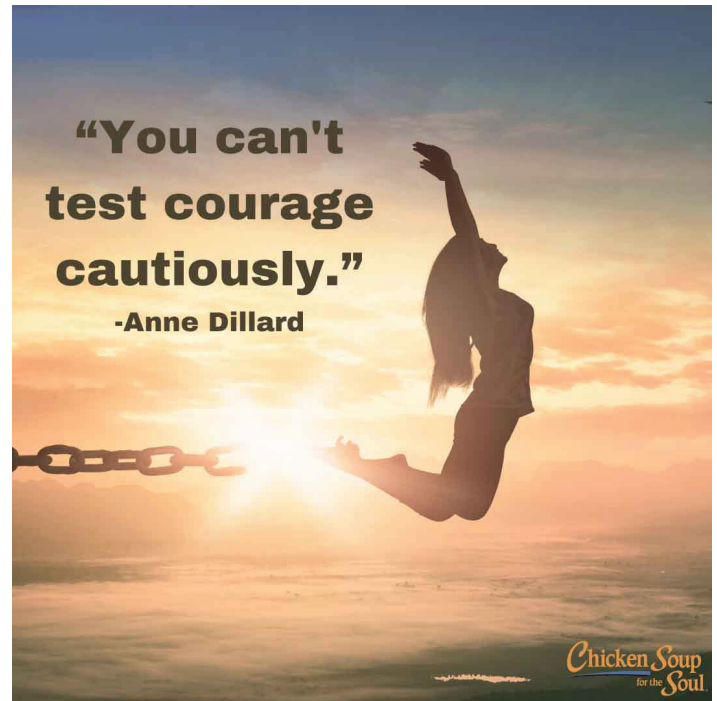


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Volleyball Action vs. Florence Henry
JV won, 2-0. Varsity lost 3-0.

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Moose in Town
A moose paid a visit to Groton Tuesday morning. The moose was sighted on the west side of town.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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The Minnesota Vikings finally showed signs of life on Sunday before ultimately falling to the Tennessee Titans 31-30. While at the end of the day the Vikings are 0-3 this season, there are reasons to believe the team is starting to right the ship.

The Vikings stumbled out of the gates a little bit. Their first drive was a three-and-out that lost four yards, and Dalvin Cook fumbled on the second play of their second drive. Things started to go right on the team's third drive, which covered 76 yards on

7 plays and was capped off by a 39-yard touchdown run by Cook. The Vikings got the ball back at their 12-yard line after a Harrison Smith interception and proceeded to march down the field, a drive that ended with a 16-yard Adam Thielen touchdown catch. Both teams traded field goals before halftime, and the Vikings went into the break with a 17-9 lead.

The Vikings got the ball to start the second half, and Kirk Cousins immediately threw an interception. On their next possession, the Vikings picked up 57 yards on eight plays, but Dan Bailey missed the field goal. The team's third drive of the second half only took two plays, ending with a 71-yard bomb from Cousins to rookie receiver Justin Jefferson. The Vikings were up 24-12 and Vikings fans' hopes were soaring. The third quarter took a turn for the worse, however, and the Titans were able to score two quick touchdowns with a Vikings' three-and-out sandwiched in the middle.

The Vikings had the ball to start the fourth quarter and were down 25-24. Instead of folding, the team took their game to another level on their next drive which took 10 plays and ended with a "catch of the year" nomination by Kyle Rudolph in the back of the endzone. A failed two-point conversion kept the score 30-25 Minnesota. In the final ten minutes of the fourth quarter, the Vikings had a five-point lead and both teams got two drives. The Titans were able to run a total of 19 plays and cover 83 yards, with both of their drives ending in a field goal. The Vikings were able to run a total of nine plays and cover 13 yards, with one of their drives ending in a punt, and the final drive ending in an interception. The Vikings played good today... but not good enough.

Kirk Cousins: 16/27, 251 yards, 3 TD, 2 INT

Dalvin Cook: 22 carries, 181 yards (career-high), 1 TD

Harrison Smith: 9 tackles, 1 INT, 1 TFL, 1 QB hit, 1 PD

Breakout player of the game

Justin Jefferson had a monster game on Sunday, catching seven passes for 175 yards and a touchdown. Most of his production came in the first half, and the team – for whatever reason – decided to stop throwing him the ball in the fourth quarter. Jefferson's six catches for 104 yards in the first half were the most by a Vikings' rookie receiver since 1998 and some guy named Randy Moss.

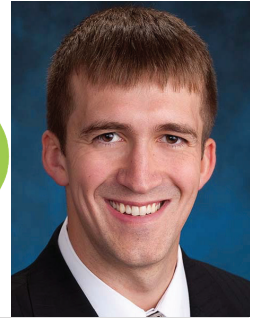
Looking ahead, the Vikings (0-3) will travel to Houston to take on the Texans (0-3). If someone would have told me both of these teams would be winless entering week four, I would have called them crazy. Houston is a better team than their record indicates, however, as they've lost to the Chiefs, Ravens, and Steelers so far this season. Deshaun Watson is a great quarterback, and the Vikings will have a hard time keeping him contained. If Justin Jefferson can prove this week wasn't a fluke, the Vikings' offense should be able to keep up with the Texans and give themselves a chance to win. Skol!



By Jordan Wright

Advances in the Treatment of Stroke

Weakness on one side of the body, slurred speech, facial drooping, inability to find or understand words; these are symptoms of a stroke which are typically sudden in onset. The symptoms can be subtle, or they can be severe. Regardless, rapid diagnosis and treatment is the key to recovery.



By Andrew Ellsworth, M.D. ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

Not long ago, not much could have been done for someone as they were having a stroke. Often, we could only wait and see how the patient recovered with rehabilitation. For years, prevention was the only tool we had to combat initial and recurring strokes. Preventative measures such as blood pressure control, aspirin or other blood thinners, cholesterol control, and of course, a healthy diet and exercise remain especially important today. Thankfully, we now have a few more options.

Clot-busting medications have been a great advancement in the treatment of strokes since the mid-1990s. If administered soon enough, sometimes these clot-busting medications can work to break up a clot that is blocking blood flow in an area of the brain thus restoring circulation. This can help to preserve or at least minimize the area of the brain that would be permanently damaged.

There are risks to these meds, such as bleeding, but the chance of improving the outcome usually justifies their use. To minimize risks, the clot-busting medication must be initiated within three to four- and one-half hours following the onset of symptoms. Physicians also consider other criteria before treating with clot-busting meds, including the patient's medical history, blood test results, and they must rule out a hemorrhagic stroke using CT imaging of the brain. A hemorrhagic stroke is when damage is done by a ruptured blood vessel rather than from blockage.

More recently, technological developments have changed the emergent care offered for very severe strokes. It is now possible to manually restore blood flow to the brain using minimally invasive surgery. A surgeon inserts a system of catheters and wires into an artery in the arm or groin, advances this system up through the neck and into the brain. Then, at the location of the blood vessel blockage, the blood clot is removed and the circulation to the affected area is restored.

Highly specialized, this new procedure seems almost miraculous. It has been referred to as the "Lazarus" procedure as it literally brings people back to life and sometimes immediate improvement is noted as soon as during the procedure.

The keys are recognition and time. Know the signs and get help quickly. Think of the acronym FAST: Face drooping? Arm weakness? Speech difficulty? Time to call 9-1-1.

Andrew Ellsworth, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices family medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

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#219 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

We reported 43,900 cases today, a 0.6% increase. We are now at 7,219,00 cases in the US, and our rolling new case average is still showing strong increases over two weeks ago. There have now been 204,849 deaths. Today, there were 971 deaths reported, a 0.5% increase. Current estimates have about one in 1250 Americans deceased from this virus.

I don't generally report on worldwide trends here, not because I don't care about the rest of the world, but because all I can manage on a daily basis is to track the data streams for the US. However, on the occasion of the world crossing the one-million-death mark yesterday, I thought we could take a look at the countries driving this pandemic these days. Top of the list, unfortunately, but not surprisingly, is still the US which has both the highest number of cases and deaths. We leaped out ahead while our cases were still largely centered in the Northeast and then maintained our lead as the rest of the country got into the act with our deaths dropping recently, but showing signs of resurgence again. We show no signs of establishing any sort of control as yet. Brazil is next: Their trajectory looks much like the US's in that there was an early surge which was tamped down followed by another larger one with their deaths also dropping in the last month, but stalling now. India has terrible trouble; they ended a lockdown in May and have been on a rapid upward spiral ever since. We should remember, however, that while the raw numbers look awful, India has an enormous population (over four times ours), and so when they're measured as a share of the population, India is in far better shape than most others on this list. Mexico has also had a fairly uncontrolled situation. Worryingly, these top four countries over the past two weeks have had the highest average daily number of deaths so far in the pandemic, a sure sign things are not improving in any of them. Rounding out our list is the UK which has also had a resurgence since May, but a much lower number of deaths than the others; that number is increasing in the past few weeks, however. All five countries are still in serious trouble and are not showing any real signs they're getting a handle on things; so I would expect that number of deaths worldwide, driven largely by these countries, will continue to swell. That's a lot of human potential snuffed out.

We have a new, very comprehensive survey of data on infections in children. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital Association collaborated in a survey of data available on the health department websites of 49 states (no idea what happened with that last state), New York City, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam of nearly 625,000 cases in children. We should recognize that not all data were reported according to age, so the set is incomplete; but this seems to be pretty much everything available in the US. The survey covered cases, hospitalizations (where data were available by age), and deaths.

There's no startling news here, but it's helpful to have our early impressions confirmed. Children make up 10.5% of reported cases in states reporting by age, and there has been a 14% increase in child cases in the two-week period ending on September 24, which is concerning. The report says "COVID-19-associated hospitalization and death is uncommon in children." Forty-two states and New York City reported deaths by age, and of those, 17 reported zero child deaths. The death rate in the overall reports was 0.16%, which is very low. This is a good thing; I don't think there's anyone among us here who views child deaths as somehow preferable to deaths in older age groups.

A study comes from the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency. Looking at more than 900 people who have recovered from Covid-19, it was found that 90% of them reported at least one side effect following recovery, including loss of taste and smell, fatigue, and psychological issues. The most common was fatigue, seen in more than 26% of patients. This has come to be referred to as long covid and can persist for weeks to months. A similar study from the Covid Symptom Study in Britain showed individuals suffering symptoms for more than three months after recovery. And in a webinar sponsored by the British Medical Journal earlier this month, public health professor Nisreen Alwan discussed declines in health following recovery, including breathlessness, muscle and body aches, and spiking fevers. She described the "relapsing, remitting nature of the illness where you feel as though you've recovered, then it hits you

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back." I'm thinking it must be difficult to finally recover from this infection only to experience recurring and newly-developing symptoms for a long period of time after your ostensible recovery.

We've been watching a lot of scientific wrangling about exactly how this virus is transmitted through the air, whether simply by droplets, which implies short range transmission only, or via what is called airborne transmission by aerosols, which implies much longer-range transmission. I'm going to point out that most scientists agree airborne transmission is, indeed, a thing, although there is still disagreement about how great a role it plays. The problem for us ordinary people is that we have to figure out what all of this means so we can protect ourselves and those around us appropriately. Droplets are really not much of an issue beyond that social distance of six feet; these are relatively larger particles (bigger than 100 microns) and will fall out of the air quite rapidly, typically within six feet. Aerosols consist of particles smaller than 100 microns and can travel quite a distance. They can be likened to cigarette smoke—more concentrated close to the smoker, but hanging in the air for quite some time at quite some distance. They can build up in the air, especially when ventilation is poor. It helps to think about aerosol transmission the same way you would about smoke; if you'd be able to smell smoke at the distance you're experiencing, then you can probably be infected by an aerosol at that range. We can also remember that smoke exposure risks diminish with distance; so do virus exposure risks. All respiratory activities produce more aerosols than droplets. Aerosols are more likely to be inhaled and likelier to travel deep into the lungs where they do the most damage. We are not now clear on how aerosols transmit infection, but we are not absolutely sure how often it happens. So how do you play it safe?

Here's the best thinking on that subject.

Indoors: Practice distancing, the farther the better, more than six feet whenever possible. Wear a face mask when with others and ask them to wear one too, even when you can maintain distance; remember how that smoke drifts all the way across the room, and operate accordingly. Open windows whenever possible, and use an air filter if you can.

Outdoors: Practice distancing, maintaining the six-foot distance and more when possible, and wear a mask whenever you cannot, asking others to wear them too. Move every activity outdoors that you can.

Remember that duration of exposure matters; the longer the exposure, the greater the risk. Limit your time with others outside your household as much as possible, particularly under conditions where distance cannot be maintained, someone refuses to use a mask, or when indoors or in a situation with poor ventilation.

So how's that herd immunity project coming? You may recall we've discussed herd immunity in the past. This is the idea that, if you get a high enough percentage of a population immune to an infection, the infected person will have a tough time finding another susceptible person to whom to give it. This is a real thing we know happens; the percentage of the population that needs to be immune to achieve this result, the so-called herd immunity threshold (HIT), differs from virus to virus. For this particular virus, we're looking at 60-70% as the HIT and we're seeing a population looking to be maybe 9% immune so far (and that's only if immunity lasts more than a couple of months), so we're not there and we're not close.

We've talked in the past few weeks about Regeneron's monoclonal antibody cocktail which spent the summer in late stage trials. To review, monoclonal antibodies are laboratory-produced, very pure antibodies of a type shown to have high efficacy against the virus. (For details on monoclonals and testing them, read my Update #136 posted July 8 here: <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3753580371325008>.) These were randomized, double-blind studies, the most valuable kind involving 275 patients diagnosed with this virus. The overall finding is that the drug appeared to speed recovery and reduce the amount of virus in the nasal cavities. Symptoms resolved in 6-8 days compared with 13 days in those receiving placebo. Patients not making their own antibodies at the beginning of the trial benefitted most from the medication. The company says it is in talks with the FDA; we'll wait for further news, but another tool in the arsenal would be most helpful.

We have an interesting study of Covid-19 infection in domestic pets conducted by researchers at the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at Colorado State University. Let's establish up-

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front that only a handful of pets have become infected naturally and they do not appear to represent a significant concern to humans. Even after all these months and millions of human infections, there is still no evidence that a pet has ever transmitted the virus to humans, even though some do shed virus.

Both cats and dogs were able to be infected artificially in the lab.

Neither species is likely to get sick, although cats do develop a strong, protective immune response, which makes them interesting as a focus of study for that response. There is some evidence infected cats can transmit virus to other cats. There is also evidence they may transmit the virus to wildlife; one unpublished study shows deer mice may become infected from contact with cats. Infected dogs in this study didn't appear to replicate virus in their respiratory tracts at all, and they did not shed virus. It should be noted other studies in dogs have found different results.

There is some evidence ferrets may pass the infection among themselves, but in a paper awaiting peer review, Tufts scientists reviewed a case of a household with 29 pet ferrets free to roam the house and two humans with Covid-19; none of the ferrets became infected. (I have lived with a ferret or two in a cage, and I'm just going to say, as charming and social as these creatures are—and that's a whole lot of charm and sociability—the fragrance of a household overtaken by 29 of the critters must have been totally overwhelming.) We know their cousins, minks, are quite easily infected—witness a couple of raging outbreaks among farmed minks in The Netherlands—and can transmit those infections to humans, again documented from those mink farm outbreaks.

The Colorado State study advises you to observe social distancing with cats in your household if you should become infected. I say, good luck with that. I've been around cats too.

Sometimes when bad things are happening, you look around and wonder what just one person can do about it; the problems can seem so large that there's no point in even tackling them. And sometimes, you just decide to do something on whatever scale you can manage. That's how it happened for Anika Nelson, now a senior at Lincoln High School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Last winter, she was seeing the news reports about the wildfires raging across Australia and the billion estimated wildlife deaths from them; and she decided to do something.

She thought about the fact that she often bought t-shirts for different causes, "and I thought when I wore them, I could remember them and think about them because they were on me." So she figured t-shirts can do good twice—once when the money they generate is donated to the cause and again when the shirts raise awareness. She got together with family and designed shirts to support wildlife in Australia, put them into production, and sold them—almost 100 in the first month alone. All of the proceeds from the shirts went to WIRES Wildlife Australian Charity to help impacted animals. With those fires finally put out in May, Nelson's fund-raiser ended. She said it felt good to do something to help. "But it wasn't just me. So, I think it's nice that we can all feel like we helped."

Now, with fires closer to home in the western US, she's at it again. She teamed up with her dad, a graphic designer, on a new shirt, again with the proceeds to help animals impacted by the fires. These donations will go to the RedRover Foundation that helps deal with pets displaced by the fires. Nelson's goal this time around too is to spread awareness that we need to come together and help. "We're just going to keep doing an order every two weeks; if the demand is there, we'll just keep placing more orders," her proud dad said. I suspect this young woman is going places—good places—with her life. She says, "I think it's good to just help any way you can." Indeed, it is. For all of us.

Be well. I'll be back tomorrow.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Sept. 23	Sept. 24	Sept. 25	Sept. 26	Sept. 27	Sept. 28	Sept. 29
Minnesota	91,422	92,100	93,012	94,189	95,659	96,734	97,638
Nebraska	41,785	42,278	42,731	43,162	43,596	44,063	44,578
Montana	10,700	10,912	11,242	11,564	11,907	12,107	12,413
Colorado	66,053	66,669	67,217	67,926	68,510	69,079	69,490
Wyoming	4,231	4,368	4,488	4,585	4,618	4,780	4,897
North Dakota	18,508	18,981	19,451	19,885	20,380	20,724	20,983
South Dakota	19,189	19,634	20,097	20,544	21,133	21,541	21,738
United States	6,897,495	6,935,415	6,978,874	7,034,824	7,079,689	7,113,666	7,150,117
US Deaths	200,818	201,920	202,819	203,789	204,499	204,750	205,091

Minnesota	+480	+678	+912	+1,177	+1,460	+1,075	+904
Nebraska	+397	+493	+453	+431	+434	+467	+515
Montana	+271	+212	+330	+323	+343	+200	+306
Colorado	+654	+616	+548	+709	+584	+569	+411
Wyoming	+42	+137	+120	+97	+33	+162	+117
North Dakota	+264	+473	+470	+434	+495	+344	+259
South Dakota	+320	+445	+463	+457	+579	+412	+198
United States	+39,357	37,920	+43,459	+55,950	+44,865	+33,977	+38,451
US Deaths	+928	+1,102	+899	+970	+710	+251	+341

	Sept. 30
Minnesota	98,447
Nebraska	45,044
Montana	12,724
Colorado	70,025
Wyoming	4,948
North Dakota	21,401
South Dakota	21,997
United States	7,191,349
US Deaths	206,005

Minnesota	+809
Nebraska	+466
Montana	+311
Colorado	+535
Wyoming	+51
North Dakota	+418
South Dakota	+259
United States	+41,232
US Deaths	+914

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September 29th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

South Dakota recorded five more deaths with three in Codington County and one each in Clay and Fall River. Four were male and one female. Three in the 80+ age group and two in their 70s. North Dakota also had five deaths.

