Hanson, who owned a business that made patio enclosures, bought the property in 1974. He spent weekends there for the next 17 years, planting walnut, peach, fig and eucalyptus trees.

In 1991, he completed a 3,000 square-foot (279-square-meter) addition to that house. It had a wine cellar, indoor and outdoor pools plus three fireplaces.

The fires this week have grown quickly and, collectively, have destroyed nearly 700 homes and other structures across the state.

Most of the homes that were leveled were burned by the fire that took Hanson’s home, the so-called LNU Lightning Complex fire. It’s the second-largest wildfire in state history and has burned more than 490 square miles (1,270 square kilometers).

Hanson said he is treating the fire as “an adventure” and talks excitedly when describing his harrowing escape. But his voice catches when he talks about the house, especially when he says he won’t rebuild.

“I worked on it for 30 years. It was pretty nice,” he said. “I wouldn’t want to do it on a lesser scale, and I don’t got time to top the old one.”

Hanson said he plans to turn the lot into a park and a campground for himself and his friends for the

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next few years.

But first, he had some shopping to do. His tomatoes, surprisingly, did not burn. He bought some hoses and plans to return to the ranch in an attempt to water them, assuming the deer haven't eaten them first. "They escaped the whole deal," he said. "About the only thing I have left in the world is tomatoes."

Beam reported from Sacramento, California.

Trump delivered on some big 2016 promises, but others unmet

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — He's broken his pledge never to take a vacation or play golf for pleasure. His plan to update the nation's infrastructure has become a running punchline and he's dropped his threat to throw Army deserter Bowe Bergdahl out of a plane without a parachute. But behind the drama, chaos and tumult that has defined President Donald Trump's administration, the president has fulfilled a wide range of promises he made during his 2016 campaign.

It's a theme that will play a major role in the upcoming Republican National Convention, as the president tries to convince a weary nation that he deserves a second term, even when millions of Americans have been infected by the coronavirus, the economy is in tatters and racial tensions are boiling over.

"I'm the only candidate that gave you more than I promised in the campaign. It's true. I'm the only one ever, maybe ever," Trump said at a rally in battleground Arizona last week.

Back in 2016, Trump was criticized for failing to release detailed policy plans akin to those of his rival, Hillary Clinton. What Trump did do was lay out a vision for a new America — one driven by a nationalist self-interest and disregard for Democratic norms.

In the years since, Trump has acted on that vision, making good on his nativist immigration rhetoric, tearing back regulations on business and transforming America's role in the world by abandoning multi-lateral agreements and upending decades-old alliances, cheered on by many of his most loyal supporters and generating great alarm among his critics.

But will that matter when more than 175,000 Americans have died and more than 5.5 million have been infected by a virus that has hit the U.S. far harder than other industrialized nations?

"I think the golden egg of Trump's reelection effort is going to be the promises kept, such as getting two Supreme Court justices in power and keeping America out of foreign wars like Afghanistan and Iraq," said Douglas Brinkley, presidential historian at Rice University. "The problem he has is that his COVID response wasn't on the ballot in 2016 and he's gotten poor marks on how he's handled the pandemic. So that's put a wrinkle in his promises kept talking points."

Arguably Trump's biggest impact has been on immigration.

While Mexico never did pay for the "big, beautiful wall" Trump pledged to build along the 2,000-mile southern border — the signature promise of his 2016 campaign — the project is now underway, with 450 miles expected to be completed by the end of December. (Only a sliver of that, however, has been built along stretches where no barrier stood before.) And Trump has succeeded in fundamentally transforming the nation's immigration system, despite resistance from the courts and little cooperation from Congress.

Using more than 400 executive actions, according to a recent analysis by the nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute, Trump has effectively shut down the asylum system at the southwest border and slashed refugee admissions. At the same time, Trump has imposed a slew of new restrictions on legal immigration, with the pandemic spurring many more. With so few visas being processed and immigration fees collected, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has all but run out of money and is about to furlough large swaths of its workforce.

Some specific promises on immigration went unfulfilled: Trump failed to create a new "deportation force," never met his pledge to deport millions, didn't end funding for sanctuary cities that don't cooperate with immigration authorities and didn't move to end the constitutional right to birthright citizenship. But he did clamp down on "catch and release" of immigrants in the country illegally, enhance background screening

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of migrants and move to suspend immigration from a host of majority-Muslim nations — an evolution of the Muslim ban he floated during his campaign.

"They have used the tools that the executive branch has on immigration really to their ultimate extent. And they've been successful," said Doris Meissner, the director of the Migration Policy Institute's U.S. Immigration Policy Program and a former commissioner of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. "And you know, in many ways remarkably so because there's been very stiff resistance all the way."

In other areas, Trump's record has been more mixed. On health care, Republicans in Congress did repeal the Obama-era individual mandate forcing people to buy health insurance, but he failed to replace the Affordable Care Act with an alternative, despite frequent promises to present his own plan.

On the economy, Trump and congressional Republicans pushed through a promised tax cut early in his term that dramatically slashed the corporate tax rate — as he had promised — and doubled the estate tax threshold, but did not eliminate it. He also did not meet his pledge to reduce the number of individual income tax brackets from seven to three to simplify the tax code, and efforts to bolster manufacturing jobs began to stall by his third year in office.

Trump had promised to boost economic growth to 3.5% per year on average. But he never surpassed 3% growth in any year, and progress on lowering unemployment has been annihilated by the pandemic, which has ushered in the worst recession since the Great Depression.

Some of Trump's more controversial promises have fallen by the wayside, such as his pledge to eliminate gun-free zones at schools and on military bases and to establish a national right to carry concealed weapons that would trump local restrictions. He has all but ignored the spiraling cost of college education and the plans he had proposed to make student loan repayment more affordable. He never made good on his pledge to push a constitutional amendment to impose term limits on members of Congress. And his pledge to embark on a massive \$1 trillion effort to rebuild the nation's infrastructure, including airports, roads and bridges, has become a running punchline.

He also quickly abandoned his promise never to take a vacation while president, making frequent trips to his properties in Florida and New Jersey. And while he claimed he would only play golf with those who might help him govern and never with friends, he has now paid more than 270 visits to golf clubs since his inauguration, according to a website dedicated to tracking his visits. He is often photographed playing with pros.

But he delivered on other fronts. He immediately enacted a federal hiring freeze, as he had promised, and mandated that for every new federal regulation enacted, two be eliminated. He launched an aggressive campaign to roll back environmental protections passed by the Obama administration, including those that protected waterways, encouraged cleaner energy, reduced auto emissions and restricted offshore drilling and oil exploration on federal land. At the same time, he has prioritized tapping the country's shale oil, and natural gas and coal reserves.

However, courts are undoing many of Trump's environmental rollbacks, calling them poorly reasoned and illegal.

On trade, Trump renegotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement and withdrew the U.S. from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, but failed to decrease the U.S.-China trade imbalance while starting a trade war with the country.

On the international front, the impact has been enormous as he has put his "America First" policy into practice, fundamentally redefining America's place in the world. He increased funding for the military, joined the race to weaponize space, all but abandoned efforts to curb nuclear proliferation, and has threatened U.S. membership in the landmark alliances of the 20th century, including NATO.

At the same time, he has pulled the U.S. from participation in a host of landmark accords, including the Paris Climate Agreement and the Iran nuclear deal (though he failed to bring Iran back to the negotiating table to broker a replacement deal, as he had pledged.) At international summits, he has cozied up to authoritarian leaders, including Russia's Vladimir Putin, while picking fights with longstanding allies like the U.K. and Canada.

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In a sign of just how far he has broken from the global community, he stopped funding the World Health Organization in the midst of the pandemic earlier this year.

Jeremy Shapiro, a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, said Trump has altered U.S. foreign policy in ways that go beyond what he outlined before taking office.

"I don't think he was really preparing people for the degree of revolution. He didn't say, 'I don't care about human rights' on the campaign trail. He didn't say, 'I don't care about democracy.' He didn't say, 'I don't care about alliances,'" Shapiro said.

While Trump complained the U.S. had gotten a raw deal in so many areas, he has failed, Shapiro argued, to negotiate improvements, aside from perhaps the new NAFTA.

"It's easy to destroy a deal. It's much harder to create a better one. And he hasn't done that," Shapiro said.

Follow Colvin on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

Comatose Russian dissident visited by wife, aide in Germany

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Alexi Navalny's wife and a top aide visited him Sunday in a Berlin hospital where the comatose Russian dissident is being treated by German doctors after a suspected poisoning.

Navalny was flown to Germany on Saturday from Siberia after doctors determined he was stable enough to be brought to the capital's Charité hospital for treatment.

After his arrival, hospital spokeswoman Manuela Zingl said the 44-year-old would be undergoing extensive diagnostic tests and that doctors wouldn't comment on his illness or treatment until they were able to evaluate the results.

On Sunday, Navalny's wife, Yulia Navalnaya, and aide Leonid Volkov visited the Russian opposition leader in the hospital, making no comments to reporters.

Navalny, a politician and corruption investigator who is one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critics, was admitted to an intensive care unit in the Siberian city of Omsk on Thursday. His supporters believe that tea he drank was laced with poison — and that the Kremlin is behind both his illness and a delay in transferring him to Germany.

Navalny fell ill on a flight back to Moscow from Siberia on Thursday and was taken to the hospital after the plane made an emergency landing.

While his supporters and family members insist that Navalny was poisoned, doctors in Omsk have denied that, theorizing a metabolic disorder was the most likely diagnosis and that a drop in blood sugar may have caused Navalny to lose consciousness.

Russian health authorities on Saturday said that tests done so far haven't shown any poisons in his system.

When German specialists arrived aboard a plane equipped with advanced medical equipment Friday morning at his family's behest, Navalny's physicians in Omsk initially said he was too unstable to move. The dissident's supporters suggested that was just a ploy to delay his departure until the poison was out of his system.

The Kremlin denied that resistance to the transfer was political, with spokesman Dmitry Peskov saying that it was purely a medical decision. However, the reversal to allow him to leave came as international pressure on Russia's leadership mounted.

Navalny's own doctor, Yaroslav Ashikhmin, who has treated him since 2013, said the politician has always been in good health, regularly went for medical checkups and didn't have any underlying illnesses that could have triggered his condition.

Like many other opposition politicians in Russia, Navalny has been frequently detained by law enforcement and harassed by pro-Kremlin groups. In 2017, he was attacked by several men who threw antiseptic in his face, damaging an eye.

Last year, Navalny was rushed to a hospital from jail where he was serving a sentence on charges of

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violating protest regulations. His team also suspected poisoning then. Doctors said he had a severe allergic reaction and sent him back to detention the following day.

If he was poisoned, it would not be the first time a prominent, outspoken Russian was targeted in such a way — or the first time the Kremlin was accused of being behind it.

TS Marco in Gulf aiming at Louisiana, TS Laura also on way

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Tropical Storm Marco is swirling over the Gulf of Mexico heading for a possible hit on the Louisiana coast as a hurricane, while Tropical Storm Laura knocked utilities out as it battered Hispaniola early Sunday, following a track forecast to take it to the same part of the U.S. coast, also as a hurricane.

It would be the first time two hurricanes appear in the Gulf of Mexico simultaneously, according to records dating to at least 1900, said Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach.

A hurricane watch was issued for the New Orleans metro area, which Hurricane Katrina pummeled in August 2005.

The projected tracks from the U.S. National Hurricane Center late Saturday pointed to both storms being together in the Gulf on Monday, with Marco hitting Louisiana's coast around midday and Laura making landfall in the same general area Wednesday. But there was still much uncertainty surrounding the forecasts for the two storms.

"It's entirely possible that the volatile shifts seen in the models could continue," the hurricane center said.

Laura was centered about 95 miles (150 kilometers) east of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Sunday morning, with maximum sustained winds of 45 mph (75kph). It was moving west-northwest at 18 mph (30 kph).

Crews armed with megaphones in the Dominican capital of Santo Domingo had urged dozens of residents in flood-prone areas to evacuate before Laura's heavy rains hit. The storm left more than 100,000 people without water in the Dominican Republic on Saturday night, while earlier it snapped trees and knocked out power to more than 200,000 customers in neighboring Puerto Rico.

It was also whipping at Haiti, which shares Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, and forecast to move over Cuba on Sunday night or Monday.

Officials in the Florida Keys, which Laura might pass over on its route into the Gulf, declared a local state of emergency and issued a mandatory evacuation order for anyone living on boats, in mobile homes and in campers. Tourists staying in hotels were warned to be aware of hazardous weather conditions and consider changing their plans starting Sunday.

Marco, meanwhile, was centered about 395 miles (635 kilometers) south-southeast of the mouth of the Mississippi River and was moving to the north-northwest at 13 mph (20 kph). It had maximum sustained winds of 70 mph (110 kph) and could become a hurricane sometime Sunday.

New warnings were added Sunday morning — including a storm surge warning from Morgan City, Louisiana to Ocean Springs, Mississippi, and a hurricane warning from Morgan City to the mouth of the Pearl River. A tropical storm warning included Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana, and metropolitan New Orleans.

Storm surge up to 6 feet (2 meters) was forecast for parts of coastal Louisiana and Mississippi.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards, who declared a state of emergency Friday, asked President Donald Trump for a federal emergency declaration. "The cumulative impact of these storms will likely have much of Louisiana facing tropical storm/hurricane force impacts for a much longer period of time than it would with any one hurricane," he wrote.

People in Louisiana headed to stores to stock up on food, water and other supplies. Raymond Monday of Gretna, though, had only a generator on his cart at Sam's Club. "We've got a freezer full of food" at home, along with large containers of water, he said.

Both storms were expected to bring 3 to 6 inches (8 to 15 centimeters) of rain to areas they were passing over or near, threatening flooding.

The hurricane center said the storms were not expected to interact as the region faces an unusually

active hurricane season.