We had 144 fewer active cases today in South Dakota with 259 positive and 398 recovered. Currently hospitalized increased by two.

Brown County had 18 positive and 19 recovered, Day had 3 positive and 3 recovered, Edmunds had 4 recoveries, Marshall had 2 positive, McPherson had 1 recovery, and Spink had 1 positive and 3 recoveries.

Those with double digit increases were Brown with 18, Davison 15, Lincoln 22, Minnehaha 41 and Pennington 37. .

Brown County:

Total Positive: +18 (1,223) Positivity Rate: 10.0%

Total Tests: 180 (10,750)

Recovered: +19 (1014)

Active Cases: -1 (205)

Ever Hospitalized: +1 (47)

Deaths: +0 (4)

Percent Recovered: 82.9

South Dakota:

Positive: +259 (21,997 total) Positivity Rates: 12.6%

Total Tests: 2,060 (266,439 total)

Hospitalized: +23 (1,511 total). 211 currently hospitalized +2)

Deaths: +5 (223 total)

Recovered: +398 (18,090 total)

Active Cases: -144 (3,828)

Percent Recovered: 82.2%

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 9% Covid, 46% Non-Covid, 45% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 12% Covid, 60% Non-Covid, 28% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 14% Non-Covid, 81% Available

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: +2 positive, +2 recovered (12 active cases)

Beadle (9): +3 positive, +8 recovered (104 active cases)

Bennett (1): +0 positive, +2 recovered (14 active cases)

Bon Homme (1): +1 positive, +1 recovered (15 active

cases)

Brookings (2): +2 positive, +0 recovered (118 active cases)

Brown (4): +18 positive, +19 recovered (205 active cases)

Brule: +5 positive, +4 recovered (31 active cases)

Buffalo (3): +0 positive, +2 recovered (21 active cases)

Butte (3): +2 positive, +2 recovered (33 active cases)

Campbell: +1 positive, +6 recovered (18 active cases)

Charles Mix: +3 positive, +2 recovered (45 active cases)

Clark: +3 positive, +0 recovered (12 active cases)

Clay (6) +0 positive, +1 recovered (43 active cases)

Codington (6): +6 positive, +23 recovered (202 active cases)

Corson (1): +1 positive, +1 recovered (10 active cases)

Custer (2): +0 positive, +12 recovered (26 active case)

Davison (2): +15 positive, +5 recovered (122 active cases)

Day: +3 positive, +3 recovered (17 active cases)

Deuel: +0 positive, +1 recovered (11 active cases)

Dewey: +7 positive, +0 recovered (64 active cases)

Douglas (1): +1 positive, +6 recovered (25 active cases)

Edmunds: +0 positive, +4 recovered (16 active cases)

Fall River (4): +0 positive, +0 recovered (13 active cases)

Faulk (1): +0 positive, +3 recovered (12 active cases)

Grant (1): +6 positive, +9 recovered (53 active cases)

Gregory (3): +2 positive, +8 recovered (44 active cases)

Haakon: +0 positive, +1 recovered (9 active case)

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Hamlin: +1 positive, +2 recovered (21 active cases)
 Hand: +3 positive, +1 recovered (18 active cases)
 Hanson: +2 positive, +1 recovered (13 active cases)
 Harding: +0 positive (1 active case)
 Hughes (5): +7 positive, +15 recovered (126 active cases)
 Hutchinson (2): +2 positive, +6 recovered (32 active cases)
 Hyde: +0 positive, +2 recovered (4 active cases)
 Jackson (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (11 active cases)
 Jerauld (1): +7 positive, +1 recovered (33 active cases)
 Jones: +1 positive, +0 recovered (7 active cases)
 Kingsbury: +1 positive, +2 recovered (12 active cases)
 Lake (7): +2 positive, +3 recovered (33 active cases)
 Lawrence (4): +6 positive, +11 recovered (104 active cases)
 Lincoln (2): +22 positive, +21 recovered (207 active cases)

Lyman (3): +3 positive, +3 recovered (44 active cases)
 Marshall: +2 positive, +0 recovered (8 active cases)
 McCook (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (20 active cases)
 McPherson: +0 positive, +1 recovery (5 active case)
 Meade (5): +6 positive, +17 recovered (111 active cases)
 Mellette: +1 positive, +1 recovery (3 active cases)
 Miner: +1 positive (5 active cases)
 Minnehaha (81): +41 positive, +60 recovered (620 active cases)
 Moody: +2 positive, +1 recovered (31 active cases)
 Oglala Lakota (3): +3 positive, +3 recovered (58 active cases)
 Pennington (37): +37 positive, +47 recovered (416 active cases)
 Perkins: +0 positive, +2 recovered (8 active cases)
 Potter: +1 positive, +1 recovered (12 active cases)
 Roberts (1): +3 positive, +8 recovered (58 active cases)
 Sanborn: +0 positive, +0 recovered (10 active cases)
 Spink: +1 positive, +3 recovered (29 active cases)
 Stanley: +0 positive, +3 recovery (9 active cases)
 Sully: +1 positive, +0 recovered (3 active cases)
 Todd (5): +4 positive, +1 recovered (22 active cases)
 Tripp: +4 positive, +7 recovered (67 active cases)
 Turner (2): +3 positive, +0 recovered (38 active cases)
 Union (7): +2 positive, +9 recovered (59 active cases)
 Walworth (1): +0 positive, +7 recovered (39 active cases)
 Yankton (4): +3 positive, +10 recovered (85 active cases)
 Ziebach: +1 positive, +2 recovered (9 active case)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	688	0
10-19 years	2458	0
20-29 years	5173	2
30-39 years	3811	7
40-49 years	2992	10
50-59 years	2970	22
60-69 years	2078	32
70-79 years	1049	40
80+ years	778	110

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	11413	101
Male	10584	122

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report
 COVID-19 Daily Report, September 29:

- 6.7% rolling 14-day positivity
 - 9.4% daily positivity
 - 419 new positives
 - 4,472 susceptible test encounters
 - 105 currently hospitalized (0)
 - 3,669 active cases (-18)
- Total Deaths: +5 (239)

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	58	46	548	0	Moderate
Beadle	804	691	2692	9	Substantial
Bennett	67	52	750	1	Substantial
Bon Homme	85	69	1162	1	Moderate
Brookings	771	666	4764	2	Substantial
Brown	1223	1014	6997	4	Substantial
Brule	126	95	1132	0	Substantial
Buffalo	138	114	772	3	Substantial
Butte	106	70	1565	3	Substantial
Campbell	31	13	149	0	Substantial
Charles Mix	177	132	2208	0	Substantial
Clark	43	31	547	0	Moderate
Clay	564	515	2558	6	Substantial
Codington	882	674	4990	6	Substantial
Corson	92	81	727	1	Moderate
Custer	186	158	1298	2	Substantial
Davison	320	196	3528	2	Substantial
Day	79	62	942	0	Substantial
Deuel	86	73	632	0	Moderate
Dewey	153	91	2843	0	Substantial
Douglas	83	57	552	1	Substantial
Edmunds	94	78	608	0	Substantial
Fall River	95	78	1431	4	Moderate
Faulk	73	60	307	1	Substantial
Grant	139	85	1114	1	Substantial
Gregory	130	83	642	3	Substantial
Haakon	26	17	367	0	Moderate
Hamlin	100	79	1001	0	Substantial
Hand	43	25	467	0	Substantial
Hanson	42	29	344	0	Moderate
Harding	4	3	85	0	Minimal
Hughes	453	322	2882	5	Substantial
Hutchinson	101	67	1224	2	Substantial

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Hyde	19	15	218	0	Moderate
Jackson	35	23	614	1	Moderate
Jerauld	92	58	335	1	Substantial
Jones	14	7	99	0	Minimal
Kingsbury	57	45	810	0	Substantial
Lake	198	158	1432	7	Substantial
Lawrence	418	310	4064	5	Substantial
Lincoln	1385	1176	10476	2	Substantial
Lyman	165	118	1246	3	Substantial
Marshall	40	32	655	0	Moderate
McCook	98	77	910	1	Substantial
McPherson	33	28	308	0	Moderate
Meade	548	437	3733	5	Substantial
Mellette	31	28	481	0	Minimal
Miner	24	19	347	0	Minimal
Minnehaha	6732	6031	41084	81	Substantial
Moody	96	65	873	0	Substantial
Oglala Lakota	290	209	4346	3	Substantial
Pennington	2365	1912	18065	37	Substantial
Perkins	40	32	365	0	Moderate
Potter	46	34	480	0	Moderate
Roberts	212	153	2692	1	Substantial
Sanborn	29	19	329	0	Moderate
Spink	137	109	1491	0	Substantial
Stanley	42	33	434	0	Moderate
Sully	12	9	136	0	Minimal
Todd	124	97	2805	5	Substantial
Tripp	162	95	916	0	Substantial
Turner	167	127	1371	2	Substantial
Union	404	338	3006	7	Substantial
Walworth	126	86	1135	1	Substantial
Yankton	420	331	4616	4	Substantial
Ziebach	62	53	507	0	Minimal
Unassigned	0	0	4942	0	

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- ✓ 30 year law enforcement veteran with city and county government experience
- ✓ Progressive thinker/ Conservative spender
- ✓ Common sense approach to solving issues



I pledge

- ✓ to put taxpayers first by no wasteful spending
- ✓ to increase transparency to taxpayers
- ✓ to maintain roads and bridges
- ✓ to the creation of a criminal justice task force addressing Meth, Opioid and other drug addictions

Your vote will be much appreciated!



Absentee voting begins September 18th



Representation from eastern Brown County is long overdue! (35 years)

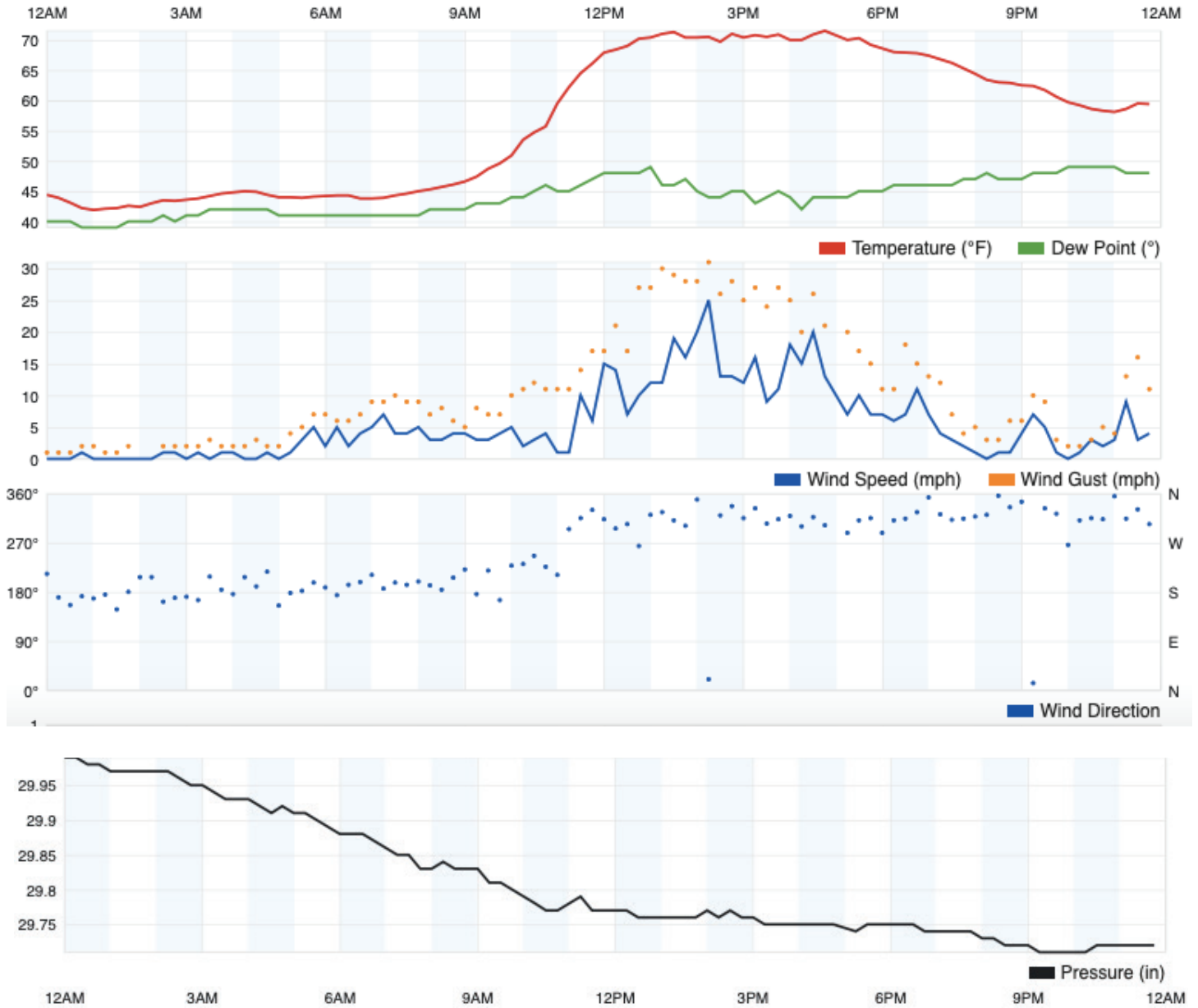
Vote for Michael Nehls for Brown County Commission (your vote **only for Mike could make a difference)**

Paid for by the committee to elect Mike Nehls to Brown County Commission

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
				
Increasing Clouds and Windy	Mostly Cloudy and Breezy then Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Frost then Partly Sunny
High: 61 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 52 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 57 °F

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
METEOROLOGICAL AND HYDROLOGICAL ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 9/29/2020
4:02 PM Central

Windy & Cool Weather

When:

Wednesday late AM through early evening

Thursday night into Friday AM

Hazards:



Consider:

Secure loose objects, exercise caution driving high profile vehicles, properly discard cigarettes, keep vehicles off dry grass, avoid power equipment that creates sparks

Protect/cover sensitive outdoor vegetation that you'd like to keep alive

A Wind Advisory is in effect across the area (except for west central Minnesota) from 10am to 8pm Wednesday. Be mindful that these conditions will be conducive to the starting and spreading of fires as well. Cooler air will continue streaming in, with highs in the low 60s Wednesday and mid to low 50s Thursday. Frost is then possible Thursday night.

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Today in Weather History

September 30, 2006: Severe to exceptional drought conditions improved dramatically by the end of the month across central and north central South Dakota as above normal rainfall was recorded for the month of September.

1896: A hurricane formed on September 22 and lasted until September 30. It formed directly over the Lesser Antilles and hit Cuba, Florida, Georgia, South and North Carolina, Virginia, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania. Its maximum sustained winds were at 130 mph. The heaviest rainfall deposited in association with the storm was 19.96 inches at Glennville, Georgia. This hurricane was responsible for an estimated 130 deaths and \$1.5 million in damage (1896 dollars).

1959 - Three tornadoes spawned by the remnants of Hurricane Gracie killed 12 persons at Ivy VA. (The Weather Channel)

1970 - A nineteen month drought in southern California came to a climax. The drought, which made brush and buildings tinder dry, set up the worst fire conditions in California history as hot Santa Anna winds sent the temperature soaring to 105 degrees at Los Angeles, and to 97 degrees at San Diego. During that last week of September whole communities of interior San Diego County were consumed by fire. Half a million acres were burned, and the fires caused fifty million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1977 - The temperature at Wichita Falls, TX, soared to 108 degrees to establish a record for September. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - Thunderstorms, which had inundated northern sections of Oklahoma with heavy rain, temporarily shifted southward producing 4 to 8 inches rains from Shawnee to Stilwell. Baseball size hail and 80 mph winds ripped through parts of southeast Oklahoma City, and thunderstorm winds caused more than half a million dollars damage at Shawnee. (Storm Data)

1987 - Afternoon thunderstorms in Michigan produced hail an inch in diameter at Pinckney, and wind gusts to 68 mph at Wyandotte. A thunderstorm in northern Indiana produced wet snow at South Bend. Seven cities in the northwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including readings of 98 degrees at Medford OR and 101 degrees at downtown Sacramento CA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed over Florida, and in the western U.S. The afternoon high of 94 degrees at Fort Myers FL was their tenth record high for the month. Highs of 98 degrees at Medford OR and 99 degrees at Fresno CA were records for the date, and the temperature at Borrego Springs CA soared to 108 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thirteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, as readings soared into the upper 80s and 90s from the Northern and Central High Plains Region to Minnesota. Bismarck ND reported a record high of 95 degrees, and the temperature reached 97 degrees at Broadus MT. Afternoon thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced wind gusts to 60 mph at Wendover UT. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992: The past month was the coldest September ever recorded in interior Alaska. Fairbanks averaged a frigid 31.7° which was 13.2° below normal and the first below freezing September ever. Beginning on the 9th and on every day for the rest of the month, a new record low was set for either low minimums or low maximums, or both. On this date, the city plunged to 3° to set a new all-time record low for September. Snowfall for the month totaled 24.4 inches which was more than three times the previous record for September.

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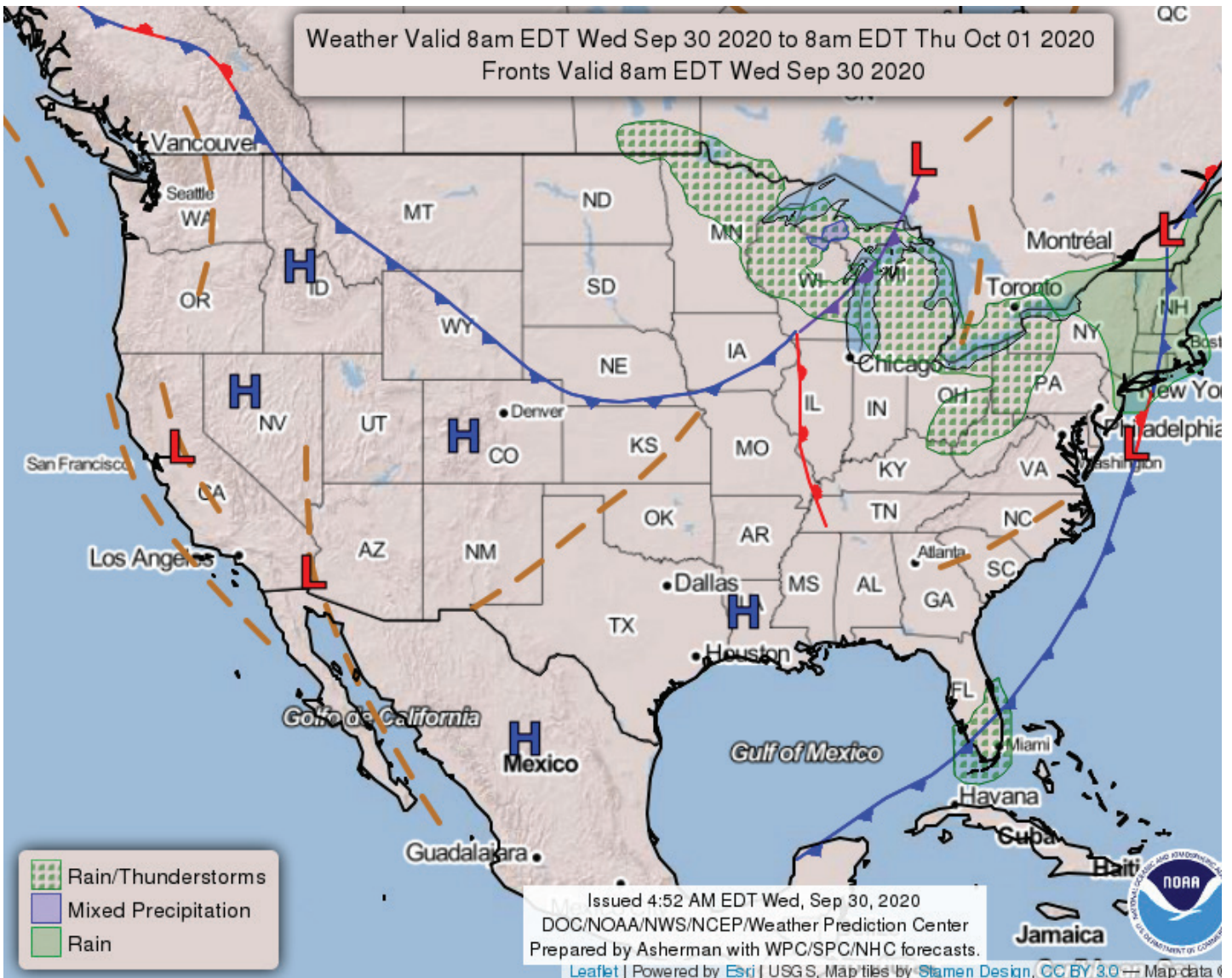
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 72 °F at 4:48 PM
Low Temp: 42 °F at 12:54 AM
Wind: 31 mph at 12:36 PM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 92° in 1905, 1989
Record Low: 15° in 1939
Average High: 66°F
Average Low: 39°F
Average Precip in Sept...: 2.12
Precip to date in Sept.: 1.80
Average Precip to date: 18.41
Precip Year to Date: 15.15
Sunset Tonight: 7:15 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:33 a.m.



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A BETTER WORLD

One day the Abbots were watching the morning news. After observing one tragic event after another, Jon turned to his wife and said, "You know, I could make a better world than this one."

Turning to him, she politely said, "Why don't you?"

We read in Genesis that God "looked over all that He made, and He saw that it was excellent in every way." Every small detail that God brought into existence was the way He intended it to be - excellent. He placed light in the sky and fish in the sea; land for farmers to grow crops, and scenery for people to enjoy; the sun and moon and stars to govern days and nights and seasons; birds in the sky and animals for man's enjoyment, use and nourishment - even the man and woman He created were without flaw. Everything was all perfect.

But, then through man - the triumph of His creation - sin entered the world, and all that was the way He wanted it to be perfect - was ruined. Satan entered His creation and brought destruction and death.

Any goodness in us or in the world is of God. He is the source of light and life, grace and goodness, peace and purity. And, it is only as we let God through Christ, Who is Lord, rule and reign in our lives, that we can become good, and do good for God, and reclaim His work.

Christ in us, the hope of glory.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to do Your work in Your world as we surrender our lives to Your will. May we make the world better through Your Son, our Savior. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day. Genesis 1:31

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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)
- 10/30/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
- **CANCELLED** 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

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News from the  Associated Press

Tuesday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Avon def. Scotland, 20-25, 25-18, 25-12, 22-25, 15-10
Baltic def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-18, 25-20, 27-25
Brookings def. Yankton, 25-13, 25-13, 25-23
Clark/Willow Lake def. DeSmet, 25-14, 25-18, 25-12
Colman-Egan def. Howard, 25-14, 25-9, 25-21
Corsica/Stickney def. Wessington Springs, 25-18, 25-7, 25-15
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Flandreau, 25-19, 25-15, 25-12
Faulkton def. Langford, 25-13, 25-14, 25-11
Florence/Henry def. Groton Area, 25-9, 25-18, 25-17
Garretson def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-20, 25-23, 25-17
Great Plains Lutheran def. Lake Preston, 25-13, 25-13, 25-19
Hamlin def. Deuel, 25-9, 25-3, 25-7
Harding County def. Dupree, 25-10, 25-13, 25-14
Hay Springs, Neb. def. Edgemont, 25-21, 25-22, 25-17
Highmore-Harrod def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 25-16, 25-18, 25-20
Hill City def. Philip, 25-19, 25-13, 25-14
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-11, 25-15, 25-12
Huron def. Aberdeen Central, 26-24, 18-25, 25-21, 25-21
James Valley Christian def. Iroquois, 25-11, 25-11, 25-12
Kadoka Area def. Bennett County, 25-17, 25-20, 25-16
Kimball/White Lake def. Tri-Valley, 20-25, 25-14, 25-19, 23-25, 15-12
Lemmon def. Bison, 24-18, 26-24, 25-11
Lennox def. Beresford, 30-28, 26-28, 26-24, 25-15
Madison def. Parker, 15-25, 25-15, 25-23, 25-22
Menno def. Irene-Wakonda, 26-24, 25-18, 21-25, 25-18
Miller def. Chamberlain, 25-22, 25-13, 25-16
North Central Co-Op def. Leola/Frederick, 25-20, 25-22, 25-19
Northwestern def. Redfield, 25-11, 25-9, 25-5
Platte-Geddes def. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, 25-22, 17-25, 25-19, 25-22
Rapid City Stevens def. Rapid City Central, 25-9, 25-18, 25-20
Sioux Falls Christian def. Vermillion, 25-18, 25-12, 25-10
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-17, 25-22, 25-19
Sioux Falls Washington def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-22, 25-19, 25-15
Sisseton def. Britton-Hecla, 25-3, 25-13, 25-17
Tripp-Delmont/Armour def. Centerville, 11-25, 25-15, 25-12, 25-13
Warner def. Aberdeen Roncalli, 22-25, 21-25, 25-14, 25-15, 15-5
Webster def. Waubay/Summit, 25-20, 15-25, 25-27, 25-19, 15-13
West Central def. Canton, 25-22, 25-21, 22-25, 25-17
White River def. Gregory, 25-22, 25-15, 25-18

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

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SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

14-39-43-44-67, Mega Ball: 19, Megaplier: 3

(fourteen, thirty-nine, forty-three, forty-four, sixty-seven; Mega Ball: nineteen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$32 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$34 million

South Dakota reports 5 COVID-19 deaths, dip in active cases

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The number of people with active coronavirus infections in South Dakota declined for the first time in a week on Tuesday to 3,684, according to data from the Department of Health.

Health officials also reported five more deaths from COVID-19, while the number of daily new cases dipped from last week's record-setting counts. The Department of Health reported 259 people have tested positive for the coronavirus and 211 people are currently hospitalized with COVID-19.

The state has been suffering through its worst wave of the virus in recent weeks. It recorded the nation's second-highest number of new cases per capita over the last two weeks, with nearly 560 new cases per 100,000 people, according to Johns Hopkins researchers.

South Dakota's seven-day test positivity rate has remained one of the highest in the country, which is an indicator that more people have active infections than testing indicates. The seven-day positivity average is over 25%, according to the COVID Tracking Project.

The Department of Health is working to increase testing in an effort to drive down the positivity rate.

September has been the deadliest month of the pandemic for South Dakota as 56 people have died from COVID-19. A total of 223 people have died since March.

Editorial Roundup: Excerpts from South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

Sioux Falls Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, Sept. 26

How can South Dakotans trust Sen. Thune?

"Since the next presidential election is already underway, the next president should make this lifetime appointment to the Supreme Court." – Senator John Thune on March 16, 2016, defending Senate Republicans' refusal to consider a Supreme Court nominee following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia, nearly seven and a half months ahead of the 2016 general election

"While tonight the nation rightly mourns, we'll soon turn to the Senate's constitutional role in this process. I believe Americans sent a Republican president and a Republican Senate to Washington to ensure we have an impartial judiciary that upholds the Constitution and the rule of law. President Trump's Supreme Court nominee will receive a vote on the floor of the U.S. Senate." – Thune on the day of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death, Sept. 18, 2020, six weeks ahead of the 2020 general election

How are South Dakotans to take John Thune at his word?

Despite rhetorical justifications for his reversal regarding when and whether a sitting president's nominee to the nation's highest court should be considered, Thune's lodestar principle appears to be that of securing power for his party. We are not the first to call out his hypocrisy on the Supreme Court issue, but it bears calling out regardless.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky., center, approaches the microphones accompanied by, from left, Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., and Sen. Todd Young, R-Ind., at the start of a news conference.

This is not his first flip-flop in the name of partisan expediency. South Dakota's senior senator has risen to become the second-highest ranking Republican in the Senate over a national political career spanning

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nearly a quarter of a century. Surviving as an elected official for that long requires compromises. Ideally, that can be accomplished without compromising one's integrity.

In 2016, Thune evinced outrage at unearthed video footage of GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump boasting about groping women's genitals. In a Twitter post the following day, Thune said that Trump "should withdraw and Mike Pence should be our nominee effective immediately." Three days later, though it was clear that Trump would not be stepping down from the nomination, Thune told local reporters "I intend to support the nominee of our party."

Thune's 1998 words in the Congressional Record regarding House impeachment proceedings against former Democratic President Bill Clinton stated: "In America there is no emperor, and there is no Praetorian guard. There is one standard of justice that applies equally to all, and to say or do otherwise will undermine the most sacred of all Americans ideals."

By contrast, in October 2019, Thune called impeachment proceedings against President Trump in the Democratic-controlled House a "risky strategy...If you're the leadership over there, you got to think long and hard about what the implications are if it looks like you're overreaching."

Thune's silence has often revealed as much as his contradictory positions. He has used the issue of deficit spending as a cudgel against opponents and toed the party line when its initiatives have ballooned the amount of federal dollars in the red.

When reporters told him that Trump planned to accept his party's 2020 nomination from the White House, Thune was initially incredulous. "Is that even legal? I assume that's not something that you could do. I assume there's some Hatch Act issues or something. I don't know the answer to that but I haven't, and I haven't heard him say that. But I think anything you do on federal property would seem to be problematic." When it became clear that Trump would carry through on that plan in grandiose fashion? Crickets.

During Thune's 2004 campaign to unseat Tom Daschle during George W. Bush's presidency, he referred to the Senate Minority Leader as the "chief obstructionist" who put party loyalty above all else. During the next presidency, Thune looked dutifully over his own party leader's shoulder throughout years of GOP legislative obstruction that culminated in 2016 with the months-long stonewalling of a Supreme Court nominee, bringing us full circle.

On Wednesday, President Trump declined to commit to a peaceful transfer of power should he lose the Nov. 3 election, pointing to potential voter fraud. Thune pushed back with a statement that "peaceful transition of power is a fundamental principle of our democracy. Republicans believe in the rule of law, and we believe in the Constitution. The Constitution is very clear about what happens after the election."

We'd like to believe that he'll stand by those words.

Acclaimed poet Maya Angelou famously advised that when someone shows you who they are, you should believe them. Does a nation that shrugs off evidence of opportunism, throwing its collective hands up in the air and writing it off as "politics as usual" – does that nation deserve the democracy for which its sons and daughters have fought and died?

The Supreme Court vacancy offers a grim reminder that today's politics are not about synergy or service but rather the seizure and utilization of power. Both parties have crossed that line, with the Kavanaugh hearings of 2018 at times sinking to shameful depths to prevent a Republican president from seating a conservative justice.

The death of Justice Ginsburg so close to the November election offers a different dynamic, especially because of the Senate's refusal to hold hearings for President Obama's nominee Merrick Garland in 2016, citing the proximity of the election as justification.

South Dakota's other senator, Mike Rounds, told the Argus Leader on Friday that the decision not to consider Garland's nomination was at the directive of party leadership, separating himself from the strategy. He added that he met with Garland after Obama made the nomination, joking that he took some heat for it from some of his colleagues.

"You elect your leadership at the beginning of the term, and the Senate Majority Leader does make the call," Rounds said.

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Such decisions don't always reflect the will of the nation. A Washington Post/ABC poll this week revealed that 57 percent of respondents say that filling the Supreme Court seat should be left to the winner of the presidential election, followed by a Senate vote next year.

But Republican leaders, mindful that the White House and Senate could soon be in Democratic hands, are going full steam ahead.

These are raw political maneuverings from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Thune for the estimable prize of having an ideological advantage on the nation's highest court. In a cynical world where power is everything, that strategy makes sense.

But there is undoubtedly a segment of the American citizenry that still reveres principled leadership, fairness and, yes, compromise – the ability to take a broader view of what benefits the country beyond immediate party "wins."

Though it might not always seem like it, there is a way to fight for those beliefs.

That means holding the leaders we elect accountable for their words and for their actions. Calling out hypocrisy when we see it. Fighting off the cynicism and world-weary disinterest of the politically fatigued. Paying attention. Correcting our political leaders when they stray off course. Voting.

In this tumultuous era of hyper-partisanship, the democratic tradition of correcting transgressions at the ballot box still endures.

Madison Daily Leader, Madison, Sept. 28

It's OK to promote business during a pandemic

The South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) -- and Gov. Kristi Noem - continue to actively recruit businesses to relocate to South Dakota. Some observers believe that is an unsafe thing to do during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Current recruiting of businesses does continue along the same theme of a business-friendly environment, including low regulation compared to some states. The state's recruitment website even mentions the fact that South Dakota didn't have mandatory shutdowns like other states.

But we don't take that as an endorsement of an "anything goes" business environment, or that we're encouraging employers to be sloppy about protecting employees' health.

The main points made by the GOED are still:

- The state is fiscally responsible.
- It has a good tax climate.
- South Dakotans have a strong work ethic.
- Our work force is growing.
- We have a lack of red tape.
- The state is at the center of the country.

These are all good points to make in any environment. And for businesses that look beyond the current health crisis, they could be important factors in making a long-term decision to locate facilities and bring jobs.

We're not saying South Dakota's handling of the pandemic has been perfect -- it hasn't, with among the highest recent per capita infections rates. But we also believe we should continue to actively promote economic development and growth in our state, even during the pandemic.

Yankton Press and Dakotan, Yankton, Sept. 28

Is merging agriculture and natural resources a good idea?

Earlier this month, South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem proposed to merge the state's Department of Agriculture (SDDA) with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) into a single agency. Few details were provided and it's left a lot of questions among both agricultural and environmental interests.

One of the common questions we've encountered: Why?

According to South Dakota News Watch, this would be the only state in the Great Plains to have these

two agencies combined as one entity.

And yes, it does stir a lot of questions.

"The planned merger has the potential to profoundly reshape the complex relationship between agriculture, the environment, and the people charged with promoting and regulating the industry," the News Watch story said.

The first thing that leaps to mind is the fact that DENR generally provides oversight to the SDDA on numerous issues, including, notably, concentrated animal feedlot operations (CAFOs). Given the governor's desire to see the expansion of CAFO development in the state, there may be legitimate concerns how the environmental elements of such expansion could be independently monitored on inter-agency terms.

Meanwhile, ag producers are expressing concerns that, if a future governor comes in with a different approach on issues such as CAFOs (think of this in terms of the Yankton County Commission's periodic changeovers and shifts in CAFO philosophies), this merger may not allow for what News Watch referred to as agricultural "push back" on equal terms.

"Historically, there have been some issues that come up where the Department of Ag and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources have not met on the same side," Scott VanderWal of the South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation said. "Most of the concern would be that the ag department would turn more toward regulation, and maybe have a lack of understanding of what (farming) operations need."

Added Kelly Kistner of the Izaak Walton League, "You can support a clean environment, healthy natural resources and agriculture, but there will be times and some issues where it will be very difficult to support both."

Also, environmental concerns in this state are not limited to the agricultural sector. The Black Hills, for instance, present their own unique issues. On the other side of the state, Sioux Falls has environmental issues that have little to do with agriculture. Will these be served as efficiently or given the same amount of attention with a combined SDDA/DENR agency.

Also, both fields of interest — agriculture and the environment — are vast, complex issues in this state. Frankly, they would both seem to warrant their own divisions and their own autonomy.

Yes, there could be budgetary savings. The DENR currently has about 180 full-time employees and is budgeted at \$25.9 million. The SDDA has about 225 full-time employees and is budgeted at about \$47.5 million. Some streamlining figures to be likely, but again, it's uncertain.

Much more information is needed about what this proposal would look like, but as Jay Gilbertson of the East Dakota Water Management District said, "It's hard for me to imagine what the advantage of this merger is."

At this point, we have to agree.

Businesses creating dream wedding for bride with cancer

By TANYA MANUS Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Nicole Weiss and David Rhoades' wedding plans took an abrupt turn on July 31 when Weiss was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

In the midst of mounting medical bills and Weiss' radiation and chemotherapy, Black Hills businesses are teaming up to give the Rapid City couple a wedding celebration on Oct. 18.

Weiss is battling stage 4 glioma, a rare mutation of a cancerous tumor. Though it isn't curable, doctors hope to slow its progression. Weiss is undergoing treatment at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. High school sweethearts Weiss, 28, and Rhoades, 29, had been planning to marry in spring 2021, the Rapid City Journal reported.

"When we found out about my diagnosis, I thought, 'Why have we waited so long? Let's just get married.' We've been together 11 years," Weiss said.

Sandra Nichols of IndigoBlue Photography in Hot Springs took the couple's engagement photos. When she heard about Weiss' health crisis, she and Rapid City wedding designer Justin Straw of Justin Straw Designs collaborated to organize and plan an intimate ceremony, dinner and dance for Weiss and Rhoades.

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The couple will celebrate with about two dozen family members and close friends.

"It's about giving the families a day to breathe and just be, and David and Nicole having an outpouring of love," Nichols said.

"We're doing this in about six weeks start to finish, but that's the advantage to being in the field we're in and knowing the people we know. I don't recommend to any bride to try to pull off a wedding in six weeks," she said, laughing.

Weiss created a Pinterest wedding board as inspiration for Nichols and Straw to share with other vendors. Straw is designing the vintage boho romantic-themed décor that's personalized to the couple.

"I decided to go (with fall colors) so it's primarily burgundy and sage green with gold and blush accents," Weiss said. "Whatever they do is going to be perfect."

"We keep thinking up new creative things to do," Straw said. "We've filled Nikki in as much as we feel like she needs to know, and the rest we'll try to make as big a surprise as possible."

Nichols and Straw said they were thrilled every vendor they approached agreed to help.