"We are in unprecedented times," Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves said at a news conference Saturday as he declared a state of emergency. "We are dealing with not only two potential storms in the next few hours, we are also dealing with COVID-19."

The headline of this story has been corrected to reflect the name of the storm is Marco, not Marcos.

Associated Press writers Freida Frisaro in Miami and Janet McConnaughey in New Orleans contributed to this report.

Riot declared outside Portland public safety building

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Police forced protesters away from a law enforcement building in Oregon's biggest city early Sunday, as efforts to stop the demonstrators from gathering at the building seemingly fell apart.

The protesters apparently had plans Saturday night to march from a park to the Penumbra Kelly public safety building, news outlets reported. But, a standoff between marchers and officers took place on a bridge along the way — and the demonstrators retreated.

Protesters appear to have returned to the park, and then taken cars to the building, according to a reporter for The Oregonian/Oregon Live.

Police initially declared an unlawful assembly, saying items had been thrown at officers, green lasers had been pointed at them and paintball guns had been fired.

The gathering was later declared a riot. Officers had been hit with rocks, bottles and other objects, police said.

Images posted online showed officers using smoke to clear the area. Several people were seen being detained, but it's unclear whether any arrests were made.

Similar protests have previously occurred at the Penumbra Kelly building, including last weekend.

The unrest followed rivaling protests Saturday afternoon. Federal authorities forced demonstrators away from a plaza near a federal building as dueling demonstrations by right-wing and left-wing protesters turned violent.

The area includes county and federal buildings and has been the site of numerous recent protests. Department of Homeland Security officers moved through the plaza across from an 18-story federal building. A federal courthouse is also near that area.

Violent demonstrations have gripped Portland for months, following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody.

The Saturday afternoon demonstration involving hundreds of people began about noon near the Multnomah County Justice Center, news outlets reported. Demonstrators hurled rocks and other items at each other and got into fights. Streets were blocked amid the mayhem.

Right-wing groups had announced a rally near the Justice Center Saturday afternoon that quickly drew counter demonstrators.

No arrests were reported.

In a statement, Portland Police said there had been questions about why the afternoon gathering wasn't declared a riot and why city police officers didn't intervene. Incident commanders have to determine whether police action will make things more dangerous, the statement said.

"In this case there were hundreds of individuals and many weapons within the groups and an extremely limited amount of police resources actually available to address such a crowd," police said. "Additionally, (Portland police officers) have been the focus of over 80 days of violent actions directed at the police, which is a major consideration for determining if police resources are necessary to interject between two groups with individuals who appear to be willingly engaging in physical confrontations for short durations."

'End of the world': Countdown to Beirut's devastating blast

By BASSEM MROUE, SARAH EL DEEB and ZEINA KARAM Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The 10 firefighters who received the call shortly before 6 p.m. — about a big fire at the nearby port of Beirut — could not know what awaited them.

The brigade of nine men and one woman could not know about the stockpile of ammonium nitrate warehoused since 2013 along a busy motorway, in the heart of a densely populated residential area — a danger that had only grown with every passing year.

They and nearly all the population of Beirut were simply unaware. They were not privy to the warnings authorities had received, again and again, and ignored: ammonium nitrate is highly explosive, used in fertilizer and sometimes to build bombs. The stockpile was degrading; something must be done.

They knew, of course, that they lived in a dysfunctional country, its government rife with corruption, factionalism and negligence that caused so much pain and heartbreak. But they could not know that it would lead to the worst single-day catastrophe in Lebanon's tragic history.

Across the city, residents who noticed the grey smoke billowing over the facility were drawn to streets, balconies and windows, watching curiously as the fire grew larger. Phones were pulled out of pockets and pointed toward the flames.

The firefighters piled into a fire engine and an ambulance and raced to the scene — and to their doom.

Seven years ago, a ship named the Rhosus set out from the Georgian Black Sea port of Batumi carrying 2,755.5 tons of ammonium nitrate destined for an explosives company in Mozambique.

It made an unscheduled detour, stopping in Beirut on Nov. 19, 2013. The ship's Russian owner said he struggled with debts and hoped to earn extra cash by taking on pieces of heavy machinery in Lebanon. That additional cargo proved too heavy for the Rhosus and the crew refused to take it on.

The Rhosus was soon impounded by Lebanese authorities for failing to pay port fees. It never left the port; it sank there in February 2018, according to Lebanese official documents.

The Port of Beirut is considered one of the most corrupt institutions in a country where nearly every public institution is riddled with corruption. Port officials are notorious for taking bribes. A bribe from an importer, for example, will ensure an incoming shipment is mislabeled to get lower customs duties — or escapes duties and taxes completely. Confiscated goods are sometimes sold off on the sly for a profit.

For years, Lebanon's ruling political factions have divvied up positions at the port and handed them out to supporters — as they have ministries, public companies and other facilities nationwide.

The longtime head of customs is known to be a loyalist of President Michel Aoun, for example, while the head of the port is in the camp of Saad Hariri, the Sunni leader who has repeatedly served as prime minister. The Hezbollah militant group and, even more, its Shiite ally the Amal faction headed by Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, also have loyalists at the port, though Hezbollah doesn't have the same influence as it does at, for example, the airport, which it controls and uses to ferry in cash from Iran.

The result is a port divided into factional fiefdoms that don't necessarily work together and are sometimes outright rivals. Individual port authorities are sometimes more concerned with their scams than with proper functioning. And government officials avoid looking too closely at goings-on at the port to protect their loyalists.

The first known warning came on Feb. 21, 2014, three months after the ship docked at the port.

In a letter to the customs authority's anti-smuggling department, senior customs official Col. Joseph Skaff wrote that the material on board was "extremely dangerous and endangers public safety."

It is not known if Skaff ever received a response or if he sent other letters. He was found dead outside his house near Beirut under mysterious circumstances, shortly after he retired in March 2017. At least one medical report suggested he might have been murdered.

Skaff's son, Michel, said he was killed by a blow to the head. He said his father dealt with other sensitive matters, including drug trafficking. "Someone maybe was trying to hide what is happening at the port,"

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he said by telephone from his home in New York City.

In the years that followed, Skaff's letter was followed by other correspondence that went back and forth between top customs and port officials and members of the judiciary and the army.

On June 27, 2014, with the ammonium nitrate still aboard the Rhosus, Jad Maalouf, a judge for urgent matters, warned the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation in correspondence that the ship was carrying dangerous material and could sink. He said the ministry should deal with the ship, remove the ammonium nitrate and "place it in a suitable place that it (the ministry) chooses, and it should be under its protection."

It is not clear if there was ever a reply. Ministry officials did not respond to requests from The Associated Press asking for comment.

In October 2014, the ammonium nitrate was moved into the port's Warehouse 12, which holds impounded materials.

A chemical forensic expert, commissioned by the courts and the owners of the ammonium nitrate, got a look at the stockpile soon after. It was "in terrible shape," she said in her February 2015 report. Most of the sacks — she estimated more than 1,900 of the 2,750 sacks— were torn open, their contents spilling out. Some of the crystals had darkened, a sign of decomposition. The sacks were piled so haphazardly that she could not count them to be sure all were still there.

The inspector recommended the chemicals be disposed of according to environmental guidelines. Her report was uncovered by Riad Kobaissi, an investigative reporter with Al Jadeed TV who has followed corruption at the port and within the customs authorities since 2012.

On Oct. 26, 2015, the army command asked customs to sample the material and check the level of nitrogen "and based on that we can give a suggestion regarding them."

The then-head of the customs department, Shafeeq Merhi, wrote back in February 2016, saying an expert found the nitrogen level was 34.7%, a very high and dangerous level, well above the acceptable concentration of around 11%.

The army command responded the following April, saying it didn't need the ammonium nitrate. It asked customs to contact Lebanese Explosives Co. — a maker of explosives for construction of roads and tunnels and for imploding structures — to see if that private company could use it.

If not, the material should be exported at the expense of the ship owner who brought it to Lebanon, the army said in its letter.

An administrator at Lebanese Explosives told the AP that it was "not interested in buying confiscated material because we did not know where they were brought from, what is the quality nor its expiry."

Merhi and his successor as customs chief, Badri Daher, sent multiple letters in the following years to the Courts of Urgent Matters, warning of the danger and seeking permission to sell the material or a ruling on another way to get rid of it.

Daher told the AP and other media that he never received any reply from the court. But Kobaissi, the investigative reporter, found documents showing the court responded each time that it didn't have jurisdiction and that the Public Works Ministry had to decide.

Over the years, Lebanese built and bought luxury property opposite the port, a nearby Beirut Marina including restaurants, cafes and retail shops was built up, concerts were held, children rode their bicycles and workers went about their daily business, oblivious to the massive "bomb" waiting to explode.

At some point, someone battered open a door to Warehouse 12 and knocked a hole in one of its walls.

When is not known. It was reported when State Security inspected the site this summer. In a July 20 report, it warned that the warehouse's "Door Number 9 has suffered a blow in the middle, knocking it away from the wall enough to allow anyone to enter and steal the ammonium nitrate." It also noted the hole in the wall and pointed out that there was no guard at the warehouse, "making theft even easier."

The report to President Michel Aoun and then-Prime Minister Hassan Diab warned that thieves could steal the material to make explosives. Or, it said, the mass of material could cause an explosion "that would practically destroy the port." Kobaissi shared the report with the AP.

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Aoun has been in office since 2016. After the explosion, he said the State Security report was the first time he'd heard of the dangerous stockpile. He said he immediately ordered military and security agencies to do "what was needed" — though he added he had no authority over the port.

After being criticized by rival politicians and on social media for not doing more, Aoun's office issued a further statement saying that his military adviser had immediately forwarded the State Security report to the Higher Defense Council, the top defense body in the country.

But a government official said security agencies had repeatedly sent warnings directly to the government. "The same memo was sent roughly every year basically since that ship arrived, and it became clear the stuff wasn't moving. So, it was like a tradition and it wasn't marked as priority," the official told AP, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to talk to the media.

Kobaissi, the investigative reporter, said all political factions in the country benefited from using the port for patronage, and most overlooked dubious dealings. He said many people knew about the initial warning by Skaff, including Hezbollah's former point man at the port.

Port and customs officials "are a gang, a mafia, appointed by a mafia gang that has come to office through an election process," Kobaissi told the AP.

He believes officials at the port were trying to find a legal cover to sell off the ammonium nitrate and skim off some of the money. He noted a similar scheme was run in the past when containers of confiscated asbestos were auctioned off. He said there were many instances of port officials profiting off impounded shipments, even keeping some goods — like Mini Coopers — for themselves.

Both the customs chief Daher and the head of the port, Hassan Koraytem, are among those detained in the wake of the explosion.

On the afternoon of Aug. 4, security officials say, three metalworkers who had been working for several days to weld the broken Door Number 9 of Warehouse 12 finished work and left the facility.

The cause of the original fire has still not been determined and is at the heart of the current investigation. Some have questioned whether the welding may have sparked stocks of flammable liquids used in making detergents, as well as tons of fireworks that were also being kept in Warehouse 12. Other possibilities such as sabotage are also being investigated. The metalworkers, who were hired to fix the door by the port authorities in response to the security report, have been detained for questioning, according to security officials.

Shortly after the 10 firefighters arrived at the port, they sent an urgent call back to headquarters, asking for reinforcements. Photos they sent from their mobile phones to their colleagues showed them trying to open the gate of Warehouse 12.

"When they called us, they said they are hearing the sound of fireworks," Beirut fire chief Nabil Khankarli told the AP.

No one told the emergency responders that dangerous material was stored in the warehouse. No port officials were even there to help them open the gate, Khankarli said.

A second team jumped into their vehicles and headed toward the port. All across the city, flames and the pillar of black smoke could be seen pouring into the sky, lit up by popping fireworks. Many residents would later report hearing a jet or a drone and presuming it was Israeli, since Israel sends reconnaissance flights over Lebanon on an almost daily basis. No evidence has yet emerged of warplanes.

There was an initial explosion, sending shredded debris into the air. That first blast, survivors would recount later, sent some who had been watching the fire scurrying for cover.

Twelve seconds later, at 6:08 p.m., the ammonium nitrate detonated in one of the biggest non-nuclear explosions ever recorded.

In an instant, a blast with the force of hundreds of tons of TNT sucked in the air — one video showed a luxury store window exploding outward from the suction, spraying a bride and groom taking their wedding video on the sidewalk outside — and then unleashed its power across the city.

It blew a crater nearly 200 meters (yards) wide out of the port where Warehouse 12 once stood, and

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seawater poured in to fill it. The port was leveled. A grain silo right next to the warehouse was shredded and sheared in half — though its massive bulk partially shielded sections of the city from the blast. For miles around, in people's homes and in shops and hospitals, windows were shattered, doors knocked off their hinges, ceilings or walls blown in a vicious whirlwind onto those inside.

Alaa Saad and his friends were out diving, about 2.5 kilometers (1.5 miles) off the coast of Beirut, when they started hearing noises from the direction of the port and saw the smoke. Was it fireworks? Ammunition?

"There were lots of flashes going off inside the smoke," he said. He heard some kind of eruption, like a volcano. "Something that was boiling very much," he said.

"Five seconds passed, and this is when I saw the cloud or the wave that was coming toward us at very high speed," he said. "It was insane speed. I could not even think if I wanted to jump in the water or stay on the boat."

Saad fell on the deck. A friend tumbled into the water.

"After that," he said, "I thought it was the end of Beirut or the end of the world or the war has started."

More than 6,000 people were injured, and at least 180 were killed — among them the 10 first responders. It would take days of searching before colleagues found all their bodies in the rubble.

Nearly three weeks later, theories abound. In the deeply polarized country, some have turned their suspicion to Hezbollah, which maintains a huge weapons stockpile in the country and dominates its politics. A member of the militant group was sentenced to six years in prison after he was arrested in Cyprus in 2015 in connection with the seizure of nine tons of ammonium nitrate at a house where he was staying.