"With COVID-19 for so many businesses in the wedding industry, it's been a hard year for us. To ask people to even give a little bit more (is a lot) but honest to goodness, there was no hesitancy," Nichols said. "It's been like a little bit of magic and a real feel-good experience. Without even knowing the couple, the people that have stepped up to the plate for this is incredible."

"I felt like this is something I wanted to be involved with, and every vendor I've talked to has been amazing. They all said, 'Yes, I'm on board. I'd love to help this couple out,'" Straw said.

Between chemotherapy and radiation treatments, Weiss went to a David's Bridal location in Minnesota and found a wedding dress she liked. The David's Bridal shop in Rapid City obtained the dress Weiss wanted and is donating it to her. Main Street Menswear in Rapid City is donating suits for Rhoades and his best man, Jimmy Belmonte.

Weiss said she always dreamed of getting married at Prairie Berry Winery in Hill City. Prairie Berry has donated the use of its Homestead venue, and Weiss' family is paying for a meal catered by Prairie Berry. The Country Cookie in Newell is donating custom cookie favors, and Sweet Secrets Bakery in Rapid City is donating the carrot cake wedding cake.

Although Weiss has switched to a Keto diet based on nutritionists' recommendations, she's going to splurge on her wedding day.

"I love Prairie Berry's food. We picked a menu of beer-braised beef with garlic mashed potatoes and rice pilaf and seasonal salad," she said. "During this (cancer treatment) I've cut out all carbs and sugar, but I said, 'It's my wedding day. I'm going to eat whatever I want.' I'm going to eat the cake!"

Rapid City-based Complete Weddings + Events will deejay a dance after dinner. To keep herself mentally and physically strong for her medical treatments and wedding day, Weiss does yoga, walks, meditates, journals and reads the Bible, she said.

"I'm not sure how I'm going to feel (physically), but I'm planning on doing some dancing, as much as I can," Weiss said.

Jenny's Floral in Custer is donating the bridal bouquet, boutonnieres and flowers for centerpieces and décor. Nichols and Barbara Downen of Mist and Moonlight Photography are taking wedding photos, and Finer Details Artistry will be the videographer.

Weiss' close friend Hannah Manzano will be the maid of honor. Amanda Wilson is donating hair and makeup styling for Weiss and Manzano.

Weiss' niece Rosie Weiss and Rhoades' niece Lizzie Blomberg will be flower girls. Weiss' younger brother Brennan Weiss and nephew Leelan Weiss will be ring bearers. Officiant KC Bunch will perform the ceremony.

Lowe & Co. is providing keepsake invitations for the wedding guests.

Even the weather is cooperating for the couple's late-afternoon celebration. The long-range forecast for Oct. 18 is mild and sunny.

"Everything people have done for me has really restored my faith in humanity right now," Weiss said. "I'm really grateful for all the work everyone's put into it. I'm really excited for the day."

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Inmate accused in deputy assault has lengthy criminal record

TEA, S.D. (AP) — An inmate accused of attacking a Turner County deputy and stealing his sheriff's vehicle during a transport has previous charges of aggravated assault of a law enforcement officer.

Tyson Wessels was being returned to the Minnehaha County Jail in Sioux Falls following a court appearance in Turner County Sept. 22. Authorities say he assaulted the deputy transporting him on Interstate 29 and escaped with the patrol vehicle.

Wessels was believed to have abandoned the patrol vehicle and to have stolen two other vehicles while traveling in South Dakota and Minnesota. The second stolen vehicle was found in southwestern Minnesota.

Authorities located the 42-year-old fugitive in Yankton Friday, three days after he escaped. He did not resist arrest, the Yankton Press and Dakotan reported.

Before last week's crimes, Wessels was already wanted on 14 charges in Lincoln County, included aggravated assault against a law enforcement officer and simple assault against a law enforcement officer. He was also wanted in Yankton County for contempt of court and in Clay County for first-degree reckless burning and accessory to a felony.

The sheriff's deputy who was attacked is recovering. Court records do not list an attorney for Wessels in the most recent case.

Elderly man struck and killed on Black Hills highway

MAVERICK JUNCTION, S.D. (AP) — An elderly man has died after being struck by a vehicle on the southeastern edge of the Black Hills, according to the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

The 82-year-old man was killed on Highway 18 west of Maverick Junction Monday afternoon, the patrol said.

A 72-year-old woman driving a Chevy Impala was traveling on a crest in the highway when she saw the man walking across the roadway, swerved, but couldn't avoid striking him, according to authorities.

The victim, who has not been identified, was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver wasn't injured.

Defendant's sanity in question in deaths of mother, nephew

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A judge will decide whether a Sioux Falls man is not guilty by reason of mental disease in the slayings of his mother and nephew in 2016.

Heath Otto told investigators he felt he did the right thing in killing the two because he was ending their misery from their respective medical needs.

Otto, 28, faces two counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of Carol Simon and 7-year-old Brayden Otto. Police say the two were strangled and their throats were cut at Simon's Sioux Falls home.

During a trial Monday, a police interview with Otto was played in court in which he said he wanted to end their pain because nobody else cared about them, the Argus Leader reported.

Otto was initially deemed incompetent to stand trial, but was treated at the state-run Human Services Center in Yankton and is now able to understand the charges against him.

A psychiatrist testified that Otto was under an ongoing schizophrenic delusion that his actions were at the direction of the CIA, and that his orders were to kill his mother and nephew.

The state rested its case Monday afternoon, and testimony for the insanity defense began with the psychiatrist who evaluated Otto. Testimony was expected to continue Tuesday.

Second Circuit Court Judge Bradley Zell is proceeding over the trial.

Resorts to RV parks: Parents take school year on the road

By LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In RVs, rental homes and five-star resorts, families untethered by the constraints of physical classrooms for their kids have turned the new school year into an extended summer vacation, some lured by the ailing hotel industry catering to parents with remote learners through "roadschooling"

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amenities.

With the pandemic ongoing, the change of scene for desperate work- and school-from-home families boils down to "risk versus reward," said Amanda Poses, a travel consultant and mother of two teenagers in Austin, Texas. "God willing, we don't have the opportunity to do this again."

Poses and her husband let 13-year-old Addison attend school from Park City, Utah, for three days of a five-night stay in early September. In search of a flight of three hours or less, they rode horses, hiked and zip-lined. They went tubing and enjoyed an alpine slide. And, yes, there was a bit of logging in to school.

"I ended up skipping like half of my classes," Addison smiled. "It was nice. It was like a new start."

Addison's 16-year-old brother sat out the trip. "He was concerned about being distracted," mom said.

One of the places the family stayed, the luxury Montage Deer Valley mountain resort, now offers "Montage Academy" for distance learners, complete with an all-day monitored "study hall" and access to virtual tutors. Other hotels are offering on-site tutors and tickets for "field trips" at area attractions.

Anna Khazenzon, a data and learning scientist for the online study platform Quizlet, said the monotony of weeks stuck at home for school on top of six months of pandemic restrictions risks bringing on burnout for distance learners.

But there are dangers lurking in schoolcations as well.

"Formal schoolcation programs have the potential to create further achievement gaps between high- and low-income families, and more cost-effective versions should be developed, but overall there are many learning benefits for taking children on schoolcations," Khazenzon said. "If students are burnt out and under-stimulated studying at home, then they may not be engaged in class at all."

Jennifer Steele, an associate professor of education at American University, said that if distance learners don't show up for class during schoolcations, "we would expect them to lose some knowledge and skills." In addition, she said, the idea "exposes socioeconomic inequities in terms of people's inability to leave and go to difference places."

Since the start of the pandemic, families of means have decamped to second homes or taken long-term rentals in vacation spots around the world. With summer over, schoolcations offer others similar experiences, whether they're roughing it on the road for extended periods or spending on hotels and resorts trying to make up for a summer slump.

For Jayson and Tammy Brown, schoolcations for their three kids have been both ongoing and life-affirming over the past five years. The parents and 11-year-old Jayde, 13-year-old Jay'Elle and 14-year-old Jayson are used to traveling the world with school topics in mind, but the pandemic has them avoiding planes.

Before the pandemic, there was a trip to Israel at a time Jay'Elle was studying the Mideast. Young Jayson made science connections between rock formations there and bioluminescent organisms he saw on another adventure.

In South Africa, the family focused on Nelson Mandela, visiting the former prison and military fort Constitution Hill, which has been turned into a history museum on the country's journey to democracy.

The Browns have taken a few road trips within driving distance of home in Atlanta since March, and have more planned. Tammy, a special education teacher, is handling her students remotely. She and her husband make sure their kids log on to school when attendance is required.

"Oh we stay on them for sure," dad said.

What do the kids think they're gaining?

"I find it much more fun than school, being able to experience firsthand what I'm actually learning in class," Jay'Elle said.

Her brother's favorite part of all that travel? "The food, and the animals," he said.

The siblings are writing a book about their travels.

Terika Haynes, a luxury travel planner in Orlando, Florida, said all of the "school from paradise" packages she's recently spotted guarantee dedicated workspaces for children. Some are adding after-school activities, including sports training for student athletes.

Packages range from seven to 21 days, she said.

"It's a bit too early to capture numbers since these programs are just starting to roll out, but these pro-

grams are designed for those with more of a disposable income who are accustomed to luxury," Haynes said.

In Florida, the Marker Key West Harbor Resort began offering private tutors in mid-September. It has technical support available for kids, and educators to cover local topics, such as the island's literary history and marine life. There have been a handful of reservations so far.

The extras add between \$225 and \$250 to the room rate, which varies depending on the date and room type.

"Family vacations are the new field trip," said Lee Rekas, the resort's director of sales and marketing. "The virtual learning has been tough for a lot of kids. They're stuck on screens all day or sitting there at home, with their parents over their shoulders, doing work sheets."

Stephanie Gunderson, a stay-at-home mom in southeastern Pennsylvania, plans a two-week trip to North Carolina's Outer Banks in October with her four children — ranging from 5 to 13 — and their school-issued iPads. Her husband will stay behind to work.

They'll be staying in a small cabin close to the beach that they rented at a lower, off-season price. They're packing in their food and will bypass the usual tourist attractions.

"We plan primarily to stay in the cabin doing schoolwork. That's the No. 1 priority, for the kids to attend school but then having the late afternoons free to walk on the beach or walk on a trail," she said.

Breaux Walker and Edie Silver Walker prefer Stormy, the nearly 30-foot RV they bought for \$17,000 just before they took off Aug. 8 from home in San Francisco with their sixth-grader and twin first-graders. Logging in to school and homework is mandatory, the parents said.

"We're working our itineraries around WiFi. We're using hot spots on our cell phones a lot," Silver Walker said from Ennis, Montana, about seven weeks in.

Reyne, the 11-year-old doing full days of live instruction, didn't miss a moment when Stormy blew an air hose in the middle of school in a sleet storm north of Helena, Montana, on Interstate 15.

"With her laptop and her headphones, she just hopped up into the tow truck," Silver Walker laughed.

Breaux added: "We're out in the woods every single day after they go to class. They're getting the coolest, most experiential, useful education every day."

Rape and killing of Dalit woman shocks India, draws outrage

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — The gang rape and death of a woman from the lowest rung of India's caste system sparked outrage across the country on Wednesday, with several politicians and activists demanding justice and protesters rallying in the streets.

The attack of the 19-year-old is the latest gruesome case of sexual violence against women to rile India, where reports of rape are hauntingly familiar.

The victim, who belonged to the Dalit community, was raped by four men on Sept. 14 in the heartland state of Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district. The woman's family told local media that they found her naked, bleeding and paralyzed with a split tongue and a broken spine in a field outside their home. She died two weeks later, on Tuesday, after battling serious injuries in a hospital in New Delhi.

Police said the four men, all from an upper caste, have been arrested.

Uttar Pradesh's chief minister, Yogi Adityanath, on Wednesday ordered a special investigation team to handle the case and said it will be tried in a fast-track court.

In New Delhi, police detained several female activists after they tried to march in the street shouting slogans against Adityanath and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The demonstrators carried placards that read, "Stop rape culture."

Maimoona Mullah of the All India Democratic Women's Association said Uttar Pradesh, which is ruled by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party and ranks as the most unsafe state for women in the country, had become the "rape state of India."

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"We do not accept rape culture in the name of new India," Mullah said.

Earlier on Tuesday, hundreds of protesters from the Bhim Army, a party championing the rights of Dalits, thronged the hospital premises in New Delhi and jostled with police. Party leader Chandra Shekhar Aazad urged Dalits across the country to flood the streets to demand that the perpetrators be hanged.

Dalits — formerly known as "untouchables" and at the bottom of India's unforgiving Hindu caste hierarchy — are victims of thousands of attacks each year. According to human rights organizations, Dalit women are particularly vulnerable to caste-based discrimination and sexual violence.

Last month, a 13-year-old Dalit girl was raped and killed in Uttar Pradesh. In December last year, a 23-year-old Dalit woman in the same state died after being set ablaze by a gang of men as she made her way to court to press rape charges. Both cases are pending in court.

In the latest case, questions were raised over a hasty cremation, with several politicians calling it an abuse of human rights.

The woman was cremated early Wednesday, with the family alleging that police did not allow them to perform her final rites. Videos on social media show the family weeping as police insisted on cremating the body without allowing them to take it home.

Senior Police Officer Vikrant Veer denied the allegations, while the leader of the opposition Congress party, Rahul Gandhi, described the cremation incident as "abusive and unjust."

In India, rape and sexual violence have been under the spotlight since the 2012 gang rape and killing of a 23-year-old student on a New Delhi bus. The attack galvanized massive protests and inspired lawmakers to order the creation of fast-track courts dedicated to rape cases and stiffen penalties for those convicted of the crime.

In March, four men sentenced to death for the 2012 attack were hanged.

Indians often rally for swift justice in a country where a woman is raped every 15 minutes, according to government data, and sentencing is notoriously delayed by backlogged courts.

According to the government, police registered 33,658 cases of rape in 2017 — an average of 92 per day and a 35% jump from 2012. About 10,000 of the reported victims were children. The real figure is believed to be far higher due to the stigma of sexual violence.

Associated Press videojournalist Shonal Ganguly contributed to this report.

Cold weather means new challenges for struggling restaurants

By DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writer

U.S. restaurants are moving warily into fall, hoping their slow recovery persists despite the new challenge of chilly weather and a pandemic that's expected to claim even more lives.

New York opens indoor dining on Wednesday, restricting capacity to 25%. San Francisco may do the same as early as this week. Chicago is raising its indoor capacity from 25% to 40% on Thursday, but says restaurants still can't seat more than 50 people in one room.

It's a dose of reality for an industry that was able to stem at least some of its losses by pivoting to outdoor dining this summer, setting up tables and chairs on sidewalks and parking lots and offering some semblance of normalcy.

But as temperatures start to slide across the country, restaurants will have to coax patrons to come back inside, and it's anyone's guess how many actually will. That could spell trouble for an industry that has already lost nearly 100,000 U.S. restaurants — or 1 in 6 — since the start of the pandemic, according to the National Restaurant Association. The future remains uncertain for thousands more.

"We're all a little apprehensive, but that was the case when we started outdoor dining, too," said Samantha DiStefano, owner of Mama Fox, a restaurant and bar in Brooklyn.

Mama Fox can only seat 18 people inside at 25% capacity, so DiStefano will still rely heavily on her 14 outdoor tables. She thinks many New York restaurants won't open indoor dining until the limit reaches 50% because they can't cover their costs at 25%.

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In the meantime, Mama Fox and others are trying to figure out how to extend the outdoor dining season using space heaters, tents, temporary igloos and even blankets. Heat lamps are already in short supply.

Restaurants are also promoting delivery and carryout. Nearly 70% of 3,500 restaurants surveyed in September by the National Restaurant Association said they added curbside takeout during the pandemic; 54% added delivery.

Philip Moseley, co-owner of Blue Oak BBQ in New Orleans, said carryout demand has risen from 10% of sales before the pandemic to 50% now.

Blue Oak BBQ's dining room is open at half capacity, or about 20 people. But a tent in the parking lot seats 80. That's enough traffic that the restaurant was able to hire back all 50 employees.

"You do anything you have to do to make the food work, to make the experience work, to get butts in seats," Moseley said.

Although fall in New Orleans is ideal for outdoor dining, tourists are scarce and the usual round of festivals won't happen this year.

"Every day has a new set of struggles," co-owner Ronnie Evans said.

Seventy percent of U.S. restaurants are independent, but chains are hurting too. NPC International, the largest franchisee of both Pizza Hut and Wendy's, filed for bankruptcy protection in July.

Steve Nikolakakos closed one of his three Manhattan restaurants because his landlord wouldn't give him a break on the rent. Another, Gracie's Diner, closed for two months in March after two employees died of the coronavirus.

Even with outdoor seating, the diner is only making 65% of what it did before the pandemic, he said. Still, that's better than May, when he was doing only 30% of his usual business.

"This is the worst thing I have ever seen," said Nikolakakos, a 40-year veteran of the industry.

Il Carino, a tiny Italian restaurant in Manhattan, is reopening its dining room with just 12 seats. Outdoor seating has recaptured only about 30% of the restaurant's business, and it has had to lay off 13 workers, said Giolio Alvarez, the restaurant's manager.

Alvarez said customers are asking for heat lamps, but the restaurant doesn't know if they're worth the extra money. And increasing menu prices is off the table.

"How are we going to increase prices?" he said. "Everyone is broke."

Monthly U.S. restaurant sales hit their lowest point in April, when they plunged to \$30 billion, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That was less than half the amount restaurants made a year earlier. Sales steadily improved as lockdowns ended, carryout demand picked up and states allowed to-go alcohol. U.S. restaurant sales hit \$55 billion in August, but that's still \$10 billion less than last year.

Some waiters and kitchen staff have gone back to work. Restaurant employment rose by 3.6 million people over the four months ending in August, according to government data. Still, there were 2.5 million fewer U.S. restaurant workers in August compared to February. September's unemployment numbers are due out Friday.

Mario Sandoval, an unemployed server from Las Vegas, appeared before a U.S. House committee last week to urge lawmakers to restart monthly stimulus checks. He also wants a guarantee that he can return to his job when his restaurant reopens.

"I'm worried about the economy crashing again," he said.

On Wednesday, some restaurant workers in Washington planned to strike, saying they can't survive on subminimum wages and tips that are a fraction of what they used to be because of capacity limits. The workers, backed by the group One Fair Wage, want lawmakers to guarantee minimum wages for restaurant workers.

But even if restaurants rehire staff, reopen dining rooms or shell out \$1,000 for a fiberglass igloo, there's no guarantee customers will return.

Nancy Chapman used to eat out often, at restaurants near her College Grove, Tennessee, home and on the road when she traveled to horse shows. But Chapman, 70, who recently retired from her CPA and business management practice, said she isn't going to restaurants until she is satisfied there is a better

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understanding of COVID-19 and a clear path to its resolution.