An investigative team that includes Kobaissi, working with The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, found that the shadow owner of the Rhosus was actually a Cypriot who owed money to a Lebanese bank linked to Hezbollah — raising speculation that he brought in the ammonium nitrate for the group. The businessman, Charalambos Manoli, denied the report, insisting to the AP that he sold the ship in May 2012.

Others have peddled a theory that rivals of the group had sought to accrue the fertilizer for use as explosives in the war in neighboring Syria.

The documents show clear negligence and failure; the question of whether something more triggered the blast depends on an investigation that so far has seemed predictably slow and ineffectual.

The fire chief, Khankarli, is furious. So much destruction. So much bloodshed. All of it avoidable.

"We are waiting for the investigation," he said. "But what is gone cannot be recovered."

AP Explains: Why revolt in Belarus is different from Ukraine

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

MINSK, Belarus (AP) — A former Soviet republic on the fault line between Russia and Europe is boiling with revolt this summer. Sounds familiar — but Belarus 2020 isn't Ukraine 2014, and that's why it's hard to predict what will happen next.

Here is a look at what's different this time, and why it matters:

LEADERLESS RESISTANCE

The uprising in Belarus erupted last week in a democratic vacuum, in a country where challengers to President Alexander Lukashenko are jailed or exiled and where there is no experienced parliamentary opposition.

So those at the forefront of Minsk protest marches have been ordinary Belarusians, instead of established political leaders like those who helped galvanize crowds and funding for Ukraine's 2014 protest movement, centered around the Maidan independence square in Kyiv.

In Belarus, "the absence of bright leaders undoubtedly weakens the protests ... Leaders bring awareness," independent political analyst Valery Karbalevich said.

So Belarusian protesters formed a new Advisory Council this week to try to "offer the street a clear plan and agenda," he said.

However, opposition figure Maria Kolesnikova argues that the mass protests this month in Minsk, which

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came together in decentralized clusters via messaging app Telegram, show that Belarusians no longer need a vertical hierarchy telling them what to do.

And a leaderless protest has one key advantage, she said: "It cannot be beheaded."

ORDERLY, AND OK WITH RUSSIA

When unprecedented crowds of 200,000 people marched through the tidy, broad avenues of Minsk on Sunday, they came to a halt at red traffic lights, waiting obediently until they turned green.

In Ukraine, by contrast, "protesters burned tires and threw Molotov cocktails," said Syarzhuk Chyslau, leader of the Belarusian White Legion organization.

That's in part because the Minsk marches lack the kind of far-right and neo-Nazi militant groups that joined Ukraine's uprising and fanned the violence.

It's also because Belarusians aren't driven by the deep-seated anger at Russian influence that fueled Ukraine's uprisings in 2004 and 2014, or Georgia's ground-breaking Rose Revolution in 2003.

While Ukraine has been geopolitically split between pro-West and pro-Russian camps since the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Belarusians are broadly Moscow-friendly.

Not a single European Union flag has appeared at the Minsk rallies, and the protesters aren't pursuing NATO membership at the Kremlin's expense; they just want to freely choose their own leader after an election they believe was stolen from them.

Pavel Latushko, a former Lukashenko loyalist now on the protesters' Advisory Council, hopes this could allow Belarusians to count on help from both Brussels and Moscow to settle the current tensions.

"If the EU and Russia together acted as a mediator in resolving the Belarusian crisis, this would be an ideal option," Latushko told The Associated Press.

SHOESTRING BUDGET

While Ukraine's protest movement built a huge tent camp in the center of Kyiv, complete with food delivery and security forces, the only perks for protesters in Belarus so far are bottles of water.

"There are no oligarchs in Belarus who would give money for hot meals, medical treatment and tents. Even to pay police fines, Belarusian protesters collect money themselves," analyst Alexander Klaskouski said.

Unlike Ukraine's largely privatized economy, Belarus' economy remains 80% state-run, and little has evolved since the Soviet era. That makes it even more remarkable that workers at state-run factories have joined this week's protests and strikes.

"The structure of the economy allowed Ukrainians not to be afraid of the state, which in Belarus could throw any person out on the street with nothing at all," said Klaskouski.

The EU and U.S. also had economic interests in Ukraine before its 2014 uprising, but have only a marginal role in the largely closed-off Belarusian economy.

MOSCOW'S HAND

Given that, the Kremlin can't easily portray Belarus' protests as a Western-backed effort to sow chaos in its backyard the way it could in Ukraine. Russia used that argument to justify its annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and backing for separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine in a war that still simmers, six years on.

But Russia's role in Belarus is pivotal, as the country's top trade partner and main military ally.

So far, Russian President Vladimir Putin has made it clear to Germany and France that they should steer clear of any interference, but hasn't revealed how he wants to deal with the protesters or with Lukashenko, the only leader in the former Soviet space who's been in power longer than Putin himself.

POTENTIAL PARALLELS

Ukraine has been a cacophonous democracy for much of the 29 years since winning independence from the USSR, and Belarus is dubbed Europe's last dictatorship — but they share some similarities.

"Lukashenko made the same mistake as (former Ukrainian President Viktor) Yanukovich — he began to brutally beat peaceful protesters, which sparked a tsunami of popular protest, insulted dignity and triggered a revolution," said analyst Vladimir Fesenko, director of the Penta Center in Kyiv.

Belarusian economist Dmitry Rusakevich, 46, participated in the Kyiv protests on the Maidan, and now goes out to Minsk's Independence Square every evening.

"Maidan woke up Belarusians and showed that we need to fight for freedom," he said. "It took the calm Belarusians a long time to muster the courage to say no to the dictator."

Angela Charlton in Paris contributed to this report.

Follow AP's coverage of the political turmoil in Belarus at <https://www.apnews.com/Belarus>

India's virus caseload tops 3 million as disease moves south

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's coronavirus caseload topped 3 million on Sunday, with the country leading the world in new infections as the disease marched through impoverished rural areas in the north and the wealthier but older populations of the south.

Health authorities reported 69,239 new cases and 912 deaths, bringing the total to 3,044,940.

Cases have leveled off in India's two largest cities, with serological surveys showing widespread prevalence among the residents of the capital, New Delhi, and financial center Mumbai.

New hot spots continue to feed surges in cases in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states in India's north, and in the southern states of Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

India has the third-highest caseload after the United States and Brazil, and its 56,706 fatalities are the fourth-highest in the world.

This story corrects the number of new cases.

Changing weather prompts more fire fears in California

By DAISY NGUYEN and ADAM BEAM Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — An unwelcome change in the weather, with higher winds, temperatures and lightning that threatens to spark new wildfires was coming Sunday to parched Northern California, where firefighters have for nearly a week battled three huge "complexes" of fires that have destroyed hundreds of homes and forced tens of thousands to flee.

Firefighters made slow but hopeful progress in battling the blazes on Saturday, aided by good weather but hampered by smoky skies that grounded water-dropping aircraft for some of the day. Reinforcements arrived to bolster overwhelmed crews, and evacuation orders were lifted in some areas.

But the changing weather brought fears of new fires overnight and warnings from state and local officials for residents in threatened areas to prepare to flee at any moment.

"There's not a feeling of pure optimism, but a feeling of resolve, a feeling of we have resources backing us up," Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore said.

Since Aug. 15, state fire officials said more than 12,000 lightning strikes across the state have ignited more than 500 wildfires. Of those, about two dozen major fires were attracting most of the state's resources. Most of the damage was caused by three clusters of fire "complexes" that were ravaging forest and rural areas in and around the San Francisco Bay Area. They have burned 1,120 square miles (2,900 square kilometers).

Among the casualties were ancient redwood trees at California's oldest state park, Big Basin Redwoods, plus the park's headquarters and campgrounds. Smoke from the fires made the region's air quality dangerous, forcing people to stay inside.

Overall, the fires have killed five people, torched nearly 700 homes and other structures and forced tens of thousands from their houses.

"Tuesday night when I went to bed I had a beautiful home on a beautiful ranch," said 81-year-old Hank Hanson of Vacaville. "By Wednesday night, I have nothing but a bunch of ashes."

The changing weather brought good news for some communities, including Boulder Creek, an old logging community of about 5,000 people in the Santa Cruz mountains. Fire officials said they expected the blaze to reach the community, but they took advantage of recent good weather to try to "herd" flames

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around the town.

The storms predicted for Sunday were expected to aid those efforts by changing the direction of the wind. "As bad as that weather prediction is overall for certain parts of this fire, it actually is going to help us move it away from those certain communities," said Chief Mark Brunton, a battalion chief for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the state's firefighting agency.

Responding to the emergency, President Donald Trump issued on Saturday a major disaster declaration to provide federal assistance. Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a statement that the declaration will also help people in counties affected by the fires with crisis counseling, housing and other social services.

Fire officials, meanwhile, struggled to get enough resources to fight the two largest cluster of fires around the San Francisco Bay area that had grown to become the second-largest and third-largest fires in state history by size.

The fire burning in California's wine country, north of the San Francisco Bay, had only 1,400 firefighters assigned to battle the blaze. By comparison, the state had 5,000 firefighters assigned to the Mendocino Complex in 2018, which still holds the record as the largest fire in state history — for now.

"All of our resources remain stretched to capacity that we have not seen in recent history," said Shana Jones, the chief for CalFire's Sonoma-Lake-Napa unit.

Underscoring the danger the fires pose for firefighters, the Sonoma County sheriff's office released dramatic video of the helicopter rescue Friday night of two firefighters trapped on a ridge line at Point Reyes National Seashore. They were hoisted to safety as flames advanced.

"Had it not been for that helicopter, those firefighters would certainly have perished," Sonoma County Sheriff Mark Essick said.

Beam reported from Sacramento, California. Associated Press writer Martha Mendoza contributed from Scotts Valley, California.

Protest erupts over fatal police shooting of Black man

LAFAYETTE, La. (AP) — The mother of a man fatally shot by Louisiana police said her son was intelligent, shy and had sought therapy for social anxiety. Her lawyers said they plan to sue over the death of Trayford Pellerin, who police said had a knife and was trying to enter a convenience store.

The shooting Friday night was captured on video, and the state ACLU condemned what it described as a "horrific and deadly incident of police violence against a Black person." Both the ACLU and the Southern Poverty Law Center quickly called for an investigation.

Pellerin's death prompted a crowd of protesters to gather Saturday and demonstrate against the latest fatal police shooting. Officers in riot gear fired smoke canisters on Saturday night to get the crowd to disperse, Trooper Derek Senegal said. No tear gas was deployed, he said.

At a news conference late Saturday, local officials said the protest began peacefully, but violence later erupted with fireworks shot at buildings and fires set in the median of the road.

"Our intent is not going to be to just let people disrupt our town and put our citizens and our motorists and our neighborhoods in danger," Interim Police Chief Scott Morgan said.

Arrests were made, Morgan said, but an exact number wasn't immediately available.

"We do support people's First Amendment rights," Lafayette Parish Sheriff Mark Garber said. "However, when it comes to the destruction of property, we are not going to have Lafayette set on fire."

On Friday night, Lafayette officers followed Pellerin, 31, on foot as he left a convenience store where he had created a disturbance with a knife, Louisiana State Police said. Stun guns failed to stop him, and the officers shot Pellerin as he tried to enter another convenience store, still with the knife, according to a news release.

Pellerin became anxious in groups and may have been frightened by the officers, Michelle Pellerin told The Advocate. He had sought professional help earlier this year, she said.

"Instead of giving him a helping hand they gave him bullets," national civil rights attorney Ben Crump told

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the newspaper. He and Baton Rouge attorney Ronald Haley said they have begun their own investigation by interviewing witnesses. Some said Pellerin was not armed, Haley said.

The family believes Pellerin may have been having a mental health crisis, Crump said.

Lafayette police asked state police to investigate — standard procedure in the state for shootings by local officers.

“Lafayette police shot Mr. Pellerin several times as he walked away from them,” Margaret Huang, president and CEO of the Southern Poverty Law Center, said in an emailed statement. “His killing demands an analysis of the excessive use of force by law enforcement. We fully support movement leaders’ calls for a swift and transparent investigation into Mr. Pellerin’s killing.”

State ACLU executive director Alanah Odoms Hebert said, “Once again, video footage has captured a horrific and deadly incident of police violence against a Black person who was brutally killed in front of our eyes.”

Captured on video, the May 25 death of George Floyd under the knee of a white Minneapolis police officer sparked a global reckoning over police tactics and racial injustice.

“Trayford Pellerin should be alive today. Instead, a family is mourning and a community is grieving,” her statement said. “None of our communities are safe when the police can murder people with impunity or when routine encounters escalate into deadly shooting sprees.”

Rikasha Montgomery, who took a video of the shooting, told The Advertiser that a man holding what looked like a knife kept walking down the highway while some officers fired stun guns at him. Officers holding guns shouted at him to get onto the ground, said Montgomery, 18.

She said they fired when the man reached the door of a Shell gas station.

“When I heard the gunshots, I couldn’t hold my phone like I was first filming,” she said. “I feel kind of scared about it. I’m traumatized. You’re so used to hearing about this, but I never thought I would experience it.”

Crump, representing Pellerin’s family, called the shooting reckless and his death tragic.

“The officers involved should be fired immediately for their abhorrent and fatal actions,” Crump said in a statement Saturday.

The incident was the third shooting by Lafayette police since mid-July. State police said a man was critically wounded last month after being shot during an altercation with police. Another man was in stable condition after being shot during a burglary investigation earlier this month.

Haley told The Advocate that he and Crump will be seeking reform and policy changes in the police department as well as damages.

“We want policy changes as well, so that Ben and I are not in the living room with another family in Lafayette dealing with this,” Haley said.

Experts flag risks in India’s use of rapid tests for virus

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL and MATTHEW PERRONE Associated Press

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — In June, India began using cheaper, faster but less accurate tests to scale up testing for the coronavirus — a strategy that the United States is now considering.

These rapid tests boosted India’s testing levels nearly five-fold within two months. But government numbers suggest some parts of the country might have become over reliant on the faster tests, which can miss infections. Experts warn that safely using them requires frequent retesting, something that isn’t always happening.

Cases surged faster than labs could scale up testing once India’s harsh lockdown was relaxed. So far authorities have rationed the use of the more precise molecular tests that detect the genetic code of the virus. But on June 14, India decided to bolster these with faster tests that screen for antigens, or viral proteins.

Albeit less accurate, these tests are cheap and yield results in minutes. Most don’t require a lab for processing or any specialized equipment or trained personnel. The plan was to rapidly increase testing

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to identify infected people and prevent them from spreading the virus. Samples tested using both tests increased from 5.6 million in mid-June to 26 million two months later, and nearly a third of all tests conducted daily are now antigen tests, health officials say.

But India's experience also highlights the inherent pitfalls of relying too heavily on antigen tests, at the expense of more accurate tests. The danger is that the tests may falsely clear many who are infected with COVID-19, contributing to new spread of the virus in hard-hit areas.

Rapid test results can be backstopped with more accurate laboratory tests, but these are slower and expensive. Experts also warn that since the two types of tests vary in accuracy, they need to be interpreted separately to properly assess the spread of infection -- something India isn't doing.

The U.S. faces a similar need to strike a balance between speed and precision, with overburdened labs struggling to keep pace with the outbreak. Researchers at Harvard and elsewhere are proposing developing a \$1 saliva-based antigen test for all Americans to test themselves daily, something that has not yet been approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

Harvard's Dr. Michael Mina says antigen tests don't catch as many patients early in the infection, when virus levels are low. But these people aren't considered the greatest threat to spreading the disease since it's only after virus levels surge that they become more infectious, and by then they will be picked up by antigen tests, he said.

Because a negative antigen test doesn't guarantee a person is virus free, people should be retested regularly, said Dr. Ashish Jha, director of Harvard's Global Health Institute. "If their symptoms change, you want to think about retesting those people."

India's strategy is different. Health officials have asked for those who test negative with antigen tests but have symptoms to be retested with the more accurate laboratory tests.

But India has largely been opaque about how many negatives were being retested, and what type of tests were being used.

Delhi state, which includes the Indian capital, New Delhi, and where the High Court is monitoring testing, was among the first to aggressively use antigen tests to screen patients for free. Centers were created in dispensaries, schools and government offices. But only 0.5%, or 1,365 of over 260,000 people who tested negative from June 18 to July 29, were retested, court documents show. Delhi conducted over 280,000 tests in this period.

"That is abysmally low," said Dr. S.P. Kalantri, a public health specialist in Maharashtra, India's worst-hit state. He said the decline in use of more precise lab tests by nearly half, from a capacity of 11,000 tests daily to just 5,400 tests per day, was a worrying trend.

Under guidelines set by the World Health Organization, India should be conducting around 140 daily tests per million people in order to safely relax coronavirus restrictions.

Rajesh Bhushan, India's top health official, has repeatedly pointed to India's cumulative total of the two types of test to assert that India is testing more than the WHO standard. Authorities also use this to calculate the percentage of samples testing positive, which is a key metric for judging testing performance.

But Jha said combined data from the two types of tests can't be used to conclude that infections in India are going down, since using less accurate tests would automatically drive down the number of positive results.

Experts fear that over-reliance on antigen tests without retesting could impede efforts to contain the virus as it spreads to states with fragile health care systems, like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, with a combined population of over 300 million.

The two states now conduct over 100,000 tests daily, the most in India. But only a fraction — 6,100 in Bihar and 30,000 in Uttar Pradesh — use laboratory tests.

Jha said the antigen tests were a way to expand testing for people who don't have access to laboratory tests, but that didn't mean use of the more accurate tests should lessen.

"I want both," he said. The rapid test "isn't a perfect substitute."

Perrone reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Biswajeet Banerjee in Lucknow, India, and

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Indrajit Singh in Patna, India, contributed to this report.

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

House passes bill to reverse changes blamed for mail delays

By LISA MASCARO and MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With heated debate over mail delays, the House approved legislation in a rare Saturday session that would reverse recent changes in U.S. Postal Service operations and send \$25 billion to shore up the agency ahead of the November election.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi recalled lawmakers to Washington over objections from Republicans dismissing the action as a stunt. President Donald Trump urged a no vote, including in a Saturday tweet, railing against mail-in ballots expected to surge in the COVID-19 crisis. He has said he wants to block extra funds to the Postal Service.

"Don't pay any attention to what the president is saying, because it is all designed to suppress the vote," Pelosi said at the Capitol.

Pelosi called the Postal Service the nation's "beautiful thread" connecting Americans and said voters should "ignore" the president's threats.

The daylong session came as an uproar over mail disruptions puts the Postal Service at the center of the nation's tumultuous election year, with Americans rallying around one of the nation's oldest and more popular institutions. Millions of people are expected to opt for mail-in ballots to avoid polling places during the coronavirus pandemic.

Ahead of voting the president tweeted, "This is all another HOAX."

More than two dozen Republicans broke with the president and backed the bill, which passed 257-150. Democrats led approval, but the legislation is certain to stall in the GOP-held Senate. The White House said the president would veto it.

Facing a backlash over operational changes, new Postmaster General Louis DeJoy testified Friday in the Senate that his "No. 1 priority" is to ensure election mail arrives on time.

But the new postal leader, a Trump ally, said he would not restore the cuts to mailboxes and sorting equipment that have already been made. He could not provide senators with a plan for handling the ballot crush for the election. DeJoy is set to return Monday to testify before the House Oversight Committee.

"The American people don't want anyone messing with the post office," said Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., the chair of the Oversight Committee and author of the bill. "They just want their mail."

But Republicans countered that complaints about mail delivery disruptions are overblown, and no emergency funding is needed right now.

"It's a silly, silly bill," said Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla.

Despite the postmaster general's vow election mail will arrive on time, Democrats remain skeptical. Maloney's committee on Saturday released internal Postal Service documents warning about steep declines and delays in a range of mail services since early July, shortly after DeJoy took the helm. He acknowledged at the Senate hearing there has been a "dip" in service, but disputed reports of widespread problems. The Board of Governors of the Postal Service announced a bipartisan committee to oversee mail voting.

The bill would reverse the cuts by prohibiting any changes made after January, and provide funds to the agency.

In a memo to House Republicans, leaders derided the legislation as a postal "conspiracy theory" act. Many GOP lawmakers echoed such sentiments during a lively floor debate.

"I like the post office, I really do," said Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Wis. But he said, "We have no crisis here."

Nevertheless, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell is eyeing a \$10 billion postal rescue as part of the next COVID-19 relief package. While Trump has said he wants to block emergency funding for the agency, the White House has said it would be open to more postal funding as part of a broader bill.

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Hundreds of lawmakers returned to Washington for the weekend session, but dozens cast votes by proxy under House rules that allow them to stay away during the COVID-19 crisis. Another lawmaker, Rep. Dan Meuser, R-Pa., announced Saturday he had tested positive for the virus.

Trump's chief of staff, Mark Meadows, was on Capitol Hill meeting Saturday with GOP House leader Kevin McCarthy and other lawmakers, according to a Republican aide granted anonymity to discuss the private sessions.

The Postal Service has been struggling financially under a decline in mail volume, COVID-19-related costs and a rare and cumbersome congressional requirement to fund in advance its retiree health care benefits.

For many, the Postal Service provides a lifeline, delivering not just cards and letters but also prescription drugs, financial statements and other items that are especially needed by mail during the pandemic.

The postal board of governors, appointed by Trump, selected DeJoy to take the job as postmaster general. A GOP donor, he previously owned a logistics business that was a longtime Postal Service contractor. He maintains significant financial stakes in companies that do business or compete with the agency, raising conflict of interest questions.

In a statement, the Postal Service said DeJoy has made all required financial disclosures, but he might have to divest some holdings if conflicts arise.

Republicans have long sought changes to have the agency run more like a private company, and Trump often complains the Postal Service should be charging Amazon and other companies higher rates for package deliveries. The founder of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, also owns The Washington Post, a publication that Trump frequently derides as "fake news" over critical stories of him.

Others say the Postal Service is not expected to be solely a money-making enterprise, often delivering to far-flung places where it is not efficient to operate.

Associated Press writers Anthony Izaguirre in Charleston, W.Va., and Christina A. Cassidy in Atlanta contributed to this report.

The Associated Press produced this coverage with support from the Carnegie Corp. of New York.

In recordings, Trump's sister says he 'has no principles'

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's older sister, a former federal judge, is heard sharply criticizing her brother in a series of recordings released Saturday, at one point saying of the president, "He has no principles."

Maryanne Trump Barry was secretly recorded by her niece, Mary Trump, who recently released a book denouncing the president, "Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man." Mary Trump said Saturday she made the recordings in 2018 and 2019.

In one recording, Barry, 83, says she had heard a 2018 interview with her brother on Fox News in which he suggested that he would put her on the border to oversee cases of immigrant children separated from their parents.

"His base, I mean my God, if you were a religious person, you want to help people. Not do this," Barry says.

At another point she says: "His goddamned tweet and lying, oh my God." She adds: "I'm talking too freely, but you know. The change of stories. The lack of preparation. The lying. Holy shit."

Barry can also be heard saying that she guesses that her brother has never read her opinions on immigration cases.

"What has he read?" Mary Trump asks her aunt.

Barry responds: "No. He doesn't read."

The recordings were first reported by The Washington Post. The Associated Press then obtained the recordings.

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The recordings came to light just a day after the late Robert Trump, brother to Maryanne and the president, was memorialized in a service at the White House. Later, the president was dismissive of the recordings.

"Every day it's something else, who cares. I miss my brother, and I'll continue to work hard for the American people," Trump said in a statement. "Not everyone agrees, but the results are obvious. Our country will soon be stronger than ever before."

In the weeks since the release of Mary Trump's tell-all book about her uncle, she has been questioned about the source of some of its information. Nowhere in the book does she say that she recorded conversations with her aunt. On Saturday, Mary Trump revealed that she had covertly taped 15 hours of face-to-face conversations with Barry.

"Mary realized members of her family had lied in prior depositions," said Chris Bastardi, a spokesman for Mary Trump. He added: "Anticipating litigation, she felt it prudent to tape conversations in order to protect herself."

The president has frequently spoken highly of his sister; the recordings are the first time a family member, outside of Mary Trump, has been critical of him.

The recordings illuminate the tension between the president and his sister. At one point Barry says to her niece: "It's the phoniness of it all. It's the phoniness and this cruelty. Donald is cruel."

Mary Trump's book was filled with attacks on her uncle, including the assertion — he denied it — that he paid someone to take the SATs for him as he sought to transfer into the University of Pennsylvania.

In one recording, the federal judge says that a Joe Shapiro took the test for Trump. The president was friends with a person at Penn named Joe Shapiro, who is deceased. Shapiro's widow and sister told have said he never took a test for anybody.

Bastardi said of Mary Trump: "She never expected to learn much of what she heard, including the president's sister, federal judge Maryanne Trump Barry, state that Donald Trump had paid someone to take an SAT exam for him."

AP EXCLUSIVE: US faces back-to-school laptop shortage

By JOCELYN GECKER and MICHAEL LIEDTKE Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Schools across the United States are facing shortages and long delays, of up to several months, in getting this year's most crucial back-to-school supplies: the laptops and other equipment needed for online learning, an Associated Press investigation has found.

The world's three biggest computer companies, Lenovo, HP and Dell, have told school districts they have a shortage of nearly 5 million laptops, in some cases exacerbated by Trump administration sanctions on Chinese suppliers, according to interviews with over two dozen U.S. schools, districts in 15 states, suppliers, computer companies and industry analysts.

As the school year begins virtually in many places because of the coronavirus, educators nationwide worry that computer shortfalls will compound the inequities — and the headaches for students, families and teachers.

"This is going to be like asking an artist to paint a picture without paint. You can't have a kid do distance learning without a computer," said Tom Baumgarten, superintendent of the Morongo Unified School District in California's Mojave Desert, where all 8,000 students qualify for free lunch and most need computers for distance learning.

Baumgarten was set to order 5,000 Lenovo Chromebooks in July when his vendor called him off, saying Lenovos were getting "stopped by a government agency because of a component from China that's not allowed here," he said. He switched to HPs and was told they would arrive in time for the first day of school Aug. 26. The delivery date then changed to September, then October. The district has about 4,000 old laptops that can serve roughly half of students, but what about the rest, Baumgarten asks rhetorically. "I'm very concerned that I'm not going to be able to get everyone a computer."

Chromebooks and other low-cost PCs are the computers of choice for most budget-strapped schools.

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The delays started in the spring and intensified because of high demand and disruptions of supply chains, the same reasons that toilet paper and other pandemic necessities flew off shelves a few months ago. Then came the Trump administration's July 20 announcement targeting Chinese companies it says were implicated in forced labor or other human rights abuses against a Muslim minority population, the Uighurs. The Commerce Department imposed sanctions on 11 Chinese companies, including the manufacturer of multiple models of Lenovo laptops, which the company says will add several weeks to existing delays, according to a letter Lenovo sent to customers.

School districts are pleading with the Trump administration to resolve the issue, saying that distance learning without laptops will amount to no learning for some of the country's most vulnerable students.

"It's a tough one because I'm not condoning child slave labor for computers, but can we not hurt more children in the process?" said Matt Bartenhagen, IT director for Williston Public Schools in North Dakota, a district of 4,600 waiting on an order for 2,000 Lenovo Chromebooks. "They were supposed to be delivered in July. Then August. Then late August. The current shipping estimate is 'hopefully' by the end of the year.