Juliana Gonzalez, 31, of Howard Beach, New York, is also trying to stay safe. She limits her contacts to her parents and her boyfriend, and she has walked out of dining rooms in New Jersey when she felt they were too crowded. But she's also ready for some normalcy, and she's eager for dining rooms to reopen in New York.

"I feel that most restaurants are trying to stay open, so most of them are trying their best to be safe," Gonzalez said.

AP Writers Anne D'Innocenzio and Jim Mustian in New York and Paul Wiseman in Washington contributed to this report.

Sharp virus spread in Madrid leads to new anti-outbreak plan

By ARITZ PARRA Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Madrid and its suburbs, the region in Europe where a second coronavirus wave is expanding by far the fastest, are edging toward stricter curbs on personal movement and social gatherings after a political dispute that has angered many Spaniards.

Health officials from Spain's central government and the Madrid region agreed late Tuesday on a set of health metrics that should dictate standardized restrictions in cities with a population of 100,000 or more. The new plan needs to be approved at a meeting with health officials from all Spanish regions later Wednesday.

The deal, outlined by Spanish Health Minister Salvador Illa, follows weeks of a sour public disagreement on how to tackle uncontrolled virus clusters in Madrid, the Spanish capital.

The central left-wing government of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez was demanding tougher action in Madrid that wouldn't only target the city's working-class neighborhoods, while the Madrid government, in the hands of a center-right coalition, resisted a city-wide partial lockdown for fear of damaging the regional economy further.

Madrid is leading the new wave of infections in Spain and Europe.

The Madrid region has a two-week infection rate of 784 cases per 100,000 residents, 2.5 times higher than a national average of 294 cases and seven times more than the average rate in Europe and the U.K., which stood at 94 last week, according to EU statistics.

Spain has seen more than 748,000 infections and has a confirmed virus death toll of over 31,400, but experts say all numbers understate the true toll of the pandemic due to limited testing and other factors.

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

Debate Takeaways: An acrid tone from the opening minute

By BILL BARROW and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After more than a year of circling each other, Republican President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden met on the debate stage Tuesday night in Ohio.

The 74-year-old president and the 77-year-old former vice president are similar in age, and they share a mutual dislike. But they differ starkly in style and substance. All of that was evident from the outset on the Cleveland stage.

Here are key takeaways from the first of three scheduled presidential debates before Election Day on Nov. 3.

AND IN THIS CORNER

Trump is no stranger to going on offense, but his pugilistic approach on stage left his Democratic opponent fighting to complete a sentence.

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Trailing in public and private polling, Trump advisers have pushed him to reframe the election away from a referendum on his presidency to a choice between him and Biden. Trump, instead, commandeered the debate, trying to trip up Biden by interrupting and insulting him. In the process, Trump made the debate more about himself.

"There's nothing smart about you," Trump said of Biden. "47 years you've done nothing."

While Trump played into his reputation as a bully, it may have been effective at breaking up the worst of Biden's attacks — simply by talking over them.

Trump aides believed before the debate that Biden would be unable to withstand the withering offensive in style and substance from Trump, but Biden came with a few retorts of his own, calling Trump a "clown" and mocking Trump's style by asking, "Will you shut up, man?"

Trump's supporters may have been cheered by his frontal assault. Whether undecided voters, who watched the debate to try to learn about the two candidates, were impressed is another matter.

Moderator Chris Wallace was none too amused, delivering a pointed reproach to Trump for his interruptions. "Frankly, you've been doing more interrupting," Wallace said, appealing to Trump to let his opponent speak.

Trump is fond of superlatives, but in the case of the debate there is little doubt that it was the most acrimonious since the forums have been televised.

TRUMP CAN'T ESCAPE THE VIRUS

Trump has wanted the election to be about anything but the coronavirus pandemic, but he couldn't outrun reality on the debate stage.

"It is what it is because you are who you are," Biden told the president, echoing Trump's own words and referring to his months of downplaying COVID-19 while he said privately he understood how deadly it is.

But Trump didn't take it quietly. He proceeded to blitz Biden with a mix of self-defense and counter-offensives. The 200,000 dead? Biden's death toll would have been "millions," Trump said. A rocky economy? Biden would've been worse. Biden wouldn't have manufactured enough masks or ventilators.

The kicker: "There will be a vaccine very soon."

Biden fell back on his bottom line: "A lot of people died, and a lot more are going to unless he gets a lot smarter."

For voters still undecided about who'd better handle the pandemic, the exchange may not have offered anything new.

RACIAL RECKONING

Trump said Biden was the politician who helped put millions of Black Americans in prison with the 1994 crime law. Biden called Trump "the racist" in the Oval Office.

For a nation confronting a summer of racial unrest — and centuries of injustice — the debate was the latest cultural flashpoint.

Biden was quiet as Trump blitzed him as a tool of the "radical left" and a weak figure who opposes "law and order." He pressed Biden repeatedly to name any police union that's endorsed him. He falsely accused Biden of wanting to "defund the police."

Biden didn't capitalize when Trump refused to condemn armed militias and insisted, against the guidance of his own FBI director: "This is not a right-wing problem. This is a left-wing problem."

"Proud Boys, stand back and stand by," Trump said when prompted on the far-right group. "But I'll tell you what, somebody's got to do something about antifa and the left."

The former vice president tried to push back, but not until after Trump had made his arguments, including the misrepresentations.

Biden regained some footing mocking the president's warnings about suburbs, saying, "He wouldn't know a suburb unless he took a wrong turn." And perhaps revealing the thinking about allowing Trump the rhetorical upper hand, Biden said, "All these dog whistles and racism doesn't work anymore."

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QUESTION ABOUT COURT, ANSWER ABOUT HEALTH CARE

Trump defended his decision to nominate Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court just weeks before Election Day, saying "elections have consequences."

Biden said he was "not opposed to the justice," but said the "American people have a right to have a say in who the Supreme Court nominee is."

But rather than litigate Republicans' 2016 blocking of Merrick Garland to the high court, Biden quickly pivoted to the issues that will potentially come before the court: health care and abortion. It's an effort by the Democrat to refocus the all-but-certain confirmation fight for Trump's third justice to the Supreme Court into an assault on Trump and his record.

Biden said Barrett, who would be the sixth justice on the nine-member court to be appointed by a Republican, would endanger the Affordable Care Act and tens of millions of Americans with preexisting conditions, and would imperil legalized abortion. It was a reframing of the political debate to terms far more favorable to the Democrat, and one Trump played into. Trump said of the conservative Barrett, "You don't know her view on Roe vs. Wade" and he defended his efforts to try to chip away at the popular Obama-era health law.

Biden has tried to press Democrats to use the court confirmation fight as a rallying cry against Trump, and the debate discussion largely played out on his turf.

'INVISIBLE' WALLACE STRUGGLES TO CONTAIN TRUMP

Debate moderator Chris Wallace of Fox News tried mightily to hold his ground Tuesday after saying beforehand that it was not his job to fact-check the candidates, especially Trump, in real time.

But Wallace struggled to stop Trump from interrupting and at times seemed to lose control of the debate. "Mr. President, as the moderator, we are going to talk about COVID in the next segment," Wallace said. Soon after: "I'm the moderator, and I'd like you to let me ask my question."

Minutes later: "I have to give you roughly equal time. Please let the vice president talk."

And when Wallace noted that Trump hasn't come up with his health care plan in nearly four years, Trump turned the question back on Wallace.

"First of all, I'm debating you and not him. That's okay. I'm not surprised."

Wallace had said he wanted to be "invisible."

Well, that was impossible.

FAMILY BUSINESS

As expected, Trump found a way to bring up Hunter Biden, the former vice president's son, and recycle allegations about the younger Biden's international business practices. Biden called Trump's litany "discredited" and fired back, "I mean, his family we can talk about all night."

But Biden sidestepped any of the specifics of Trump's international business dealings and instead turned straight to the camera. "This is not about my family or his family," Biden said as Trump tried to talk over him. "This is about your family."

In a later exchange, Trump interrupted Biden when he was talking about his late son, Beau Biden, who died of cancer in 2015 after having served in Iraq.

"I don't know Beau, I know Hunter," Trump said.

The Latest: Welsh hospital sees outbreak, suspends surgeries

By The Associated Press undefined

LONDON -- Planned surgeries are being suspended at a hospital in Wales following a coronavirus outbreak there.

The Royal Glamorgan Hospital, which is near the Welsh capital city of Cardiff and subject to local virus-related restrictions, says it has identified 82 cases of the virus, some linked to transmission within the

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hospital.

As a result it has announced some temporary restrictions. Bar a small number of urgent cancer cases, the hospital has decided to suspend planned surgeries beginning Wednesday.

Paul Mears, chief executive of the local health board, said the restrictions have "not been taken lightly, and we understand that they will impact our patients, their families, our staff and partner organisations."

Large parts of Wales have seen an array of local lockdown restrictions imposed in recent weeks following a spike in new coronavirus cases.

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

- At virus milestone, Italian priest reflects on loss, lessons
- Israel approves law to curb protests during virus lockdown
- As virus curbs Nepal's festivals, devotees fear gods' anger
- U.S. restaurants are facing the new challenge of chilly weather amid a pandemic that's expected to claim even more lives. New York reopens indoor dining, restricting capacity to 25%.
- The Tennessee Titans have suspended in-person activities through Friday after the NFL says three Titans players and five personnel tested positive.
- German leader Angela Merkel warns public not to ease up on anti-virus measures, says "we have a difficult time ahead of us in autumn and winter."

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

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

BANGKOK — Thailand is preparing to receive the first group of foreign tourists since scheduled commercial passenger flights into the country were halted in April due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Phuket Gov. Narong Woonsiew on Wednesday inspected the international airport at the popular southern resort island, where a new system including coronavirus testing and transport facilities has been installed to welcome the first 150 Chinese from Guangzhou province on Oct. 8.

Minister of Tourism and Sports Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said at least three groups of foreign tourists will arrive in October — two from China and one from Scandinavia. All will be subject to a 14-day quarantine and other restrictions on their movements.

The plan still needs final approval from the Cabinet. There has been speculation that the Oct. 8 start may be delayed, but Narong told reporters Phuket is ready.

Thailand has had 3,564 confirmed coronavirus cases, including 59 deaths. Regular commercial air traffic remains limited.

PRAGUE — Czechs are casting ballot from their cars for the first time, a measure forced by the coronavirus pandemic.

A total of 156 drive-in temporary ballot stations have been established by the armed forces across the country for those quarantined due to coronavirus infections.

Those who cannot use a car can ask for a visit of a special electoral committee with a ballot box in their homes.

Previously, those quarantined were not allowed to vote because of health concerns. But as their numbers rose, new legislation was passed to make sure their voting rights were respected.

The Czechs are voting in regional elections and the first round of elections for one third of the upper house of Parliament, the Senate, on Friday and Saturday. The second round of the Senate elections is scheduled for Oct 9-10.

The Czech Republic has had 67,843 confirmed cases with 636 deaths.

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NEW DELHI — India recorded 80,472 new confirmed coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, showing a decline from a record high two weeks ago.

The Health Ministry raised India's confirmed total to more than 6.2 million on Wednesday with 2.5 million in September alone. It also reported 1,179 fatalities in the last 24 hours, raising the death toll to 97,497.

India's Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu tested positive on Tuesday and was advised home quarantine. His office said in a tweet that Naidu, 71, is asymptomatic and in good health. Home Minister Amit Shah had tested positive last month and recovered in a hospital.

India's recovery rate crossed 83% on Tuesday and the number of cases under treatment were less than 1 million. The daily testing covered more than 1 million people, the ministry said.

Meanwhile, a serological survey showed that the infections were more prevalent in urban centers with high population density. The survey by the state-run Indian Council of Medical Research also found that 6.6% of the population above 10 years old have been exposed to the coronavirus.

UNITED NATIONS -- The United Nations chief says the COVID-19 pandemic has taken "an unprecedented toll" especially on the economies of many developing countries and the world has not responded with "the massive and urgent support those countries and communities need."

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that in the United States, Canada, Europe and most of the developed world, governments have adopted packages valued in double-digits of GDP to help tackle the coronavirus crisis and its impact.

"The problem is to mobilize the resources to allow the developing countries to be able to do the same," he told a joint press conference Tuesday with Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who have been jointly spearheading high-level meetings to try to raise the resources.

Guterres urged the international community to increase resources to the International Monetary Fund, including through a new allocation of special drawing rights and a voluntary reallocation of existing special drawing rights. He said many countries urgently need debt relief and called for the current debt suspensions to be extended and expanded to all developing and middle-income countries that need help. The private sector, including credit-rating agencies, also "must be engaged in relief efforts," he said.

The U.N. chief said he is encouraged to see over 40 world leaders and the heads of the IMF, World Bank, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the African Union "coming together around these bold policies."

He urged the international community to provide \$35 billion -- including \$15 billion immediately -- to fund "the ACT-Accelerator to ensure equitable access to diagnostics, treatments and vaccines" for all countries.

RALEIGH, N.C. -- The University of North Carolina system reported its first coronavirus-related student death on Tuesday since several campuses reopened with at least partial in-person learning last month.

Chad Dorrill, a 19-year student at Appalachian State University who lived off campus in Boone and took all of his classes online, died on Monday due to coronavirus complications, officials said.

"Any loss of life is a tragedy, but the grief cuts especially deep as we mourn a young man who had so much life ahead," said a statement from Peter Hans, chancellor of the system overseeing the state's 16 public colleges and universities. "I ache for the profound sadness that Chad Dorrill's family is enduring right now. My heart goes out to the entire Appalachian State community."

The university reported a new high of 159 current COVID-19 cases among students on Tuesday. Nearly 550 students have tested positive for the virus since in-person classes resumed last month. Appalachian State remains open for in-person instruction.

Three North Carolina colleges, including UNC-Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University and East Carolina University, have halted physical classes for undergraduate students, after reporting a series of coronavirus outbreaks shortly after students returned to campus.

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O'FALLON, Mo. — The number of people hospitalized for the coronavirus has nearly tripled in areas outside of Missouri's two largest metropolitan areas since the state reopened for business in mid-June, according to state health department data Tuesday.

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' COVID-19 dashboard shows the state's north-west, southeast, southwest and central regions all reached record highs for virus-related hospitalizations on Monday, based on seven-day averages. All told, Missouri reported 1,094 hospitalizations, five fewer than a day earlier, when statewide hospitalizations peaked.

Excluding the St. Louis and Kansas City areas, hospitalizations have risen 186% in the 3½ months since Republican Gov. Mike Parson allowed Missouri to reopen on June 16. The seven-day average for hospitalizations outstate on June 16 was 161; on Monday it was 461.

LIMA, Peru — Health workers for Peru's social security system began a 48-hour walkout on Tuesday to demand higher pay and better working conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

More than 9,000 doctors, dentists and pharmacists were taking part, prompting hospitals to suspend consultations and many surgeries, though emergency and intensive care facilities aren't affected.

Teodoro Quiñones, secretary of the social security doctors union, said the government hasn't kept its promises to raise salaries or pay bonuses during the pandemic.

Doctors in the public sector earn an average of \$985 a month, though most supplement that with other jobs at private hospitals or offices.

The Peruvian Ombudsman's Office said more than 4,000 health workers lack health, life and occupational risk insurance and don't have the right to sick leave if they're diagnosed with the virus.

A total of 166 doctors have reportedly died from COVID-19 in Peru. Overall, the country has reported 32,000 dead and over 808,000 infected.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Businesses in 89 of Tennessee's 95 counties will no longer have to adhere to social distancing guidelines, Gov. Bill Lee announced Tuesday, even though cases of COVID-19 in the state have been persistently high.

The Republican governor said he would lift all virus-related limits on businesses and social gatherings for most of the state. The action, which takes effect Thursday, notably does not apply to Tennessee's six populous counties with locally run health departments. Sullivan, Knox, Hamilton, Davidson, Madison and Shelby counties can continue implementing their own restrictions.

According to data kept by The Associated Press, there were about 287 new cases per 100,000 people in Tennessee over the past two weeks, which ranks 13th in the country for new cases per capita. The state has seen at least 2,389 virus-related deaths.

DENVER — Colorado Gov. Jared Polis is encouraging families to register students in online or in-person schools as the state experiences a decline in enrollment during the coronavirus pandemic.

Polis said the decline is based on anecdotal evidence, but it is widespread across the state, with the greatest decrease among preschool to third-grade students. At a news conference Tuesday, Polis and other officials warned about the "major deficit" that children who return to school after taking time off may face.

Other school districts across the U.S. have reported similar trends. Dr. Chris Rogers, a child and adolescent psychiatrist, says school is critical to the healthy development of children and adolescents.

NEW YORK — Alarmed by a spike in coronavirus infections in a few Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods, New York City officials will start issuing fines in those areas to people who refuse to wear masks, Mayor Bill de Blasio said Tuesday.

De Blasio said he was sending teams of hundreds of outreach workers and contact tracers to nine Brooklyn and Queens ZIP codes that have seen an upswing in positive COVID-19 tests in hopes of avoiding harsher enforcement measures.

Those workers will be handing out masks but also insisting that people put them on if they are in a place

where they could be within 6 feet of other people.

The Democratic mayor warned he could order further crackdowns, including the closing of nonessential businesses and bans on gatherings if things don't improve. Private schools and child care centers could be closed if people refuse to comply with coronavirus guidelines, de Blasio said.

32 acquitted in razing of India mosque that set off violence

By BISWAJEET BANERJEE Associated Press

LUCKNOW, India (AP) — An Indian court on Wednesday acquitted all 32 people accused of crimes in a 1992 attack and demolition of a 16th century mosque that sparked Hindu-Muslim violence leaving some 2,000 people dead.

Four senior leaders of the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, or BJP, were among the defendants in a trial that languished in India's sluggish legal system for almost 28 years. Seventeen of the 49 accused died of natural causes during the trial.

The four BJP leaders were accused of making inflammatory speeches that incited tens of thousands of their followers who had camped out in the city of Ayodhya ahead of the attack on the mosque.

Last year, India's Supreme Court ruled in favor of building a Hindu temple on the disputed site. Hindus believe their god Ram was born there and say the Muslim Emperor Babur built a mosque on top of a temple at the site.

The Supreme Court also ruled that the demolition of the Babri Masjid was illegal and ordered that the separate trial in the mosque demolition case be completed expeditiously.

Judge Surendra Kumar Yadav ruled there was no criminal conspiracy to attack the mosque by hard-line Hindu activists and no conclusive evidence to prove it, said attorney Rishab Tripathi, who represented one of the defendants.

"The incident was not pre-planned," Yadav said in his ruling in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh state. "The leaders present there actually tried to control and pacify the mob."

Some of those acquitted and their supporters shouted "Jai Shree Ram," hailing the god Ram, in the court. They later distributed sweets outside the court to celebrate the decision.

The four acquitted BJP leaders — L.K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Uma Bharti and Kalyan Singh — have said the mosque's demolition was a spontaneous eruption by angry Hindu activists.