The Denver Public Schools district, the largest in Colorado, is waiting for 12,500 Lenovo Chromebooks ordered in April and May. The district has scrambled to find machines, settled for whatever is available and is handing out everything they get to students that need them. Still, when school starts Wednesday, they will be about 3,000 devices short, says Lara Hussain, an IT director for the district.

"We were promised devices. Our students need devices. And as a result of not receiving devices we will have students starting the school year unable to participate. It's unconscionable," said Hussain.

Lenovo had informed Denver and other districts over the spring and summer of supply chain delays. In late July, Lenovo sent a letter to customers to say the "trade controls" announced by the Commerce Department would cause another slowdown of at least several weeks.

"This delay is a new development and is unrelated to supply constraints previously communicated," Matthew Zielinski, president of Lenovo North America said in the letter, which referred to the sanctions on a Chinese supplier, Hefei Bitland Information Technology Co. Ltd. The letter listed 23 Lenovo models for education and corporate customers made by Bitland.

"Effective immediately, we are no longer manufacturing these devices at Bitland," the letter said, adding that Lenovo is working on "a transition plan" to shift production to other sites.

A Lenovo official told California's Department of Education the company has a backlog of more than 3 million Chromebooks, said Daniel Thigpen, the department's spokesman.

Lenovo declined to respond to repeated questions from AP seeking confirmation of the backlog and details on the numbers of devices delayed, replying only to deny a question on whether computers were seized by U.S. customs, as some schools were told by suppliers.

U.S. government agencies said they have no knowledge of the computers' whereabouts and also deny any were seized.

"U.S. Customs and Border Protection does not have any record of detained laptops matching this description," the agency said in a statement.

The Department of Commerce said it added Hefei Bitland to its so-called Entity List, which restricts the export and in-country transfer of items by sanctioned companies. "It does not apply to the importation of Chromebooks from China," the department said in a statement, adding, however, "we should all agree that American school children should not be using computers from China that were produced from forced labor."

There are no nationwide tallies on the numbers of laptops and other devices that schools are waiting for. The Associated Press found that some of America's biggest school districts are among those with outstanding orders of Chromebooks, other laptops or hotspots for internet connections, including Los Angeles, Clark County, Nevada, Wake County, North Carolina, Houston, Palm Beach and Hawaii, the nation's only statewide school district.

A recent poll of California's 1,100 districts showed schools across the state are waiting on at least 300,000 backordered computers, said Mary Nicely, a senior policy advisor to the state superintendent. A survey in Alabama found that about 20 schools were waiting on 33,000 computers, said Ryan Hollingsworth, director of the School Superintendents of Alabama.

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Smaller districts in Montana, New York, Indiana, Maryland, Ohio, New Hampshire and elsewhere are also waiting on laptop orders, with delivery dates that have become moving targets.

Some of the school districts, like Los Angeles, say the outstanding orders are for replacement devices and all students who need a computer will have one. Many districts are asking parents with the means to buy devices for their children but realize that's not an option for many families.

It's also not an easy task with supplies at commercial stores running out. Best Buy's website shows 36 models of new and used Chromebooks priced under \$500, the low-cost models that are popular for students. As of this week, 33 of those models were sold out.

The backlog and delays have become so widespread that some students will be forced to start the semester without an essential piece of technology for remote learning, said Michael Flood, senior vice president of Kajeet, which works with more than 2,000 school districts in the U.S. and Canada.

Some school administrators told Flood their laptop and Chromebook suppliers hope deliveries will only be delayed by a month or so. But others are being told their machines may not be available until early 2021.

The shortage stems from exceptionally high demand at a time when the personal computer industry is still recovering from pandemic-driven precautions that shut down the factories of major PC suppliers in China during February and March. Just as the supply chain started ramping back up, new orders poured in from huge companies and government agencies with large numbers of employees working from home — in addition to school districts scrambling to secure machines, said Mikako Kitagawa, research director at Gartner Inc., which closely follows the PC industry.

"The bottom line is everyone seems to want a laptop or Chromebook right now and there just isn't enough supply of it," Kitagawa said. "It's a case of very bad timing."

To make matters worse, many school districts underestimated their needs during spring ordering, assuming that traditional in-person classes would resume in the fall.

In California, most schools were planning for some form of in-person classes in the fall but only learned in July that wouldn't be possible, when Gov. Gavin Newsom effectively ordered the majority of schools to start with remote learning. It created a mad dash for computers.

Tom Quiambao, director of technology for the Tracy Unified School District in Northern California, said he and his vendor contacted HP directly to ask why his July order for 10,000 HP laptops would take three months to be delivered. He was told, "HP is short 1.7 million units of laptops" because of production shortages in a variety of components made in China, including processors, touchscreens, motherboards and others, Quiambao said.

An HP spokeswoman declined to confirm or deny that number, saying only "we are continuing to leverage our global supply chain to meet the changing needs of our customer."

Dell offered a similarly brief response to detailed questions about a backlog.

"We can't comment on demand and supply specifically," Dell said in an emailed statement, adding the company was seeing increased orders due to virtual learning and trying "to fulfill orders as efficiently as possible."

With so many customers ordering laptops at the same time, PC manufacturers may be put in the uncomfortable position of deciding who gets them first, said Linn Huang, an analyst for the research firm International Data Corp. Those kind of pecking orders threaten to push small school districts to the back of the laptop line.

That's part of the problem for the central Texas district of Abilene, where they are waiting for 6,000 Dell Chromebooks, ordered in May and June but not expected until November.

"In Texas, there are over 1,200 school districts and they're all ordering," said district spokesman Lance Fleming. Schools are trying to get disinfecting supplies, too. "Who would have ever thought that computers and Clorox Wipes would be on the same level of need in our country."

Associated Press Writers Kathleen Foody in Chicago, Audrey McAvoy in Honolulu, Tali Arbel in New York contributed to this report.

This story corrects the name of the Morongo Unified School District in California.

2 tropical storms heading for double blow to US Gulf Coast

By DÁNICA COTO and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Two tropical storms advanced across the Caribbean on Saturday as potentially historic threats to the U.S. Gulf Coast, one dumping rain on Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Hispaniola while the other swept into the gulf through the gap between Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and Cuba.

Tropical Storms Laura and Marco were both projected to approach Louisiana's coast at or close to hurricane force just two days apart in the next several days. A hurricane watch was issued for the New Orleans metro area, which was pummeled by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005.

Two hurricanes have never appeared in the Gulf of Mexico at the same time, according to records going back to at least 1900, said Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach. The last time two tropical storms were in the Gulf together was in 1959, he said.

The projected tracks from the U.S. National Hurricane Center late Saturday pointed to both storms being together in the Gulf of Mexico on Monday, with Marco hitting Louisiana at midday and Laura making landfall in the same general area Wednesday. But large uncertainties remained for that time span, and forecasts have varied greatly so far for the two storms.

"We are in unprecedented times," Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves said at a news conference Saturday as he declared a state of emergency. "We are dealing with not only two potential storms in the next few hours, we are also dealing with COVID-19."

He urged residents to prepare for the storms and, if possible, find places to evacuate that are not public shelters.

A hurricane watch was issued for Intracoastal City, Louisiana, eastward to the Mississippi-Alabama border.

People in Louisiana headed to stores to stock up on food, water and other supplies. Raymond Monday of Gretna, though, had only a generator on his cart at Sam's Club. "We've got a freezer full of food" at home, along with large containers of water, he said.

Laura flung rain across Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands on Saturday and knocked out water service Saturday night as it whipped at the Dominican Republic and Haiti. It was predicted to move over Cuba on Sunday on its westward course to the gulf.

In Puerto Rico, the storm knocked down trees in the island's southern region and left more than 200,000 clients without power and more than 10,000 without water across the U.S. territory.

Officials said they were most concerned about the thousands of people in Puerto Rico who still have been living under blue tarps since 2017's Hurricane Maria and the hundreds of families living along the island's southern coast in homes damaged by a string of strong earthquakes this year.

Laura was centered about 25 miles (40) kilometers southeast of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, late Saturday, with maximum sustained winds of 50 mph (85 kph). It was moving west-northwest at 16 mph (26 kph).

Before the storm began moving over Hispaniola, crews in the Dominican Republic evacuated dozens of families in flood-prone areas.

Marco, meanwhile, was centered about 470 miles (755 kilometers) south-southeast of the mouth of the Mississippi River and was moving to the north-northwest at 13 mph (20 kph). It had maximum sustained winds of 65 mph (100 kph) and could become a hurricane sometime Sunday.

Carlos Joaquín González, governor of Mexico's Quintana Roo state, celebrated that Marco's changed trajectory spared his state's beaches, including those in Cancun, the country's top tourist destination.

The National Hurricane Center said it expected the storms to stay far enough apart to prevent direct interaction as the region braces for the peak of the Atlantic hurricane season, which is forecast to be unusually active.

Both storms were expected to bring 3 to 6 inches (8 to 15 centimeters) of rain to areas they were pass-

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ing over or near, threatening widespread flooding across a vast region.

"A lot of people are going to be impacted by rainfall and storm surge in the Gulf of Mexico," said Joel Cline, the tropical program coordinator for the National Weather Service. "Since you simply don't know, you really need to make precautions."

It seems fitting for such an unusual twin threat to arrive in 2020, said University of Miami hurricane researcher Brian McNoldy.

"Of course, we have to have two simultaneously land-falling hurricanes," McNoldy said. "It's best not to ask what's next.")

Forecasters said that while atmospheric conditions were favorable for Laura to grow, its passage over the mountains of Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Cuba could tear it apart or weaken it before it entered warm Gulf of Mexico waters conducive to growth.

Officials in the Florida Keys, which Laura might pass over, declared a local state of emergency and issued a mandatory evacuation order for anyone living on boats, in mobile homes and in campers. Tourists staying in hotels should be aware of hazardous weather conditions and consider altering their plans starting on Sunday, Monroe County officials said in a news release.

Citing both storm systems, Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards declared a state of emergency Friday night. "It is too soon to know exactly where, when or how these dual storms will affect Louisiana, but now is the time for our people to prepare for these storms," Edwards said in a statement.

Laura had earlier forced the closure of schools and government offices in the eastern Caribbean islands of Anguilla and Antigua, according to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency.

Associated Press writer Dánica Coto reported this story in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and AP writer Seth Borenstein reported from Kensington, Md. AP writers Freida Frisaro in Miami and Janet McConnaughey in New Orleans contributed to this report.

Trump's vision of American greatness at center of convention

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans will aim to recast the story of Donald Trump's presidency when they hold their national convention, featuring speakers drawn from everyday life as well as cable news and the White House while drawing a stark contrast with Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden.

Trump is looking to shift his campaign away from being a referendum on a presidency ravaged by a pandemic and economic collapse and toward a choice between vastly different visions of America's future. Reshaping the national conversation around the race has taken on greater urgency for Trump, who trails in public and private surveys as the coronavirus continues to ravage the nation's economy and his reelection chances.

The four-day event is themed "Honoring the Great American Story," according to four Trump campaign officials involved with the planning process but not authorized to discuss it by name. The convention will feature prominently a number of well-known Trump supporters, including members of the Trump family, but also those whom the GOP say are members of the "silent majority" of Americans who have been aided by Trump's policies. Some have been "silenced" by a "cancel culture" pushed by Democrats, the campaign officials said.

Where Democrats highlighted Republicans who crossed party lines to back Biden as an indictment of Trump's leadership, the GOP lineup will primarily feature figures on the conservative media circuit with the hope that they can deliver red meat for the president's loyal supporters — though planners say they will feature some people who did not vote for Trump in 2016.

Planners insist they will put forward a more "positive" convention than Democrats' roasting of Trump. Yet the president also appears intent on trying to seize on the nation's cultural divides, particularly around issues of racial injustice and policing, drawing on grievances to motivate his base.

The officials outlined the campaign plans to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to discuss the emerging schedule.

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The opening night Monday will highlight the "Land of Promise," aiming to show how Trump helped renew the American dream. Featured speakers include South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, who will deliver the coveted closing speech of the televised prime-time block; former Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley; presidential son Donald Trump, Jr.; staunch congressional defenders Reps. Matt Gaetz of Florida and Jim Jordan of Ohio; and Republican National Committee Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel.

Tanya Weinreis, a Montana coffee shop owner who received federal loans to pay her employees during the coronavirus, will also speak, as will Andrew Pollack, whose daughter Meadow was among those killed in the 2018 school shooting in Parkland, Florida.

Tuesday's theme is "Land of Opportunity," which is expected to cast Biden's plans as "socialist" and "radical left." Speakers will highlight Trump's actions on trade, abortion and the nation's opioid crisis. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will address Trump's foreign policy record, an unusual foray into domestic politics by the nation's top diplomat, and Trump children Eric and Tiffany Trump will also speak.

Another speaker will be Nicholas Sandmann, who as a student at a Catholic high school in Kentucky gained national attention last year for his interaction with a Native American man during demonstrations in Washington. Media commentary in the aftermath of the viral video from the interaction depicted the students as racially insensitive. Sandmann and the Native American man, Nathan Phillips, later said they were both trying to defuse tensions among conflicting groups that converged at the Lincoln Memorial.

First lady Melania Trump will deliver the marquee address of the night from a newly renovated White House Rose Garden.

Wednesday, themed "Land of Heroes," will feature a raft of conservative personalities including South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, White House counselor Kellyanne Conway, former acting Director of National Intelligence Richard Grenell, Rep. Lee Zeldin of New York and presidential daughter-in-law Lara Trump.

Clarence Henderson, a civil rights figure from the 1960s, is also on deck to address the "true meaning of peaceful protest," planners said, as Trump plans to highlight police officers amid a nationwide call for policing reform after the May death of George Floyd in police custody.

Vice President Mike Pence will deliver the keynote Wednesday from Baltimore's Fort McHenry, which inspired "The Star-Spangled Banner" in 1814, to highlight Trump's opposition to professional athletes who protest racial injustice by kneeling during the national anthem.

Speakers on the final night, themed "Land of Greatness," will include Alice Johnson, the criminal justice advocate whose sentence on drug crimes was commuted by Trump at the urging of celebrity Kim Kardashian; Carl and Marsha Mueller, the parents of human rights activist Kayla Mueller, who died while being held by the Islamic State group in Syria; and evangelist Rev. Franklin Graham.

Trump's personal attorney, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, whose attempts to dig up dirt in Ukraine on Biden's family were at the center of the president's impeachment last year, will also address the final night of the convention. Republican congressional leaders Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky and Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California and Democrat-turned-Republican Rep. Jeff Van Drew of New Jersey are to deliver remarks, as will Ultimate Fighting Championship President Dana White.

Trump will close out the convention during an unprecedented address from the White House South Lawn. He and Ivanka Trump, his daughter and senior adviser who is set to introduce him, will speak from an elaborate stage in front of the Executive Mansion. The move has drawn criticism from Democrats and ethics groups, who argue that Trump is violating the spirit, if not the letter, of federal law by using the White House grounds to stage his convention.

While the president is not covered by the Hatch Act, his aides cannot appear at the convention in their official capacities and staffers are extremely limited in what they may do to help pull off the convention. Planners insist they are following all ethics rules.

Plans for the GOP event have rapidly come together over the last six weeks, since it became apparent to the party that Trump could not hold an in-person convention at his backup site of Jacksonville, Florida. Trump was forced to move most of the convention out of Charlotte, North Carolina, the original host city, because of restrictive state coronavirus precautions.

Republicans — and Trump himself — closely watched last week's Democratic convention for cues on

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what worked and what didn't in the virtual format, hoping that will provide an advantage in putting together their week of events.

One major difference, Republicans said, will be the emphasis on live rather than taped events — and holding events with crowds to the greatest extent practicable. Trump repeatedly criticized Democrats' reliance on pre-taped videos, rather than live addresses, saying Tuesday, "Live, by the way, is always much more exciting."

A small crowd was expected for Melania Trump's speech in the Rose Garden, with a larger cohort watching in person when Pence speaks Wednesday from Fort McHenry. More than 1,000 guests are anticipated on the South Lawn when Trump delivers his acceptance speech Thursday night. The RNC has requested approval to launch fireworks from the National Mall after Trump's speech.

Unlike Democrats, Republicans are not expected to feature a roll call of states to formally renominate the president — traditionally one of the most dramatic moments of a convention. The actual voting will be taking place in truncated format Monday morning in Charlotte with a condensed recap expected to air later during the evening.

The Latest: South Korea sees steady rise in virus cases

By The Associated Press undefined

BEIJING — China on Sunday reported 12 new confirmed coronavirus cases and no additional deaths. The National Health Commission said 422 patients were being treated, including 16 in critical condition. The death toll in China, where the outbreak began in December, stands at 4,634.

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea has added 397 new coronavirus cases, counting its tenth straight day of triple-digit increases as the speed of viral spread nears the levels the country saw during the worst of its outbreak in spring.

The resurgence, which began in the densely populated capital area before spreading to practically every major city and provincial town over the past week, is a major setback for the country that had been eager to tout its hard-won gains against the virus.

After avoiding stringent social distancing measures because of concerns over a fragile economy, officials have now banned large gatherings, closed nightspots, beaches and churches and removed fans from professional sports in a desperate effort to stem transmissions.

Sunday's daily jump in infections marked the third-consecutive day of over 300 and the highest since the 483 cases reported on March 7, when the country was dealing with a spike of transmissions in its southeastern region.

The KCDC linked 297 of the new cases to the Seoul metropolitan area, home to half of the country's 51 million population, where health workers have struggled to track infections tied to various sources, including churches, schools, restaurants and workplaces.

Cases were also reported in other major cities such as Busan, Gwangju, Daejeon and Daegu, the epicenter of the country's previous major outbreak in late February and March.

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

- World reaches 800,000 confirmed coronavirus deaths
- Florida records 4,300 new virus cases, 106 deaths; hospitalizations fall
- Quarantines, closures: Confusion reigns as schools reopen
- How does coronavirus spread at a concert? Germans do a test of negative volunteers, collecting data in a "real life" simulation of a pop concert with strict health and safety controls.
- Their final breaths are tormented. Miami ICU nurse Rublas Ruiz has seen too many of them, the last gasps of 17 men and women who died of the coronavirus.
- Fifteen Minnesota residents have contracted the coronavirus after being exposed during the 10-day Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in South Dakota. Minnesota health officials expect the number to grow.

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

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — The University of Alabama has issued a temporary prohibition on student events, including off-campus parties and fraternity and sorority gatherings.

The university says its issuing a 14-day moratorium on all in-person student events outside of classroom instruction. Social gatherings are prohibited both on and off campus and the common areas of dormitories and fraternity and sorority houses are closed, according to the new guidelines.

The announcement came less than a week after city and school officials raised the alarm about large crowds waiting outside bars.

Alabama has confirmed nearly 2,000 deaths in the state, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

BOSTON — More cases of coronavirus have been traced to a recent wedding reception in Maine. Health officials say 53 cases have been linked to the Aug. 7 reception in Millinocket. A hospital says one person associated with the outbreak has died.

The reception at the Big Moose Inn exceeded the state's indoor gathering limit, among other violations of state rules. About 65 people attended the event. The limit was 50.

Thirty-two new cases and one additional death was announced Saturday by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Maine has reached nearly 4,320 cases and 131 deaths.

MIDDLETON, Wis. — A Middleton coffee shop has lost its lease after violating Dane County's mask mandate.

The Wisconsin State Journal reports that Helbachs Coffee Roasters and Kitchen will close on Aug. 31. The shop says in an Instagram post Thursday its landlord has refused to renew its lease and the decision to close comes on the heels of "enforcement action, negative public statements and continued vindictive and hostile behavior" by county health officials toward the shop.

Public Health Madison and Dane County issued the shop three citations for violating the order. The shop was facing revocation of its food and drink license because of its refusal to abide by the order.

The shop responded with a lawsuit, declaring itself "a mask-free zone."

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida recorded 4,300 new cases and 106 coronavirus deaths on Saturday.

The state is registering an average of 156 coronavirus deaths per day this month, which likely makes COVID-19 the state's No. 1 killer during that period. Cancer and heart disease each average about 125 deaths per day, according to the Florida Department of Health.

The number of new cases continues a downward trend from more than 10,000 cases per day a month ago. During the past week, the state's positivity rate on tests has been 10.8%.

Hospitalizations due to COVID-19 have been declining. On Saturday, 4,773 patients were treated for the disease in Florida hospitals compared to Friday's 4,909 and Thursday's 5,340. That number has fallen from a peak above 9,500 on July 23.

Overall, the state has nearly 600,000 confirmed cases since March 1 and 10,410 deaths.

PHOENIX — The Arizona Department of Health Services reported 996 new cases and 68 confirmed coronavirus deaths on Saturday.

That increased the state's totals to 197,895 cases and 4,756 deaths, as reports of infections and deaths continued to slow.

The coronavirus hospitalization numbers from the health department showed a downward trend, posting levels from late May and early June before Arizona became a national hot spot. New case and death reports have dropped since mid-July.

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The seven-day rolling average of new daily cases dropped from 1,578 on Aug. 7 to 740 on Aug. 21. The rolling average of deaths per day dropped from 55 to 38.

ROME — Vacationers returning to the Italian mainland from Sardinia helped push Italy's daily new coronavirus caseload far past 1,000 on Saturday, reaching the high for the first time since early May.

Confirmed cases increased from 947 on Friday to 1,071 on Saturday, with many infections confirmed in travelers who were tested as they disembarked from airplanes or ferries.

Authorities in Lazio, the south-central region including Rome, say 45 percent of its 215 new cases Saturday were from people returning from Sardinia, where several clusters have been linked to discos or private parties on the posh Emerald Coast resort area.

While the average age of infection early in the outbreak hovered near 70, it's now 30.

Italy has more than 258,000 confirmed cases. With three more deaths, the known total has reached 35,400.

NEW YORK — The world hit a grim coronavirus milestone Saturday with 800,000 confirmed deaths and close to 23 million confirmed cases.

That's according to a tally kept by Johns Hopkins University. Governments have been attempting to balance public health with economic health.

Officials believe the true numbers are far higher because of a lack of testing and reporting. In the U.S., the nation with the most infections, health officials believe there may be 10 times more cases than the confirmed 5.6 million. The U.S. also leads the world in deaths, with more than 175,000.

The news comes as South Korea, once considered a coronavirus success story, banned large gatherings, shut nightspots and churches and banned fans from professional sports to slow a viral resurgence. Germany, which also initially slowed the virus, reported a four-month high of more than 2,000 cases on Saturday. Schools there reopened two weeks ago, and at least 41 schools this week reported students or teachers were infected.

In the U.S., schools have begun to reopen, with coronavirus outbreaks triggering sudden closings, quarantines and anxiety among parents.

BERLIN — Germany's disease control reported 2,034 new cases of coronavirus on Saturday, the first time the daily national increase has topped 2,000 since the end of April.

The Robert Koch Institute calls the coronavirus outbreaks "very concerning." They are reported in various settings, including nursing homes and hospitals, schools, and "especially among travelers and in the context of religious or family events."

Germany's 16 states are resuming in-class schooling. There are concerns about the risks of virus clusters at schools spreading to families and others. In Berlin, at least 41 schools this week reported students or teachers had become infected.

The country was widely applauded for its quick and efficient effort to initially slow the spread of the pandemic, which peaked at more than 6,000 daily cases near the end of March and early April. But the figures have been increasing in recent weeks.

Overall, Germany has more than 232,000 confirmed cases and 9,200 deaths.

BREMERTON, Wash. — Washington state health officials say more than 30 coronavirus cases have been reported in an outbreak at a Bremerton hospital.

The Washington State Department of Health says the outbreak has affected multiple units at St. Michael Medical Center, which is part of the CHI Franciscan system. Officials say the outbreak involves hospital staff and employees.

The Kitsap Public Health District and state health officials say they are working with the hospital to contain the outbreak after the first case was reported late last week. Officials say patients discharged from the

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impacted units have been notified and new admissions and visitation at the hospital is currently limited.

NEW YORK — New York state will apply for a federal program for unemployment money now that the state won't have to add funds.

President Donald Trump had signed an executive order this month making money available from a FEMA fund after a new pandemic relief bill wasn't reached. The \$400-per-week benefit put the onus on the states to pay \$100 a week of that amount.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo called the idea "laughable" because state budgets are cash-strapped from the coronavirus. The U.S. Department of Labor issued guidance last week saying states would not have to contribute.

New York budget director Robert Mujica says, "the federal government has blinked and will no longer make states provide funding they do not have."

PRAGUE — The Czech Republic has recorded its biggest single-day increase in coronavirus cases.

The Health Ministry says there were 506 new cases in the latest 24-hour period. The previous high was 377 cases registered on March 27.

The announcement Saturday comes a day after neighboring Slovakia also reported a record daily increase of infected people.

The Czech Republic has 21,551 confirmed cases and 411 deaths.

NEW DELHI — India recorded nearly 70,000 new coronavirus infections as the disease spreads across the country's southern states after plateauing in the capital and the financial center of Mumbai.

India's Health Ministry reported 69,878 new cases on Saturday, bringing the total to 2,975,701. Globally India has been reporting the biggest daily rise in cases for 18 consecutive days.

Some 2.2 million people have recovered from the disease in India since the first case was diagnosed in late January.

India has the third-highest caseload behind the United States and Brazil. Its 55,794 deaths is the fourth-highest death toll in the world.

WASHINGTON — Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden says he would do whatever was needed to keep the country safe amid the coronavirus pandemic even if that meant shutting down the country.

Biden made the comment in an interview with ABC. The interview airs Sunday night, but clips were provided Friday.

Biden says, "I will be prepared to do whatever it takes to save lives because we cannot get the country moving until we control the virus." He adds that if scientists recommended shutting down the country, "I would shut it down."

President Donald Trump is encouraging schools to reopen and people to get back to work. The U.S. has had more than 5.5 million confirmed coronavirus cases, with more than 175,000 deaths.

In just a week, wildfires burn 1 million acres in California

By DAISY NGUYEN and ADAM BEAM Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Weary firefighters in California raced Saturday to slow the spread of wildfires that burned nearly one million acres statewide in a week and destroyed hundreds of homes ahead an expected weather change that could bring more lightning strikes like the ones that sparked many of the blazes.

Responding to the emergency, President Donald Trump issued a major disaster declaration to provide federal assistance. Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a statement that the declaration will also help people in counties affected by the fires with crisis counseling, housing and other social services.

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Two clusters of wildfires in the San Francisco Bay Area grew to become the second- and third-largest wildfires in recent state history by size. Light winds and cooler and more humid nighttime weather helped fire crews make progress on those fires and a third group of fires south of San Francisco ahead of the forecast of warm, dry weather, erratic wind gusts and lightning, state fire officials said.

The National Weather Service issued a red flag warning of high fire danger across the Bay Area and along the Central Coast, beginning from Sunday morning to Monday afternoon.

"The worst is not behind us. We are in a battle rhythm," California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) Chief Thom Porter tweeted.

Since thousands of lightning strikes began on Aug. 15, the state reported 585 wildfires that have burned nearly a million acres, or 1,562 square miles (4,046 square kilometers), according to Cal Fire.

Many were small and remote. The bulk of damage was from three fire "complexes" that were ravaging forest and rural areas in and around the San Francisco Bay Area. They have burned 1,045 square miles (2,700 square kilometers). The fires have killed five people, torched nearly 700 homes and other structures and forced tens of thousands from their houses.