I.B. Singh, an attorney who represented Joshi, said investigators couldn't prove the authenticity of audio and video evidence submitted in the case, and the judge held that the case lacked legal evidence that the accused were part of any conspiracy.

Joshi, who was a minister in a former BJP government, said "the truth has triumphed."

Advani said in a statement that the judgment "vindicated his and the BJP's belief and commitment toward the Ram temple movement."

Another acquitted defendant, Jai Bhagwan Goyal, said: "We had done nothing wrong. The whole of India is happy. Lord Ram's temple is coming up in Ayodhya city."

The Muslim community will challenge the acquittals in an appeals court. "This is an erroneous judgment, as it is against evidence and against law," said Jaffaryab Jilani, representing the All India Muslim Law Board.

The verdict also was sharply criticized by Maulana Khalid Rashid, chairman of the Islamic Center of India, who said Muslims have always respected court decisions, but this was an injustice to the community.

"When the Supreme Court said that the demolition of the mosque was an unlawful act, how can a lower court set free the accused?" he said.

Rashid said Muslim organizations should evaluate whether it is prudent to challenge the decision. "Will Muslims get justice there?" he said.

Muslim-majority Pakistan strongly condemned the court judgment and said the defendants who had "boasted of the criminal act publicly could not have been set free."

Pakistan's foreign ministry said in a statement that Hindu nationalists' hatred of minorities, particularly Muslims, indicates that India is fast becoming a Hindu nation where minorities are second-class citizens.

On Dec. 6, 1992, tens of thousands of Hindus gathered for a rally near the disputed site, and groups climbed the mosque and demolished it with axes and hammers.

The accused included Lal Krishna Advani, 92, a co-founder of the BJP who served as deputy prime minister from 2002 to 2004 under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Others included another former government minister, Uma Bharti, as well as Kalyan Singh, who was the top elected BJP leader of Uttar Pradesh state when the mosque was demolished.

In its ruling last November, the Supreme Court ordered the entire disputed area of 2.77 acres (1.1 hectares) to be allocated to Hindus for the construction of a temple, while 5 acres (2 hectares) at another location would be allocated to the construction of a mosque.

Associated Press writer Munir Ahmed in Islamabad, Pakistan, contributed to this report.

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AP FACT CHECK: False claims flood Trump-Biden debate

By CALVIN WOODWARD and HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump unleashed a torrent of fabrications and fear-mongering in a belligerent debate with Joe Biden, at one point claiming the U.S. death toll would have been 10 times higher under the Democrat because he wanted open borders in the pandemic. Biden preached no such thing.

Trump barreled into the debate Tuesday night as unconstrained by the facts as at his rallies, but this time having his campaign opponent and frequently the Fox News moderator, Chris Wallace, calling him out in real time, or trying. Biden stumbled on the record at times as the angry words flew from both men on the Cleveland stage.

A look at how some of their statements from Cleveland stack up with the facts in the first of three scheduled presidential debates for the Nov. 3 election:

VIRUS DEATH TOLL

TRUMP, addressing Biden on U.S. deaths from COVID-19: "If you were here, it wouldn't be 200,000 people, it would be 2 million people. You didn't want me to ban China, which was heavily infected. ... If we would have listened to you, the country would have been left wide open."

THE FACTS: The audacious claim that Biden as president would have seen 2 million deaths rests on a false accusation. Biden never came out against Trump's decision to restrict travel from China. Biden was slow in staking a position on the matter but when he did, he supported the restrictions. Biden never counseled leaving the country "wide open" in the face of the pandemic.

Trump repeatedly, and falsely, claims to have banned travel from China. He restricted it.

The U.S. restrictions that took effect Feb. 2 continued to allow travel to the U.S. from the Chinese territories of Hong Kong and Macao. The Associated Press reported that more than 8,000 Chinese and foreign nationals based in the two locales entered the U.S. in the first three months after the travel restrictions were imposed.

Additionally, more than 27,000 Americans returned from mainland China in the first month after the restrictions took effect. U.S. officials lost track of more than 1,600 of them who were supposed to be monitored for virus exposure.

Dozens of countries took similar steps to control travel from hot spots before or around the same time the U.S. did.

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PROTESTS

TRUMP: "The (Portland, Oregon) sheriff just came out today and he said I support President Trump."

THE FACTS: That is false. The sheriff of Multnomah County, Oregon — where Portland is located — said he does not support Trump.

The sheriff, Mike Reese, tweeted, "As the Multnomah County Sheriff I have never supported Donald Trump and will never support him."

Portland has been a flashpoint in the debate over racial injustice protests in the U.S. Police and federal agents have repeatedly clashed with demonstrators gathered outside the downtown federal courthouse and police buildings. Some protesters have thrown bricks, rocks and other projectiles at officers. Police and federal agents responded by firing tear gas, rubber bullets and other non-lethal ammunition to disperse the crowds.

BIDEN: "There was a peaceful protest in front of the White House. What did he do? He came out of his bunker, had the military do tear gas."

THE FACTS: It was law enforcement, not the military, that used chemical irritants to forcefully remove peaceful protesters from Lafayette Square outside the White House on June 1.

And there is no evidence Trump was inside a bunker in the White House as that happened. Secret Service agents had rushed Trump to a White House bunker days earlier as hundreds of protesters gathered outside the executive mansion, some of them throwing rocks and tugging at police barricades.

HEALTH CARE

TRUMP: "Drug prices will be coming down 80 or 90%."

THE FACTS: That's a promise, not a reality, and it's a big stretch.

Trump has been unable to get legislation to lower drug prices through Congress. Major regulatory actions from his administration are still in the works, and are likely to be challenged in court.

There's no plan on the horizon that would lower drug prices as dramatically as Trump claims.

Prescription drug price inflation has been low and slow during the Trump years, but it hasn't made a U-turn and sped off in the other direction. Prices have seesawed from year to year.

Looking back at the totality of Trump's term, from January 2017, when he was inaugurated, to the latest data from August 2020, drug prices went up 3.6%, according to an analysis by economist Paul Hughes-Cromwick of Altarum, a nonprofit research and consulting organization.

Hughes-Cromwick looked at figures from the government's Bureau of Labor Statistics, which measures prices for a set of prescription medicines, including generics and branded drugs.

When comparing prices in 2019 with a year earlier, there indeed was a decline. Prices dropped by 0.2% in 2019, a turnabout not seen since the 1970s. But that's nowhere near close to 80% or 90%.

From August of last year to this August, prices rose by 1.4%.

VIRUS RESPONSE

TRUMP: Dr. Anthony Fauci "said very strongly, 'masks are not good.' Then he changed his mind, he said, 'masks, good.'"

THE FACTS: He is skirting crucial context. Trump is telling the story in a way that leaves out key lessons learned as the coronavirus pandemic unfolded, raising doubts about the credibility of public health advice.

Early on in the outbreak, a number of public health officials urged everyday people not to use masks, fearing a run on already short supplies of personal protective equipment needed by doctors and nurses in hospitals.

But that changed as the highly contagious nature of the coronavirus became clear, as well as the fact that it can be spread by tiny droplets breathed into the air by people who may not display any symptoms.

Fauci of the National Institutes of Health, along with Dr. Robert Redfield of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Stephen Hahn of the Food and Drug Administration and Dr. Deborah Birx of the White

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House coronavirus task force, all agree on the importance of wearing masks and practicing social distancing. Redfield has repeatedly said it could be as effective as a vaccine if people took that advice to heart.

TRUMP, on coronavirus and his campaign rallies: "So far we have had no problem whatsoever. It's outside, that's a big difference according to the experts. We have tremendous crowds."

THE FACTS: That's not correct.

Trump held an indoor rally in Tulsa in late June, drawing both thousands of participants and large protests. The Tulsa City-County Health Department director said the rally "likely contributed" to a dramatic surge in new coronavirus cases there. By the first week of July, Tulsa County was confirming more than 200 new daily cases, setting record highs. That's more than twice the number the week before the rally.

TRUMP, addressing Biden: "You didn't do very well on the swine flu. H1N1. You were a disaster."

THE FACTS: Trump frequently distorts what happened in the pandemic of 2009, which killed far fewer people in the United States than the coronavirus is killing now. For starters, Biden as vice president wasn't running the federal response. And that response was faster out of the gate than when COVID-19 came to the U.S.

Then, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's flu surveillance network sounded the alarm after two children in California became the first people diagnosed with the new flu strain in this country.

About two weeks later, the Obama administration declared a public health emergency against H1N1, also known as the swine flu, and the CDC began releasing anti-flu drugs from the national stockpile to help hospitals get ready. In contrast, Trump declared a state of emergency in early March, seven weeks after the first U.S. case of COVID-19 was announced, and the country's health system struggled for months with shortages of critical supplies and testing.

More than 200,000 people have died from COVID-19 in the U.S. The CDC puts the U.S. death toll from the 2009-2010 H1N1 pandemic at about 12,500.

ECONOMY

BIDEN: Trump will be the "first (president) in American history" to lose jobs during his presidency.

THE FACTS: No, if Trump loses reelection, he would not be the first president in U.S. history to have lost jobs. That happened under Herbert Hoover, the president who lost the 1932 election to Franklin Roosevelt as the Great Depression caused massive job losses.

Official jobs records only go back to 1939 and, in that period, no president has ended his term with fewer jobs than when he began. Trump appears to be on track to have lost jobs during his first term, which would make him the first to do so since Hoover.

VOTING

TRUMP, on the prospect of mass fraud in the vote-by-mail process: "It's a rigged election."

THE FACTS: He is exaggerating threats. Trump's claim is part of a months-long effort to sow doubt about the integrity of the election before it's even arrived and to preemptively call into question the results.

Experts have repeatedly said there are no signs of widespread fraud in mail balloting, as have the five states that relied exclusively on that system for voting even before the coronavirus pandemic. Trump's own FBI director, Chris Wray, said at a congressional hearing just last week that the bureau has not historically seen "any kind of coordinated national voter fraud effort in a major election, whether it's by mail or otherwise."

Wray did acknowledge voter fraud at the local level "from time to time," but even there, Trump appeared to paint an overly dire portrait of the reality and he misstated the facts of one particular case that received substantial attention last week following an unusual Justice Department announcement.

Trump said nine military ballots found discarded in a wastebasket in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, were all marked for him. Though that's consistent with an initial statement the Justice Department made, officials later revised it to say seven of the nine ballots had Trump's name.

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FOOTBALL

TRUMP: "I'm the one who brought back football. By the way, I brought back Big Ten football. It was me and I'm very happy to do it."

THE FACTS: Better check the tape. While Trump had called for the Big Ten conference to hold its 2020 football season, he wasn't the only one. Fans, students, athletes and college towns had also urged the conference to resume play.

When the Big Ten announced earlier this month that it reversed an earlier decision to cancel the season because of COVID-19, Trump tweeted his thanks: "It is my great honor to have helped!!!"

The conference includes several large universities in states that could prove pivotal in the election, including Pennsylvania, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin.

SUPREME COURT

BIDEN, on Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett: "She thinks that the Affordable Care Act is not constitutional."

THE FACTS: That's not right.

Biden is talking about Trump's pick to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Barrett has been critical of the Obama-era law and the court decisions that have upheld it, but she has never said it's not constitutional. The Supreme Court will hear arguments in the case Nov. 10, and the Trump administration is asking the high court to rule the law unconstitutional.

DELAWARE STATE

TRUMP: "You said you went to Delaware State, but you forgot the name of your college. You didn't go to Delaware State. ... There's nothing smart about you, Joe."

THE FACTS: Trump is quoting Biden out of context. The former vice president, a graduate of the University of Delaware, did not say he attended Delaware State University but was making a broader point about his longstanding ties to the Black community.

Trump is referring to remarks Biden often says on the campaign, typically when speaking to Black audiences, that he "goes way back with HBCUs," or historically Black universities and colleges. Biden has spoken many times over the years at Delaware State, a public HBCU in his home state, and the school says that's where he first announced his bid for the Senate – his political start.

"I got started out of an HBCU, Delaware State — now, I don't want to hear anything negative about Delaware State," Biden told a town hall in Florence, South Carolina, in October 2019. "They're my folks."

Biden often touts his deep political ties to the Black community, occasionally saying he "grew up politically" or "got started politically" in the Black church. In front of some audiences, he's omitted the word "politically," but still with a clear context about his larger point. The statements are all part of a standard section of his stump speech noting that Delaware has "the eighth largest Black population by percentage."

A spokesman for Delaware State University, Carlos Holmes, has said it took Biden's comments to refer to his political start, saying Biden announced his bid for the U.S. Senate on the DSU campus in 1972.

Biden's broader point is pushback on the idea that he's a Johnny-come-lately with the Black community or that his political connections there are owed only to being Barack Obama's vice president.

CRIME

BIDEN: "The fact of the matter is violent crime went down 17%, 15%, in our administration."

THE FACTS: That's overstating it.

Overall, the number of violent crimes fell roughly 10% from 2008, the year before Biden took office as vice president, to 2016, his last full year in the office, according to data from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program.

But the number of violent crimes was spiking again during Obama and Biden's final two years in office,

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increasing by 8% from 2014 to 2016.

More people were slain across the U.S. in 2016, for example, than at any other point under the Obama administration.

TRUMP: "If you look at what's going on in Chicago, where 53 people were shot and eight died. If you look at New York where it's going up like nobody's ever seen anything ... the numbers are going up 100, 150, 200%, crime, it's crazy what's going on."

THE FACTS: Not quite. The statistics in Chicago are true, but those numbers are only a small snapshot of crime in the city and the United States, and his strategy is highlighting how data can be easily molded to suit the moment. As for New York, Trump may have been talking about shootings. They are up in New York by about 93% so far this year, but overall crime is down about 1.5%. Murders are up 38%, but there were 327 killings compared with 236, still low compared with years past. For example, compared with a decade ago, crime is down 10%.

An FBI report released Monday for 2019 crime data found that violent crime has decreased over the past three years.

Associated Press writers Josh Boak, Colleen Long, Ellen Knickmeyer, Mark Sherman, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Bill Barrow, David Klepper, Amanda Seitz, Michael Balsamo and Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

EDITOR'S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures.

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Chaotic first debate: Taunts overpower Trump, Biden visions

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, DARLENE SUPERVILLE, WILL WEISSERT and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press CLEVELAND (AP) — The first debate between President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden deteriorated into bitter taunts and near chaos Tuesday night as Trump repeatedly interrupted his opponent with angry — and personal — jabs that sometimes overshadowed the sharply different visions each man has for a nation facing historic crises.

In the most tumultuous presidential debate in recent memory, Trump refused to condemn white supremacists who have supported him, telling one such group known as Proud Boys to "stand back, stand by." There were also heated clashes over the president's handling of the pandemic, the integrity of the election results, deeply personal attacks about Biden's family and how the Supreme Court will shape the future of the nation's health care.

But it was the belligerent tone that was persistent, somehow fitting for what has been an extraordinarily ugly campaign. The two men frequently talked over each other with Trump interrupting, nearly shouting, so often that Biden eventually snapped at him, "Will you shut up, man?"

"The fact is that everything he's saying so far is simply a lie," Biden said. "I'm not here to call out his lies. Everybody knows he's a liar."

The presidential race has been remarkably stable for weeks, despite the historic crises that have battered the country this year, including a pandemic that has killed more than 200,000 Americans and a reckoning over race and police brutality. With just five weeks until Election Day and voting already underway in some key states, Biden has maintained a lead in national polls and in many battlegrounds.

It's unclear whether the debate will do much to change those dynamics.

Over and over, Trump tried to control the conversation, interrupting Biden and repeatedly talking over the moderator, Chris Wallace of Fox News. The president tried to deflect tough lines of questioning — whether on his taxes or the pandemic — to deliver broadsides against Biden.

The president drew a lecture from Wallace, who pleaded with both men to stop talking over each other.

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Biden tried to push back against Trump, sometimes looking right at the camera to directly address viewers rather than the president and snapping, "It's hard to get a word in with this clown."

Again refusing to commit to honoring the results of the election, Trump spread falsehoods about mail voting. Without evidence, he suggested that the process — surging in popularity during the pandemic — was ripe for fraud and incorrectly claimed impropriety at a Pennsylvania voting site.

But despite his efforts to dominate the discussion, Trump was frequently put on the defensive and tried to sidestep when he was asked if he was willing to condemn white supremacists and paramilitary groups.

"What do you want to call them? Give me a name. Give me a name," Trump said, before Biden mentioned the far right, violent group known as the Proud Boys. Trump then pointedly did not condemn the group, instead saying: "Proud Boys, stand back, stand by. But I'll tell you what, somebody's got to do something about antifa and the left because this is not a right-wing problem. This is a left-wing problem."

Biden attacked Trump's handling of the pandemic, saying that the president "waited and waited" to act when the virus reached America's shores and "still doesn't have a plan." Biden told Trump to "get out of your bunker and get out of the sand trap" and go in his golf cart to the Oval Office to come up with a bipartisan plan to save people.

Trump snarled a response, declaring: "I'll tell you Joe, you could never have done the job that we did. You don't have it in your blood."

"I know how to do the job," was the solemn response from Biden, who served eight years as Barack Obama's vice president.

The pandemic's effects were in plain sight, with the candidates' lecterns spaced far apart, all the guests in the small crowd tested and the traditional opening handshake scrapped. While neither candidate wore a mask to take the stage, their families did sport face coverings.

Trump struggled to define his ideas for replacing the Affordable Care Act on health care in the debate's early moments and defended his nomination of Amy Coney Barrett, declaring, "I was not elected for three years, I'm elected for four years."

"We won the election. Elections have consequences. We have the Senate. We have the White House and we have a phenomenal nominee, respected by all."

Trump criticized Biden over the former vice president's refusal to comment on whether he would try to expand the Supreme Court in retaliation if Barrett is confirmed to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. That idea has gained momentum on the party's left flank, but Biden tried to put distance between himself and the liberal wing, declining to endorse the Green New Deal and rejecting the assertion that he was under the control of radicals by declaring "I am the Democratic Party now."

The scattershot debate bounced from topic to topic, with Trump again refusing to embrace the science of climate change while Biden accused Trump of walking away from the American promise of equity for all and making a race-based appeal.

"This is a president who has used everything as a dog whistle to try to generate racist hatred, racist division," Biden said.

Recent months have seen major protests after the deaths of Black people at the hands of police. Biden said the country faces a problem with systemic racism and that while the vast majority of police officers are "decent, honorable men and women" there are "bad apples" and people have to be held accountable.

Trump in turn claimed that Biden's work on a federal crime bill treated the African American population "about as bad as anybody in this country." The president pivoted to his hardline focus on those protesting racial injustice and accused Biden of being afraid to use the words "law and order," out of fear of alienating the left.

"Violence in response is never appropriate," Biden said. "Never appropriate. Peaceful protest is."