"Tuesday night when I went to bed I had a beautiful home on a beautiful ranch," said 81-year-old Hank Hanson of Vacaville. "By Wednesday night, I have nothing but a bunch of ashes."

In Santa Cruz County, the fire was threatening Boulder Creek, an old logging community of about 5,000 in the Santa Cruz Mountains on the edge of California's oldest state park -- Big Basin Redwoods. Fire officials said they expected the blaze to reach the community, but they took advantage of recent good weather to try to "herd" flames around the town.

Earlier in the week, fire officials in charge of each of the three major wildfires said they were strapped for resources. Some firefighters were working 72-hour shifts instead of the usual 24 hours. By Friday, the approximately 13,700 firefighters on the line began to get help on the ground and with aircraft from 10 states, along with the National Guard and U.S. military.

Those fires were a top priority. But in a sign of how overburdened the state's firefighting agency is, fire officials said only 1,400 firefighters were assigned to battle the LNU Lightning Complex fire in wine country north of San Francisco, which was only 15% contained.

In comparison, about 5,000 firefighters were assigned to the Mendocino Complex fire in 2018, the largest fire in recent state history.

"All of our resources remain stretched to capacity that we have not seen in recent history," said Shana Jones, the chief for Cal Fire's Sonoma-Lake-Napa unit.

"We are making progress, but we are not out of the woods," she said.

Underscoring the danger the fires pose for firefighters, the Sonoma County sheriff's office released dramatic video of the helicopter rescue Friday night of two firefighters trapped on a ridge line at Point Reyes National Seashore. They were hoisted to safety as flames advanced.

"Had it not been for that helicopter, those firefighters would certainly have perished," Sonoma County Sheriff Mark Essick said.

Containment for the fire burning in the Santa Cruz Mountains and along the coast of San Mateo County, south of San Francisco, was at just 5%, and 115 homes and other structures had been destroyed. Firefighters established a fire break aimed at protecting the evacuated University of California, Santa Cruz campus and the surrounding area.

"It's not a silver bullet. But it gives us a really good stronghold to keep the fire from moving south toward those communities," Cal Fire Battalion Chief Mark Brunton said.

Beam reported from Sacramento, California.

This version corrects that the official speaking about the fire in the Santa Cruz mountains was Mark Brunton, not Mike Smith.

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House passes bill to reverse changes blamed for mail delays

By LISA MASCARO and MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With heated debate over mail delays, the House approved legislation in a rare Saturday session that would reverse recent changes in U.S. Postal Service operations and send \$25 billion to shore up the agency ahead of the November election.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi recalled lawmakers to Washington over objections from Republicans dismissing the action as a stunt. President Donald Trump urged a no vote, including in a Saturday tweet, railing against mail-in ballots expected to surge in the COVID-19 crisis. He has said he wants to block extra funds to the Postal Service.

“Don’t pay any attention to what the president is saying, because it is all designed to suppress the vote,” Pelosi said at the Capitol.

Pelosi called the Postal Service the nation’s “beautiful thread” connecting Americans and said voters should “ignore” the president’s threats.

The daylong session came as an uproar over mail disruptions puts the Postal Service at the center of the nation’s tumultuous election year, with Americans rallying around one of the nation’s oldest and more popular institutions. Millions of people are expected to opt for mail-in ballots to avoid polling places during the coronavirus pandemic.

Ahead of voting the president tweeted, “This is all another HOAX.”

More than two dozen Republicans broke with the president and backed the bill, which passed 257-150. Democrats led approval, but the legislation is certain to stall in the GOP-held Senate. The White House said the president would veto it.

Facing a backlash over operational changes, new Postmaster General Louis DeJoy testified Friday in the Senate that his “No. 1 priority” is to ensure election mail arrives on time.

But the new postal leader, a Trump ally, said he would not restore the cuts to mailboxes and sorting equipment that have already been made. He could not provide senators with a plan for handling the ballot crush for the election. DeJoy is set to return Monday to testify before the House Oversight Committee.

“The American people don’t want anyone messing with the post office,” said Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., the chair of the Oversight Committee and author of the bill. “They just want their mail.”

But Republicans countered that complaints about mail delivery disruptions are overblown, and no emergency funding is needed right now.

“It’s a silly, silly bill,” said Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla.

Despite the postmaster general’s vow election mail will arrive on time, Democrats remain skeptical. Maloney’s committee on Saturday released internal Postal Service documents warning about steep declines and delays in a range of mail services since early July, shortly after DeJoy took the helm. He acknowledged at the Senate hearing there has been a “dip” in service, but disputed reports of widespread problems. The Board of Governors of the Postal Service announced a bipartisan committee to oversee mail voting.

The bill would reverse the cuts by prohibiting any changes made after January, and provide funds to the agency.

In a memo to House Republicans, leaders derided the legislation as a postal “conspiracy theory” act. Many GOP lawmakers echoed such sentiments during a lively floor debate.

“I like the post office, I really do,” said Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Wis. But he said, “We have no crisis here.”

Nevertheless, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell is eyeing a \$10 billion postal rescue as part of the next COVID-19 relief package. While Trump has said he wants to block emergency funding for the agency, the White House has said it would be open to more postal funding as part of a broader bill.

Hundreds of lawmakers returned to Washington for the weekend session, but dozens cast votes by proxy under House rules that allow them to stay away during the COVID-19 crisis. Another lawmaker, Rep. Dan Meuser, R-Pa., announced Saturday he had tested positive for the virus.

Trump’s chief of staff, Mark Meadows, was on Capitol Hill meeting Saturday with GOP House leader Kevin McCarthy and other lawmakers, according to a Republican aide granted anonymity to discuss the

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private sessions.

The Postal Service has been struggling financially under a decline in mail volume, COVID-19-related costs and a rare and cumbersome congressional requirement to fund in advance its retiree health care benefits.

For many, the Postal Service provides a lifeline, delivering not just cards and letters but also prescription drugs, financial statements and other items that are especially needed by mail during the pandemic.

The postal board of governors, appointed by Trump, selected DeJoy to take the job as postmaster general. A GOP donor, he previously owned a logistics business that was a longtime Postal Service contractor. He maintains significant financial stakes in companies that do business or compete with the agency, raising conflict of interest questions.

In a statement, the Postal Service said DeJoy has made all required financial disclosures, but he might have to divest some holdings if conflicts arise.

Republicans have long sought changes to have the agency run more like a private company, and Trump often complains the Postal Service should be charging Amazon and other companies higher rates for package deliveries. The founder of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, also owns The Washington Post, a publication that Trump frequently derides as "fake news" over critical stories of him.

Others say the Postal Service is not expected to be solely a money-making enterprise, often delivering to far-flung places where it is not efficient to operate.

Associated Press writers Anthony Izaguirre in Charleston, W.Va., and Christina A. Cassidy in Atlanta contributed to this report.

The Associated Press produced this coverage with support from the Carnegie Corp. of New York.

2 bodies found, 2 missing after explosion in Texas port

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (AP) — The bodies of two missing crew members of a dredging boat were found Saturday following an explosion a day earlier in the Port of Corpus Christi in Texas, according to the U.S. Coast Guard.

Two other crew members of the dredging vessel Waymon L Boyd remain missing and the search for them continues, Coast Guard Capt. Jason Gunning said during a Saturday afternoon news conference.

The explosion happened at about 8 a.m. Friday when the vessel struck a submerged pipeline, according to the Coast Guard, and Port of Corpus Christi officials said it was a natural gas pipeline.

"Our thoughts and prayers go out to the impacted crewmen and their families," Sean Strawbridge, CEO, Port of Corpus Christi, said Saturday.

"A full investigation is underway; however, search and rescue efforts are our first priority. It will not be clear for some time the cause of this accident, and any definitive statements to the contrary would be premature," Strawbridge added.

The Waymon L Boyd is owned by Houston-based marine construction contractor Orion Marine Group.

"We greatly appreciate the efforts of the U.S. Coast Guard and other responders in their efforts to recover our missing crewmen," Orion CEO Mark Stauffer said in the statement.

The fire onboard the vessel was first extinguished Friday afternoon, but sparked again and was finally put out at approximately 10 p.m. Friday, shortly before the vessel broke apart and sunk, the Coast Guard said.

The vessel carried a maximum of about 6,000 gallons of diesel fuel, said Brent Koza, the regional manager for the Texas General Land Office, which investigates oil spills.

"We have identified and are preparing for that as our worst case discharge scenario," and diesel is being recovered from the channel and around environmentally sensitive areas, Koza said.

Brooke West, spokeswoman with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, said air quality tests have found no air pollution and testing of the waterway is planned.

"TCEQ will collect water samples from the ship channel near the site of the incident ... this is still an active emergency response event," West said.

How does coronavirus spread at a concert? Germans do a test

BERLIN (AP) — Germany held a pop concert Saturday to see how those attending could spread coronavirus if they had it.

German researchers studying COVID-19 packed part of a Leipzig arena with volunteers, collecting data in a “real life” simulation of a pop concert but one with strict health and safety controls.

About 1,500 people took part in the experiment run by the University Hospital in Halle, each taking a coronavirus test ahead of time, testing negative, and having to wear protective masks throughout the day’s testing.

Researchers equipped each volunteer with contact tracers to record their routes in the arena and track the path of the aerosols — the small particles that could carry the virus — they emitted as they mingled and talked. Fluorescent disinfectants were used to highlight which surfaces at the mock concert were touched most frequently.

German pop singer Tim Bendzko appeared on stage to create as realistic a reaction from the crowd as possible for three scenarios.

Afterward, he said he had expected the day to feel more sterile and like an experiment but that the crowd was into the concert.

“We really had a lot of fun,” he said. “We survived drive-in concerts this summer and in that respect, for us, this is a first step toward normalcy.”

Under the first scenario, which simulated the very beginning of a pandemic, the concert-goers were kept close together in the room with no social distancing. In the second, the researchers instituted hygiene measures and larger social distances between the volunteers. In the third, a distance of 1.5 meters (5 feet) between participants was strictly enforced.

Stefan Moritz, who led the study, said researchers had only about a third of the volunteers they had hoped for, partially because many Germans are still away on summer holidays and partially due to fears of participating even with the safety measures taken. But he said the experiment had gone well.

“We are satisfied with the numbers,” he told reporters. “We have good data quality.”

The results of the study are expected in four to six weeks, he said.

In general, Germany has been praised for its handling of the pandemic with its rapid response and robust testing. It has registered only 9,267 confirmed virus deaths so far, one-fourth of Britain’s virus death toll.

But the numbers have been rising recently, and Germany’s disease control center reported 2,034 new cases of COVID-19 on Saturday, the first time the daily national increase has topped 2,000 since the end of April.

The Robert Koch Institute said coronavirus outbreaks are being reported in nursing homes, hospitals, schools and “especially among travelers and in the context of religious or family events.”

“The trend is very concerning,” the agency said.

Germany’s 16 states are in the process of resuming in-class teaching at schools. The possible risks of virus clusters building up in educational institutions and then spreading to families and further into society has been a matter of great concern.

In Berlin, one of the first states to return, at least 41 schools this week reported that students or teachers have become infected, and hundreds of them have been put into quarantine.

This story corrects the spelling of Leipzig.

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

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London's famous Tower Bridge gets stuck in an open position

LONDON (AP) — London's famous Tower Bridge, which crosses the River Thames in the heart of the British capital, was stuck open on Saturday, leaving traffic in chaos and onlookers amazed at the sight.

The historic bascule-and-suspension bridge failed to close after opening to allow ships to pass underneath on the Thames. City of London police tweeted shortly after 5 p.m. that the bridge was closed to pedestrians and traffic and mechanics were working to fix the problem. An hour later, police tweeted that the bridge had reopened.

Tower Bridge is 244 meters (800 feet) long and its towers are 65 meters (213 feet) high. It was built between 1886 and 1894.

Belarus blocks over 50 news websites but protests continue

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

MINSK, Belarus (AP) — Authorities in Belarus blocked more than 50 news media websites that were covering weeks of protests demanding that authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko resign but protesters still turned out again Saturday, some forming a chain of solidarity in the capital.

The Belarusian Association of Journalists reported the shutdowns Saturday, which included sites for the U.S.-funded Radio Liberty and Belsat, a Polish-funded satellite TV channel focusing on neighboring Belarus. The state publishing house has also stopped printing two top independent newspapers, the Narodnaya Volya and Komsomolskaya Pravda, citing an equipment malfunction.

Protests unprecedented in Belarus for their size and duration broke out after the Aug. 9 presidential election, in which election officials say Lukashenko won a sixth term in a landslide. Protesters allege the officials results are fraudulent and are calling for Lukashenko to resign after 26 years in power.

Police responded harshly to the protests at first, arresting 7,000 people and beating many of them. But the police crackdown only widened the scope of the protests, and now anti-government strikes have been called at some of the country's main factories, former bases of support for Lukashenko. Some police have posted videos of themselves burning their uniforms and quitting in disgust at the government's response.

In an enormous show of defiance, an estimated 200,000 protesters rallied Aug. 16 in the capital, Minsk. Lukashenko's main election challenger, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, has called for another massive show of opposition this Sunday.

"We are closer than ever to our dream," she said in a video message from Lithuania, where she took refuge after the election, knowing that some previous presidential challengers in Belarus had been jailed for years.

Public shows of support for Lukashenko, who has ruled Belarus with an iron fist since 1994, have been comparatively modest. A pro-government rally in Minsk on Aug. 16 attracted about a quarter as many people as the protest march. On Saturday, only about 25 people showed up for a bicycle ride to support the president.

On Saturday, hundreds of women dressed in white formed a human chain in Minsk as sign of protest. Another demonstration in the evening was attended by 3,000 people.

"Threats, intimidation, blocking no longer work. Hundreds of thousands of Belarusians are telling him 'go away' from all corners and squares," said Anna Skuratovich, one of the women in the chain.

Protesters say they are fed up with the country's declining living standards and have been angered at Lukashenko's dismissal of the coronavirus pandemic, as well as his decades of repressing dissent.

"Lukashenko can't propose anything other than tears for the USSR, bans and truncheons," said Tatian Orlovich, in the crowd at the evening protest.

Lukashenko alleges that the protests are inspired by Western forces including the United States and that NATO is deploying forces near Belarus' western border. The alliance firmly denies that claim.

The 65-year-old leader renewed the allegation Saturday during a visit to a military exercise in the Grodno region, near the borders of Poland and Lithuania.

"You see that they are already dragging an 'alternative president' here," he said, referring to Tsikhanous-

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kaya. "Military support is evident — the movement of NATO troops to the borders."

Lukashenko later spoke to a rally of several thousand supporters in Grodno, where he threatened to close factories that are on still strike as of Monday. Strikes have hit some of the country's major companies, including vehicle and fertilizer manufacturers, a potential blow to the largely state-controlled economy that has been struggling for years.

Authorities on Friday threatened demonstrators with criminal charges in a bid to stop the protests. Investigators also summoned several opposition activists for questioning as part of a criminal probe into a council they created with the goal of coordinating a transition of power for the former Soviet republic of 9.5 million people.

Jim Heintz in Moscow contributed to this story.

Pompeo, Kushner to Mideast as US presses Arab-Israeli peace

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration will send two top officials to the Middle East this week in a bid to capitalize on momentum from the historic agreement between Israeli and the United Arab Emirates to establish diplomatic relations.

Three diplomats say Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and President Donald Trump's senior adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner plan to make separate, multiple-nation visits to the region in the coming days to push Arab-Israeli rapprochement in the aftermath of the Israel-UAE deal.

Pompeo is expected to depart on Sunday for Israel, Bahrain, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Sudan, according to the diplomats, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the itinerary has not yet been finalized or publicly announced. Kushner plans to leave later in the week for Israel, Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Morocco, the diplomats said.

Neither trip is expected to result in announcements of immediate breakthrough, the diplomats said, although both are aimed at finalizing at least one, and potentially more, normalization deals with Israel in the near future.

Pompeo also plans to meet in Qatar with members of the Taliban to discuss intra-Afghan peace talks that are key to the withdrawal of remaining U.S. forces in Afghanistan, the diplomats said.

The White House and State Department had no comment on the planned trips, which will come as the administration steps up efforts to push for Arab-Israeli normalization even without a resolution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

They also come as the administration has taken the controversial step of triggering the restoration of all international sanctions on Iran, something that only Israel and the Gulf Arab nations have publicly supported.

Israel and the United Arab Emirates announced on Aug. 13 they would establish full diplomatic relations, in a U.S.-brokered deal that required Israel to halt its contentious plan to annex occupied West Bank land sought by the Palestinians.

The historic agreement delivered a key foreign policy victory to Trump as he seeks reelection and reflected a changing Middle East in which shared concerns about archenemy Iran have largely overtaken traditional Arab support for the Palestinians.

U.S. and Israeli officials have suggested that more Arab nations may soon follow the UAE's lead, with Bahrain and Oman believed to be closest to sealing such deals.

Ketamine that's injected during arrests draws new scrutiny

By PATTY NIEBERG Associated Press/Report for America

DENVER (AP) — Police stopped Elijah McClain on the street in suburban Denver last year after deeming the young Black man suspicious. He was thrown into a chokehold, threatened with a dog and stun gun, then subjected to another law enforcement tool before he died: a drug called ketamine.

Paramedics inject it into people like McClain as a sedative, often at the behest of police who believe

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suspects are out of control. Officially, ketamine is used in emergencies when there's a safety concern for medical staff or the patient. But it's increasingly found in arrests and has become another flashpoint in the debate over law enforcement policies and brutality against people of color.

An analysis by The Associated Press of policies on ketamine and cases where the drug was used during police encounters uncovered a lack of police training, conflicting medical standards and nonexistent protocols that have resulted in hospitalizations and even deaths.

On Monday, it will have been a year since McClain, 23, was stopped by officers responding to a 911 call about a suspicious person wearing a ski mask and waving his arms. Police put him in a chokehold twice and multiple officers pressed their body weight into him.

Paramedics were called and injected McClain with ketamine, but they incorrectly estimated his weight, giving him more than 1.5 times the dose he should have received. He got 500 milligrams because they thought he weighed 220 pounds, but he was only 140 pounds and should have received 315 milligrams.

He suffered cardiac arrest, was later declared brain dead and taken off life support.

"The case where somebody's got six officers on them, in a chokehold, and needs ketamine is really pretty exceptional. That just doesn't happen very often," said Dr. George Lindbeck, chairman of the National Association of State EMS Officials medical director's council. "The vast majority of these scenarios get managed at a much lower level with much less physical restraint, no need for chemical restraint or sedation."

After McClain's death, Colorado's health department opened an investigation into the growing use of ketamine, first approved for use in 2013, after the case got new attention during nationwide protests seeking police reform.

There are no federal standards for law enforcement or emergency medical personnel on the drug's use. State policies and reporting requirements vary, so it's not clear how regularly it's used during police encounters and why.

Most states and agencies say ketamine may be administered when someone exhibits "excited delirium" or agitation, which is typically associated with chronic drug abuse, mental illness or both. The drug sedates them, is supposed to have limited side effects and isn't intended to make someone lose consciousness.

Medical professionals say excited delirium is a "wastebasket term" and has no standard definition. The commonly cited characteristics include superhuman strength, imperviousness to pain and wild, uncontrollable behavior, said Dr. Paul S. Appelbaum, director of the Division of Law, Ethics & Psychiatry at Columbia University.

"It's not at all clear that these people are delirious. Moreover, it seems pretty clear that they're not all one thing, that this term tends to be applied out in the field by police who are certainly not expert in diagnosis of neuropsychiatric syndromes," he said.

Police are not trained on diagnosing any medical conditions, but most know first aid and CPR. Every police agency has different criteria for calling in paramedics, according to Jimmy Holderfield, secretary for the National Fraternal Order of Police.

"The best rule of thumb to apply here is what a 'prudent and reasonable' person would do," Holderfield said by email. "Officers are charged with the duty of protecting lives and property."

Emergency medical personnel administer ketamine when they believe it's necessary, police say. But there's growing concern over whether officers are too involved in the decision and conflicting medical opinions on using it during arrests.

The American Society of Anesthesiologists opposes it and other sedatives for law enforcement purposes, saying, "These effects can end in death when administered in a non-health care setting without appropriately trained medical personnel and necessary equipment."

Those in favor of ketamine cite its fast-acting and short-lived effects as well as scientific reports that it doesn't cause severe respiratory problems compared with other sedatives.

For police, the objective is to help deescalate a tense situation and lessen restraints they need to use, Lindbeck said. Other options include drugs like Valium or Xanax and anti-psychotics.

But Chris Burbank, vice president of law enforcement strategy for the Center for Policing Equity and a former Salt Lake City police chief is suspicious of the explanations for using it.

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"I always go back to why are we doing the business that we're doing," Burbank said. "This goes to traffic stops, this goes to pedestrian stops, this goes to search and seizure. There's not a need for some of these things."

The Food and Drug Administration approved ketamine in 1970, and its first major widespread use was as a battlefield anesthetic during the Vietnam War. In the 1980s, recreational use of the drug, as Special K, became popular for its hallucinogenic effects. Over the last decade, ketamine has been studied as a treatment for depression, and the FDA approved a nasal spray last year.

In July, a Black man in Minneapolis was injected and ended up in the hospital after his girlfriend believed he was having a diabetic seizure. But paramedics questioned which drugs Johnson had taken, apparently not believing her, Abby Wulfing wrote in a Facebook post that's gotten widespread attention.

In May 2016, Marine veteran Willard Truckenmiller got into a fight in a bar in Naples, Florida, and showed signs of "alcohol-induced excited delirium." When emergency medical workers arrived, Truckenmiller was given 500 milligrams of ketamine, then suffered cardiac arrest and died.

Another Colorado man, Elijah McKnight, 25, was given two doses totaling 750 milligrams of ketamine after a drunken altercation with police. He ended up on a ventilator in August 2019, the same month McClain was injected in Aurora, Colorado.

An official autopsy found that ketamine in McClain's blood was at "tolerable levels," but it couldn't rule out an unexpected reaction to the drug, asthma attack or irregular heartbeat.

His parents sued this month, alleging that Aurora Fire Rescue's unchecked policy and its de facto dose of 500 milligrams violated their son's constitutional rights. The lawsuit says the force officers used pushed McClain into medical distress, which compounded the "substantial overdose" and led to his death.

There were 902 reported instances of Colorado paramedics administering ketamine from 2018 to 2020, and almost 17% had complications, including cardiac arrest and oxygen deprivation, the state health department said.

In other states, police were found to take part in the decision to use the drug. In Minneapolis, a report conducted by the Office of Police Conduct Review found eight of those cases between 2016 and 2018, ranging from officers requesting paramedics use the drug to emergency medical workers asking officers for their opinions on sedating someone.

The report concluded that the lack of uniform policy on how police should interact with paramedics meant cops could potentially interfere in medical decisions.

"Even if it's a homicide suspect, we would guard that person, but we don't get in the middle — nor should we — of how that person is treated for their injuries or crisis, whatever it may be that the doctor or paramedics deem appropriate to treat this person," Burbank said.

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

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Aug. 23, the 236th day of 2020. There are 130 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 23, 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union agreed to a non-aggression treaty, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, in Moscow.

On this date:

In 1754, France's King Louis XVI was born at Versailles.

In 1775, Britain's King George III proclaimed the American colonies to be in a state of "open and avowed rebellion."

In 1912, actor, dancer, director and choreographer Gene Kelly was born Eugene Curran Kelly in Pittsburgh.

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In 1914, Japan declared war against Germany in World War I.

In 1926, silent film star Rudolph Valentino died in New York at age 31.

In 1927, amid worldwide protests, Italian-born anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were executed in Boston for the murders of two men during a 1920 robbery. (On the 50th anniversary of their executions, then-Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis issued a proclamation that Sacco and Vanzetti had been unfairly tried and convicted.)

In 1973, a bank robbery-turned-hostage-taking began in Stockholm, Sweden; the four hostages ended up empathizing with their captors, a psychological condition now referred to as "Stockholm Syndrome."

In 1982, Lebanon's parliament elected Christian militia leader Bashir Gemayel president. (Gemayel was assassinated some three weeks later.)

In 2003, former priest John Geoghan (GAY'-gun), the convicted child molester whose prosecution sparked the sex abuse scandal that shook the Roman Catholic Church nationwide, died after another inmate attacked him in a Massachusetts prison.

In 2008, Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama introduced his choice of running mate, Sen. Joe Biden of Delaware, before a crowd outside the Old State Capitol in Springfield, Ill.

In 2013, a military jury convicted Maj. Nidal Hasan in the deadly 2009 shooting rampage at Fort Hood, Texas, that claimed 13 lives; the Army psychiatrist was later sentenced to death. Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, the U.S. soldier who'd massacred 16 Afghan civilians, was sentenced at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, to life in prison with no chance of parole.

In 2018, the United States and China imposed tariff increases on an additional \$16 billion of each other's goods.

Ten years ago: A jury in Goldsboro, North Carolina, convicted former Marine Cesar Laurean of first-degree murder in the death of a pregnant colleague, Lance Cpl. Maria Lauterbach. (Laurean was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.) Tiger Woods and his wife, Elin (EE'-lihn) Nordegren, officially divorced.

Five years ago: Islamic State militants destroyed a temple at ancient ruins of Palmyra in Syria, realizing the worst fears archaeologists had for the fate of the 2,000-year-old Roman-era city after the extremists seized it and beheaded a local scholar. The United Arab Emirates said its military had freed a British hostage, Robert Douglas Semple, who was kidnapped 18 months earlier ago by al-Qaida in Yemen. Ohio State became the first unanimous preseason No. 1 in The Associated Press college football poll.

One year ago: The Supreme Court said 86-year-old Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had completed radiation therapy for a cancerous tumor on her pancreas, and there was no evidence of the disease remaining. Billionaire industrialist David Koch, who with his brother Charles was a major donor to conservative causes and educational groups, died at the age of 79. President Donald Trump threatened to use the emergency power granted by a powerful but obscure federal law to make good on his tweeted "order" to U.S. businesses to cut ties in China.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Vera Miles is 90. Actor Barbara Eden is 89. Political satirist Mark Russell is 88. Pro Football Hall of Famer Sonny Jurgensen is 86. Actor Richard Sanders is 80. Ballet dancer Patricia McBride is 78. Former Surgeon General Antonia Novello is 76. Pro Football Hall of Famer Rayfield Wright is 75. Country singer Rex Allen Jr. is 73. Actor David Robb is 73. Singer Linda Thompson is 73. Actor Shelley Long is 71. Actor-singer Rick Springfield is 71. Country singer-musician Woody Paul (Riders in the Sky) is 71. Queen Noor of Jordan is 69. Actor-producer Mark Hudson is 69. Actor Skipp Sudduth is 64. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher Mike Boddicker is 63. Rock musician Dean DeLeo (Army of Anyone; Stone Temple Pilots) is 59. Country musician Ira Dean (Trick Pony) is 51. Actor Jay Mohr is 50. Actor Ray Park is 46. Actor Scott Caan is 44. Country singer Shelly Fairchild is 43. Figure skater Nicole Bobek (BOH'-bek) is 43. Rock singer Julian Casablancas (The Strokes) is 42. Actor Joanne Froggatt is 40. Actor Jaime Lee Kirchner is 39. Neo-soul musician Actor Annie Ilonzeh is 37. Dance musician Sky Blu is 34. Actor Kimberly Matula is 32. Basketball player Jeremy Lin is 32.