The attacks turned deeply personal when Trump returned to a campaign attack line by declaring that Biden's son, Hunter, had inappropriately benefitted from his father's connections while working in Ukraine. Biden rarely looked at Trump during the night but turned to face the president when he defended his sons, including Beau, an Army veteran who died of cancer in 2015, after the commander in chief's reported insults of those who served in the military.

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A new report from two Republican-led Senate committees alleged that Hunter Biden's work in Ukraine at the same time his father was vice president raised conflict-of-interest concerns for the Obama administration, but the report did not link Joe Biden to any wrongdoing or misconduct. Trump was impeached for pushing Kiev to investigate the Biden family.

The debate was arguably Trump's best chance to try to reframe the campaign as a choice between candidates and not a referendum over his handling of the virus that has killed more people in America than any other nation. Americans, according to polling, have soured on his leadership in the crisis, and the president has struggled to land consistent attacks on Biden.

In the hours before the debate, Biden released his 2019 tax returns just days after the blockbuster revelations about Trump's long-hidden tax history, including that he paid only \$750 a year in federal income taxes in 2016 and 2017 and nothing in many other years. The Bidens paid nearly \$300,000 in taxes in 2019.

Trump, in the debate, insisted he paid millions in taxes — but refused to say how much he paid in federal income taxes — and insisted he had taken advantage of legal tax incentives, another angry exchange that led to Biden declaring that Trump was the "worst president" the nation has ever had.

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Lemire reported from New York. Price reported from Las Vegas. Additional reporting by Associated Press writers Jill Colvin in Cleveland and Zeke Miller in Washington.
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Analysis: Trump leans on tone that turns off voters he needs

By STEVE PEOPLES and JULIE PACE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump needed to make the first general election debate about his rival, Democrat Joe Biden. Instead, as he so often does, Trump made it about himself.

The president set the tone from the start for one of the ugliest general election debates in recent memory, badgering Biden and repeatedly interrupting him. Biden alternated between ignoring the president and growing visibly irritated. Moderator Chris Wallace admonished and pleaded with Trump to allow his rival to speak.

Trump's aggressive posture may have appealed to his most passionate supporters — a primetime display of the brashness he has brought to the Oval Office. But by the end of the 90-minute contest, it was unclear whether Trump succeeded in making up any ground in trying to expand his coalition or win over persuadable voters, particularly white, educated women and independents who have been turned off in part by the same tone and tenor the president displayed on the debate stage.

"Trump brought the chaotic nature of his presidency to the debate stage," said Alex Conant, a Republican strategist. "He needed to knock Biden off his game, but he may have just reminded independent voters why they've turned against him."

Indeed, if there were ever a debate that turned voters away from politics altogether, this was it. Despite an array of complex and substantive issues on the debate agenda — a Supreme Court vacancy, the government's response to the coronavirus pandemic, the nation's reckoning over race and police brutality — the candidates' dramatically different visions for the country were frequently overshadowed by their obvious disdain for each other.

What did break through likely were not the moments Trump was seeking. The most striking exchange of the night came when he failed to condemn white supremacist groups. And when prodded by Biden to address the Proud Boys, a male-only group of neo-fascists who describe themselves as "western chauvinists" and have been known to incite street violence, the president offered a puzzling response.

"Proud Boys, stand back and stand by," Trump said.

There were also glaring gaps in Trump's outlines for addressing the future of health care coverage in America and controlling the pandemic, which has killed more than 200,000 people in the U.S. this year. He also refused to embrace the science of climate change, even as record wildfires rage in the West.

Among Trump's political challenges throughout this tumultuous year has been leveling a sustained and

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consistent attack against Biden. Some Republicans believe he has squandered many of the advantages of incumbency: the money and the months a sitting president can spend defining an eventual rival in the eyes of voters.

The result: With five weeks until Election Day and voting already underway in some key states, Trump has consistently trailed Biden in national polls. Biden also holds a lead in some of the battleground states, although others appear to be significantly closer.

With time running out to change the trajectory of the race, Trump did arrive at the debate armed with an array of attacks on his opponent. He challenged Biden's effectiveness during his nearly five decades in Washington and tried to link his more moderate rival to the far-left flank of the Democratic Party. He launched a barrage of unsubstantiated corruption charges against Biden's son for work he did in Ukraine, as well as his addiction struggles, and he challenged Biden's intelligence.

"Don't ever use the word smart with me," Trump said to the former vice president. "There's nothing smart about you."

Biden slapped back at the president's attacks over and over using his own searing rhetoric, calling Trump "a clown," "a racist" and "a liar." At one point when Trump kept interrupting, Biden charged, "Will you shut up, man?"

To be sure, the lowbrow debate could hold risks for Biden, too. His campaign needs strong turnout from young people, Black voters and Latinos — groups with lower turnout rates and in some cases, less enthusiasm for Biden — to turn his solid standing in polling into a victory in November. There were few chances for Biden to make a cohesive case for why his agenda would have a transformative impact on their lives, in part because of Trump's repeated interruptions.

Still, the former vice president appeared well aware of the need to look past Trump and speak to those Americans when the opportunity arose. He labored at times to ignore Trump's onslaught, instead speaking directly to the camera and the millions of voters watching at home.

He offered an olive branch to a deeply divided nation, vowing to be a president for those who support him and those who don't — a contrast to Trump, who has drawn a distinction between coronavirus deaths in blue states and red states.

When Trump tried to raise the unsubstantiated corruption charges against Biden's son, the former vice president said the issue wasn't his family or Trump's. Turning to the camera once again, he declared, "It's about your family."

The president made no real attempts to speak to all Americans, particularly those who have vigorously opposed his presidency and see the prospect of a second term as a threat to the nation's democratic systems. Nor did Trump spend any time reflecting on the Americans who have died this year from the coronavirus, insisting only that the tally would have been much higher if Biden had been president.

The end result appeared to leave few cheering, including some Trump allies, who privately suggested the president was too aggressive. Publicly, however, some of his ardent supporters insisted Americans got what they wanted from the president.

"Trump proved again why he is the best counterpuncher in American politics," said evangelical leader Ralph Reed. "It's not always pretty, but it's effective, and it's why Trump bested Biden tonight."

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Trump to far-right extremists: 'Stand back and stand by'

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

President Donald Trump on Tuesday didn't condemn white supremacist groups and their role in violence in some American cities this summer, branding it solely a "left-wing" problem and telling one far-right

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extremist group to “stand back and stand by.”

“Almost everything I see is from the left wing, not from the right wing,” said Trump, whose exchange with Democrat Joe Biden left the extremist group Proud Boys celebrating what some of its members saw as tacit approval.

He was responding to a question from debate moderator Chris Wallace, who asked the president if he would condemn white supremacist and militia groups that have showed up at some protests. Wallace specifically mentioned Kenosha, Wisconsin, where a white teenager was charged with killing two protesters during demonstrations over the police shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man. Trump has repeatedly blamed “antifa,” which stands for the anti-fascist movement.

“I’m willing to do anything. I want to see peace,” Trump said. “What do you want to call them? Give me a name.”

“Proud Boys,” Democrat Joe Biden chimed in, referencing a far-right extremist group that has shown up at protests in the Pacific Northwest. The male-only group of neo-fascists describes themselves as “western chauvinists,” and they have been known to incite street violence.

“Proud Boys, stand back and stand by,” Trump said. “But I’ll tell you what, I’ll tell you what, somebody’s got to do something about antifa and the left because this is not a right-wing problem.”

FBI Director Christopher Wray told a congressional panel last week, though, that white supremacists and anti-government extremists have been responsible for most of the recent deadly attacks by extremist groups within the U.S.

Trump, a Republican, has tried to tie incidents of violence that have accompanied largely peaceful protests to Biden and the Democrats, running on a “law and order” message that warns people won’t be safe under a Democratic president. It’s a message aimed squarely at white suburban voters, including women who voted for Trump in 2016 but may not do so again.

“What we saw was a dog whistle through a bullhorn,” California Sen. Kamala Harris, Biden’s running mate, said on MSNBC after the debate. “Donald Trump is not pretending to be anything other than what he is: Someone who will not condemn white supremacists.”

Proud Boys leaders and supporters later celebrated the president’s words on social media. A channel on Telegram, an instant messaging service, with more than 5,000 of the group’s members posted “Stand Back” and “Stand By” above and below the group’s logo.

Biden has said he decided to run for president after Trump said there were “very fine people” on both sides of a 2017 protest led by white supremacists in Charlottesville, Virginia, where a counterprotester was killed.

Trump said Tuesday that Biden was afraid to say the words “law and order” and pressed him to give examples of law enforcement groups that back his campaign. Biden didn’t name any, but said he’s in favor of “law and order with justice, where people get treated fairly.”

Biden called antifa “an idea, not an organization.” That’s similar to how Wray described it, though Trump has called on the federal government to characterize antifa as a terrorist organization.

At another point in the debate, when discussing a Trump administration move to end racial sensitivity training in the federal government, Biden directly called Trump a racist. He also accused him of trying to sow racist hatred and racist division in the country.

Foreign observers note ‘chaos,’ ‘rancor’ in US debate

BEIJING (AP) — “Chaos, interruptions, personal attacks and insults,” one outspoken Chinese newspaper editor said of the U.S. presidential debate. An Australian counterpart said it was “swamped” by the “rancor engulfing America.”

The first debate pitting Republican President Donald Trump against Democratic challenger Joe Biden was not a highlight of political oratory in the eyes of many overseas.

Yet interest ran high for its potential impact on what may be the most consequential U.S. election in years, now just over a month away.

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Observers looked for possible impact on financial markets and currencies, although the reaction was muted overall. Share prices slipped further in Japan and the dollar weakened against the Japanese yen and the euro, while U.S. futures were lower, auguring a weak opening on Wall Street.

The debate itself went as expected, said Jeffrey Halley, a senior market analyst at Oanda.

"Markets have remained calm as no policy surprises have emerged from the debate so far," he said. "My initial thoughts are the debate will not move the needle on the Democrat lead in the national polls."

The greater worry is over how tight the race might be and whether a delay in election results might prove disruptive, said Stephen Innes of AxiCorp.

"A highly polarized and possibly legally contested U.S. election is just around the corner," Innes said. "With mail-in votes likely to be too high (and potentially questioned), there is a chance that we still will not know the result by Inauguration Day with constitutional chaos ensuing."

Hu Xijin, editor of China's nationalistic Communist Party tabloid Global Times, offered his opinion on the newspaper's official microblog, writing that the "chaos, interruptions, personal attacks and insults" on display were a reflection of America's "overarching division, anxiety and the accelerating erosion of the system's original advantages."

"I used to admire this kind of televised debate in American politics, but I have much more mixed feelings when watch it again now," wrote Hu, who personally and through his paper routinely attacks American policies.

"Indeed, the overall image of the United States is growing more and more complicated in my eyes," Hu wrote.

The editor-at-large of the newspaper The Australian, Paul Kelly, described the debate as a "spiteful, chaotic, abusive, often out-of-control brawling encounter with both candidates revealing their contempt for each other."

"The rancor engulfing America swamped the first Trump-Biden debate," Kelly wrote.

While Trump surely energized his base, he "never landed a political knock-out blow," and Biden occasionally faltered but "showed he could fight," he wrote, adding, "America faces a dangerous several weeks."

A columnist for the newspaper, Peter Hoysted, called the debate a "shout-athon" and a "verbal shambles" that reflected American political life and the "yawning gap between the left and right."

Tim Wilson, a lawmaker in Australia's conservative government, was frustrated by the debate's lack of policy focus.

"For most part, it was a slanging match between President Trump and Vice President Biden. I've got to say, I thought it was pretty unedifying in terms of a discussion, not just about the future of America, but ultimately because of the might of the United States, about the rest of the world as well," Wilson told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

Amanda Wishworth, a lawmaker in Australia's center-left Labor Party, said, "A lot of people would be scratching their heads, especially here from Australia, where, believe it or not, our politics is a little bit more gentle than the U.S. of A."

Foreign policy issues were largely absent from the debate, although Trump slung accusations that China had paid Biden's son Hunter for consulting work and Biden attacked Trump's trade deals with China for failing to deliver benefits.

Trump also repeatedly blamed China for the coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than 1 million people globally and laid waste to economies in the U.S. and other nations. Trump also said he reduced the threat to the U.S. by banning travel from China, although in fact he only restricted it.

In the Mideast, the largely domestic debate drew raised eyebrows when Biden at one point said "inshallah" as Trump hedged on saying when he would release his tax returns. "Inshallah" in Arabic means "God willing." It also can be used in a way to suggest something won't ever happen. Al-Arabiya, a Saudi-owned satellite channel based in Dubai, and The National, a state-linked newspaper in Abu Dhabi, both published articles noting Biden's use of the word.

A Emirati political scientist, Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, wrote on Twitter that he saw the debate as a "tumultu-

ous verbal battle.”

“How did America reach this level of political decline?” he wrote.

Associated Press writers Rod McGuirk in Sydney, Australia, and Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, contributed to this report.

At virus milestone, Italian priest reflects on loss, lessons

By MARIA GRAZIA MURRU and NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

SERIATE, Italy (AP) — If there is anything the Rev. Mario Carminati and the traumatized residents of Italy's Bergamo province remember about the worst days of the coronavirus outbreak, it's the wail of ambulance sirens piercing the silence of lockdown.

Around the clock for weeks on end, ambulances screamed through Bergamo's valleys and towns in a terrifying soundtrack of death, as mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers gasping for air were rushed to the hospital. Thousands never came back.

As the world counts more than 1 million COVID-19 victims, the quiet of everyday life and hum of industry has returned to Bergamo, which along with the surrounding Lombardy region was the one-time epicenter of the outbreak in Europe. But the memory of those dark winter days, and the monumental toll of dead they left behind, has remained with those who survived only to see the rest of the world fall victim, too.

“They would never stop,” Carminati, the parish priest of the Bergamo town of Seriate, recalled of the ambulances. “They would drive by continuously and you would wonder ‘When will this end?’”

Bergamo recorded its first positive case Feb. 23, two days after Italy's first locally transmitted case was detected. By the end of March, the province of Bergamo had registered a 571% increase in deaths compared with the five-year monthly average — the biggest increase in Italy and one of the biggest localized increases in mortality rate in Europe.

Many of those deaths don't even figure into Italy's official COVID-19 toll of 35,851, the second highest in Europe after Britain, because so many of Bergamo's victims died at home or in nursing homes without having ever been tested. Seriate, a town of 25,000 along Bergamo's Serio river, was particularly hard-hit, losing 200 residents. Carminati says around half were parishioners whom he knew personally.

“This is the thing that made winter more tragic than. There were no leaves on the trees, and it was all gray,” he recalled this week during one of his regular visits to the cemetery to visit with his flock. “I certainly remember it as something gray and dark, something from which you felt like you couldn't get out: a tunnel that never ended.”

Early on in the outbreak, the first in the West, Carminati opened the doors of one of his churches, St. Joseph's, to house the coffins that had nowhere to go because local cemeteries and crematoria were full.

At first, some 80 wooden coffins lined the central aisle of St. Joseph's church. Carminati and a fellow priest recited the rite of the dead, with a Psalm and Scripture reading, and gave each coffin a final benediction and blessing with holy water. After a convoy of army trucks took the coffins away to be cremated, another 80 arrived. Then another.

“That had a heart-breaking impact on me, something that left me with a great bitterness,” he said.

In all, Carminati says, some 260 coffins passed through his modern red-brick church in March and April, evidence of the horrific toll of the virus in Bergamo that continues today. Last month, Carminati buried his own nephew, 34-year-old Christian Persico, after he lost a five-month battle with COVID-19.

“We'll have more because the epidemic hasn't passed,” Carminati said ruefully during a break in his daily routine rebuilding a parish that lost its gardener, its singer at evening Mass and his friend Pio, who volunteered in the sacristy.

The idea to open his church to the coffins, when the parish was otherwise shuttered under lockdown, came naturally after hospital morgues, crematoria and cemeteries filled up. Carminati said he was asked by local authorities if his parish could house the coffins temporarily. “There was a need for space,” he said.

But Carminati also felt a need to provide the dead with a dignified farewell, since their families had been

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denied a funeral and final goodbye. In Italy, funerals were essentially banned during lockdown and many mourning families were themselves in quarantine or otherwise prevented from visiting isolated COVID wards.

On Palm Sunday, Carminati placed an olive frond on each coffin. Other days, he lit a candle.

Some parishioners reached out to Carminati after learning that he was taking the coffins in, wondering if he had seen their loved ones pass through. During the peak of the outbreak, some families reported chaotic, dayslong efforts to locate their dead mothers and fathers as hospitals struggling to keep people alive lost track of where the dead ended up.

Carminati would send photos of caskets when he could.

One day he fielded 10 calls from parishioners reporting deaths in the community. One call came from a nurse with word that his friend Pio had died. She dictated a final message Pio wanted Carminati to pass along to his wife.

"He had asked her to report to his wife that he had always loved her, and he still loved her very much," Carminati said, tears welling up in his eyes. "This was his last farewell that he wanted to send his wife."

As he watches infections and deaths surge elsewhere and the world passes the million mark, Carminati wonders why more countries didn't pay attention to Italy's tragedy as it was unfolding so they could be better prepared. Instead, he says, they brushed it off as typical Italian "exaggeration" and believed somehow they would be spared.

"Initially, they lost a lot of time, and then some took some absurd decisions like 'herd immunity,'" he said. "For those of us who were in the middle of it, hearing these things at that time, we said: 'These people are crazy. They have no idea what's coming their way.'"

While the numbers of daily new infections and deaths in Italy today are nowhere near the peak, Carminati knows how quickly things can change. His hope looking forward is that the world learns lessons from the pandemic, both big and small.

"We need to understand we are not immortal, none of us is immortal," he said after visiting the cemetery on a glorious, quiet autumn Sunday. "The virus ultimately returns to us this dimension of fragility."

Nicole Winfield reported from Rome.

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

AP FACT CHECK: False claims flood Trump-Biden debate

By CALVIN WOODWARD and HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump unleashed a torrent of fabrications and fear-mongering in a belligerent debate with Joe Biden, at one point claiming that the U.S. death toll would have been 10 times higher under the Democrat because he wanted open borders in the pandemic. Biden preached no such thing.

Trump barreled into the debate Tuesday night as unconstrained by the facts as at his rallies, but this time having his campaign opponent and frequently the Fox News moderator, Chris Wallace, calling him out in real time, or trying. Biden stumbled on the record at times as the angry words flew from both men on the Cleveland stage.

A look at how some of their statements from Cleveland stack up with the facts in the first of three scheduled presidential debates for the Nov. 3 election:

VIRUS DEATH TOLL

TRUMP, addressing Biden on U.S. deaths from COVID-19: "If you were here, it wouldn't be 200,000 people, it would be 2 million people. You didn't want me to ban China, which was heavily infected.... If we would have listened to you, the country would have been left wide open."

THE FACTS: The audacious claim that Biden as president would have seen 2 million deaths rests on a false accusation. Biden never came out against Trump's decision to restrict travel from China. Biden

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was slow in staking a position on the matter but when he did, he supported the restrictions. Biden never counseled leaving the country "wide open" in the face of the pandemic.

Trump repeatedly, and falsely, claims to have banned travel from China. He restricted it.

The U.S. restrictions that took effect Feb. 2 continued to allow travel to the U.S. from the Chinese territories of Hong Kong and Macao. The Associated Press reported that more than 8,000 Chinese and foreign nationals based in the two locales entered the U.S. in the first three months after the travel restrictions were imposed.

Additionally, more than 27,000 Americans returned from mainland China in the first month after the restrictions took effect. U.S. officials lost track of more than 1,600 of them who were supposed to be monitored for virus exposure.

Dozens of countries took similar steps to control travel from hot spots before or around the same time the U.S. did.

PROTESTS

TRUMP: "The (Portland, Oregon) sheriff just came out today and he said I support President Trump."

THE FACTS: That is false. The sheriff of Multnomah County, Oregon — where Portland is located — said he does not support Trump.

The sheriff, Mike Resse, tweeted: "As the Multnomah County Sheriff I have never supported Donald Trump and will never support him."

Portland has been a flashpoint in the debate over racial injustice protests in the U.S. Police and federal agents have repeatedly clashed with demonstrators gathered outside the downtown federal courthouse and police buildings. Some protesters have thrown bricks, rocks and other projectiles at officers. Police and federal agents responded by firing tear gas, rubber bullets and other non-lethal ammunition to disperse the crowds.

BIDEN: "There was a peaceful protest in front of the White House. What did he do? He came out of his bunker, had the military do tear gas."

THE FACTS: It was law enforcement, not the military, that used chemical irritants to forcefully remove peaceful protesters from Lafayette Square outside the White House on June 1.

And there is no evidence President Trump was inside a bunker in the White House as that happened. Secret Service agents had rushed Trump to a White House bunker days earlier as hundreds of protesters gathered outside the executive mansion, some of them throwing rocks and tugging at police barricades.

HEALTH CARE

TRUMP: "Drug prices will be coming down 80 or 90%."

THE FACTS: That's a promise, not a reality, and it's a big stretch.

Trump has been unable to get legislation to lower drug prices through Congress. Major regulatory actions from his administration are still in the works, and are likely to be challenged in court.

There's no plan on the horizon that would lower drug prices as dramatically as Trump claims.

Prescription drug price inflation has been low and slow during the Trump years, but it hasn't made a U-turn and sped off in the other direction. Prices have seesawed from year to year.

Looking back at the totality of Trump's term, from Jan. 2017, when he was inaugurated, to the latest data from Aug. 2020, drug prices went up 3.6%, according to an analysis by economist Paul Hughes-Cromwick of Altarum, a nonprofit research and consulting organization.

Hughes-Cromwick looked at figures from the government's Bureau of Labor Statistics, which measures prices for a set of prescription medicines, including generics and branded drugs.

When comparing prices in 2019 with a year earlier, there indeed was a decline. Prices dropped by 0.2% in 2019, a turnabout not seen since the 1970s. But that's nowhere near close to 80% or 90%.

From August of last year to this August, prices rose by 1.4%.

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VIRUS RESPONSE

TRUMP: Dr. Anthony Fauci "said very strongly, 'masks are not good.' Then he changed his mind, he said, 'masks, good.'"

THE FACTS: He is skirting crucial context. Trump is telling the story in a way that leaves out key lessons learned as the coronavirus pandemic unfolded, raising doubts about the credibility of public health advice.

Early on in the outbreak, a number of public health officials urged everyday people not to use masks, fearing a run on already short supplies of personal protective equipment needed by doctors and nurses in hospitals.

But that changed as the highly contagious nature of the coronavirus became clear, as well as the fact that it can be spread by tiny droplets breathed into the air by people who may not display any symptoms.

Fauci of the National Institutes of Health, along with Dr. Robert Redfield of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Steven Hahn of the Food and Drug Administration and Dr. Deborah Birx of the White House coronavirus task force, all agree on the importance of wearing masks and practicing social distancing. Redfield has repeatedly said it could be as effective as a vaccine if people took that advice to heart.

TRUMP, on coronavirus and his campaign rallies: "So far we have had no problem whatsoever. It's outside, that's a big difference according to the experts. We have tremendous crowds."

THE FACTS: That's not correct.

Trump held an indoor rally in Tulsa in late June, drawing both thousands of participants and large protests.

The Tulsa City-County Health Department director said the rally "likely contributed" to a dramatic surge in new coronavirus cases there. By the first week of July, Tulsa County was confirming more than 200 new daily cases, setting record highs. That's more than twice the number the week before the rally.

TRUMP, addressing Biden: "You didn't do very well on the swine flu. H1N1. You were a disaster."

THE FACTS: Trump frequently distorts what happened in the pandemic of 2009, which killed far fewer people in the United States than the coronavirus is killing now. For starters, Biden as vice president wasn't running the federal response. And that response was faster out of the gate than when COVID-19 came to the U.S.

Then, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's flu surveillance network sounded the alarm after two children in California became the first people diagnosed with the new flu strain in this country.

About two weeks later, the Obama administration declared a public health emergency against H1N1, also known as the swine flu, and the CDC began releasing anti-flu drugs from the national stockpile to help hospitals get ready. In contrast, Trump declared a state of emergency in early March, seven weeks after the first U.S. case of COVID-19 was announced, and the country's health system struggled for months with shortages of critical supplies and testing.

More than 200,000 people have died from COVID-19 in the U.S. The CDC puts the U.S. death toll from the 2009-2010 H1N1 pandemic at about 12,500.

ECONOMY

BIDEN: Trump will be the "first (president) in American history" to lose jobs during his presidency.

THE FACTS: No, if Trump loses re-election, he would not be the first president in U.S. history to have lost jobs. That happened under Herbert Hoover, the president who lost the 1932 election to Franklin Roosevelt as the Great Depression caused massive job losses.

Official jobs records only go back to 1939 and, in that period, no president has ended his term with fewer jobs than when he began. Trump appears to be on track to have lost jobs during his first term, which would make him the first to do so since Hoover.

VOTING

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TRUMP, on the prospect of mass fraud in the vote-by-mail process, "It's a rigged election."

THE FACTS: He is exaggerating threats. Trump's claim is part of a months-long effort to sow doubt about the integrity of the election before it's even arrived and to preemptively call into question the results.

Experts have repeatedly said there are no signs of widespread fraud in mail balloting, as have the five states that relied exclusively on that system for voting even before the coronavirus pandemic. Trump's own FBI director, Chris Wray, said at a congressional hearing just last week that the bureau has not historically seen "any kind of coordinated national voter fraud effort in a major election, whether it's by mail or otherwise."

Wray did acknowledge voter fraud at the local level "from time to time," but even there, Trump appeared to paint an overly dire portrait of the reality and he misstated the facts of one particular case that received substantial attention last week following an unusual Justice Department announcement.

Trump said nine military ballots found discarded in a wastebasket in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, were all marked for him. Though that's consistent with an initial statement the Justice Department made, officials later revised it to say seven of the nine ballots had Trump's name.

FOOTBALL

TRUMP: "I'm the one who brought back football. By the way, I brought back Big Ten football. It was me and I'm very happy to do it."

THE FACTS: Better check the tape. While Trump had called for the Big Ten conference to hold its 2020 football season, he wasn't the only one. Fans, students, athletes and college towns had also urged the conference to resume play.

When the Big Ten announced earlier this month that it reversed an earlier decision to cancel the season because of COVID-19, Trump tweeted his thanks: "It is my great honor to have helped!!!!"

The conference includes several large universities in states that could prove pivotal in the election, including Pennsylvania, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin.

SUPREME COURT

BIDEN, on Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett: "She thinks that the Affordable Care Act is not constitutional."

THE FACTS: That's not right.

Biden is talking about Trump's pick to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Barrett has been critical of the Obama-era law and the court decisions that have upheld it, but she has never said it's not constitutional. The Supreme Court will hear arguments in the case on Nov. 10, and the Trump administration is asking the high court to rule the law unconstitutional.

DELAWARE STATE

TRUMP: "You said you went to Delaware State, but you forgot the name of your college. You didn't go to Delaware State. ... There's nothing smart about you, Joe."

THE FACTS: Trump is quoting Biden out of context. The former vice president, a graduate of the University of Delaware, did not say he attended Delaware State University but was making a broader point about his long-standing ties to the Black community.

Trump is referring to remarks Biden often says on the campaign, typically when speaking to Black audiences, that he "goes way back with HBCUs," or historically Black universities and colleges. Biden has spoken many times over the years at Delaware State, a public HBCU in his home state, and the school says that's where he first announced his bid for the Senate – his political start.

"I got started out of an HBCU, Delaware State — now, I don't want to hear anything negative about Delaware State," Biden told a town hall in Florence, South Carolina, in October 2019. "They're my folks."

Biden often touts his deep political ties to the Black community, occasionally saying he "grew up politically" or "got started politically" in the Black church. In front of some audiences, he's omitted the word "politically," but still with a clear context about his larger point. The statements are all part of standard

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section of his stump noting that Delaware has “the eighth largest Black population by percentage.”

A spokesman for the Delaware State University, Carlos Holmes, has said it took Biden’s comments to refer to his political start, saying that Biden announced his bid for the U.S. Senate on the DSU campus in 1972.

Biden’s broader point is push back on the idea that he’s a Johnny-Come-Lately with the Black community or that his political connections there are owed only to being Barack Obama’s vice president.

CRIME

BIDEN: “The fact of the matter is violent crime went down 17%, 15%, in our administration.”

THE FACTS: That’s overstating it.

Overall, the number of violent crimes fell roughly 10% from 2008, the year before Biden took office as vice president, to 2016, his last full year in the office, according to data from the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting program.

But the number of violent crimes was spiking again during Obama and Biden’s final two years in office, increasing by 8% from 2014 to 2016.

More people were slain across the U.S. in 2016, for example, than at any other point under the Obama administration.

TRUMP: “If you look at what’s going on in Chicago, where 53 people were shot and eight died. If you look at New York where it’s going up like nobody’s ever seen anything ... the numbers are going up 100, 150, 200%, crime, it’s crazy what’s going on.”

THE FACTS: Not quite. The statistics in Chicago are true, but those numbers are only a small snapshot of crime in the city and the United States, and his strategy is highlighting how data can be easily molded to suit the moment. As for New York, Trump may have been talking about shootings. They are up in New York by about 93% so far this year, but overall crime is down about 1.5%. Murders are up 38%, but there were 327 killings compared with 236, still low compared with years past. For example, compared with a decade ago, crime is down 10 percent.

An FBI report released Monday for 2019 year of crime data found that violent crime has decreased over the past three years.

Associated Press writers Josh Boak, Colleen Long, Ellen Knickmeyer, Mark Sherman, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Bill Barrow, David Klepper, Amanda Seitz, Michael Balsamo and Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

EDITOR’S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures.

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Debate veers from ‘How you doing?’ to ‘Will you shut up?’

By JILL COLVIN and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) — It started out civilly enough, with President Donald Trump striding deliberately to his lectern, and Democrat Joe Biden nodding to his opponent and offering a “How you doing, man?”

But within 15 minutes, the debate had devolved into a series of endless interruptions, with Biden, seemingly unable to complete a sentence, finally blurting out, “Will you shut up, man?”

It was a chaotic and unusually bitter first presidential debate of the 2020 general election, made all the more unusual by the the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. There was no friendly handshake to kick things off, no room full of supporters in each candidate’s court. Instead, the debate played out before a socially-distanced audience of about 100 people in a makeshift debate hall built in an atrium that had been previously set up as an emergency hospital for patients with COVID-19.

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Even without the pandemic, the 90-minute faceoff was jarring.

Trump came out of the gate looking to challenge Biden and badgered him throughout the debate, drawing a string of rejoinders from the Democrat, including a plea to “just shush for a minute” at the half-hour mark.

At other points, the two candidates dialed down their rhetoric, only to resume their interruptions once again. When Trump was fielding a question about a report that he paid just \$750 in federal income taxes in 2016 and 2017, Biden was the one interjecting: “Show us your taxes. Show us your taxes.”

Roughly 50 minutes into the debate, moderator Chris Wallace’s frustration came to a boil as he tried to regain control.

“Gentlemen, I hate to raise my voice, but why should I be any different than the two of you?” Wallace said, drawing some muffled laughter from both sides of the otherwise mostly quiet room.

Trump blamed Biden, but Wallace firmly pushed back to the president, “Frankly, you’ve been doing more interrupting.”

The reaction from the mask-wearing crowd, warned not to make a sound, was inaudible on television, though there were several moments when they could be heard laughing or jeering inside the atrium — including when Biden used his “shut up” line.

But was no discernible response when the former vice president called the sitting president a “clown” and told him to “keep yapping.”

The television cameras also eliminated the difference in speaking volume between Trump and Biden that made Trump seem even more combative. Inside the atrium, Biden was sometimes hard to hear and spoke far more softly than Trump, who often yelled, and even Wallace, who repeatedly tangled with Trump as he tried to get the candidates to abide by the no-interruption rules their campaigns had agreed to.

The debate was hosted by the Cleveland Clinic and Case Western Reserve University in the 27,000-square-foot (2,500-square-meter) atrium of the Sheila and Eric Samson Pavilion on the clinic’s Health Education Campus. Notre Dame, the original debate host, withdrew because of the pandemic.

Earlier this year, the building had been transformed into a temporary, 1,000-bed surge hospital, named Hope Hospital, for expected coronavirus patients. Though it never ended up needing to be used, the floor where the debate stage was built was not long ago lined with beds for patients and copper piping to bring in oxygen.

This time it was turned into a makeshift debate hall with a stage, red carpeting and elevated platforms for cameras. About 100 people watched, all of whom were tested for the virus and sat with plenty of distance between them. Guests were required to wear masks, though some — including members of the president’s family — didn’t. Seats were set with programs and antibacterial wipes.

Most in the crowd did abide by the social distancing and mask-wearing rules. At least one audience member even wore a bright red “MAGA” face mask, technically a violation of rules prohibiting campaign paraphernalia.

Some in Trump’s section tried to greet the first lady with a standing ovation as she walked in, but with the sparse crowd it didn’t quite come together.

The emptiness of the room only made the sharpness of the candidates’ verbal slugfest, which often took the tone of a schoolyard squabble, more notable.

“The fact is that everything he’s saying so far is simply a lie,” a flustered Biden snapped when Trump suggested that the vice president stole the nomination from Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. “I’m not here to call out his lies. Everybody knows he’s a liar.”

After just over 90 minutes, the faceoff was done — but not without more interruptions.

“This is the end of this debate,” said Wallace, as Trump continued to boom his objections. “We’re going to leave it there, to be continued,” the moderator said as he finished what he deemed an “interesting” debate.

Pablo Martínez Monsiváis contributed to this report. Madhani reported from Chicago.

Chaotic first debate: Taunts overpower Trump, Biden visions

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By JONATHAN LEMIRE, DARLENE SUPERVILLE, WILL WEISSERT and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press CLEVELAND (AP) — The first debate between President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden deteriorated into bitter taunts and near chaos Tuesday night as Trump repeatedly interrupted his opponent with angry — and personal — jabs that sometimes overshadowed the sharply different visions each man has for a nation facing historic crises.

In the most tumultuous presidential debate in recent memory, Trump refused to condemn white supremacists who have supported him, telling one such group known as Proud Boys to “stand back, stand by.” There were also heated clashes over the president’s handling of the pandemic, the integrity of the election results, deeply personal attacks about Biden’s family and how the Supreme Court will shape the future of the nation’s health care.

But it was the belligerent tone that was persistent, somehow fitting for what has been an extraordinarily ugly campaign. The two men frequently talked over each other with Trump interrupting, nearly shouting, so often that Biden eventually snapped at him, “Will you shut up, man?”

“The fact is that everything he’s saying so far is simply a lie,” Biden said. “I’m not here to call out his lies. Everybody knows he’s a liar.”

The presidential race has been remarkably stable for weeks, despite the historic crises that have battered the country this year, including a pandemic that has killed more than 200,000 Americans and a reckoning over race and police brutality. With just five weeks until Election Day and voting already underway in some key states, Biden has maintained a lead in national polls and in many battlegrounds.

It’s unclear whether the debate will do much to change those dynamics.

Over and over, Trump tried to control the conversation, interrupting Biden and repeatedly talking over the moderator, Chris Wallace of Fox News. The president tried to deflect tough lines of questioning — whether on his taxes or the pandemic — to deliver broadsides against Biden.

The president drew a lecture from Wallace, who pleaded with both men to stop talking over each other. Biden tried to push back against Trump, sometimes looking right at the camera to directly address viewers rather than the president and snapping, “It’s hard to get a word in with this clown.”

Again refusing to commit to honoring the results of the election, Trump spread falsehoods about mail voting. Without evidence, he suggested that the process — surging in popularity during the pandemic — was ripe for fraud and incorrectly claimed impropriety at a Pennsylvania voting site.

But despite his efforts to dominate the discussion, Trump was frequently put on the defensive and tried to sidestep when he was asked if he was willing to condemn white supremacists and paramilitary groups.

“What do you want to call them? Give me a name. Give me a name,” Trump said, before Biden mentioned the far right, violent group known as the Proud Boys. Trump then pointedly did not condemn the group, instead saying, “Proud Boys, stand back, stand by. But I’ll tell you what, somebody’s got to do something about Antifa and the left because this is not right wing problem. This is a left wing problem.”

Biden attacked Trump’s handling of the pandemic, saying that the president “waited and waited” to act when the virus reached America’s shores and “still doesn’t have a plan.” Biden told Trump to “get out of your bunker and get out of the sand trap” and go in his golf cart to the Oval Office to come up with a bipartisan plan to save people.

Trump snarled a response, declaring that “I’ll tell you Joe, you could never have done the job that we did. You don’t have it in your blood.”

“I know how to do the job,” was the solemn response from Biden, who served eight years as Barack Obama’s vice president.

The pandemic’s effects were in plain sight, with the candidates’ lecterns spaced far apart, all of the guests in the small crowd tested and the traditional opening handshake scrapped. While neither candidate wore a mask to take the stage, their families did sport face coverings.

Trump struggled to define his ideas for replacing the Affordable Care Act on health care in the debate’s early moments and defended his nomination of Amy Coney Barrett, declaring that “I was not elected for three years, I’m elected for four years.”

“We won the election. Elections have consequences. We have the Senate. We have the White House and we have a phenomenal nominee, respected by all.”

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Trump criticized Biden over the former vice president's refusal to comment on whether he would try to expand the Supreme Court in retaliation if Barrett is confirmed to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. That idea has gained momentum on the party's left flank but Biden tried to put distance between himself and the liberal wing, declining to endorse the Green New Deal and rejecting the assertion that he was under the control of radicals by declaring "I am the Democratic Party now."

The scattershot debate bounced from topic to topic, with Trump again refusing to embrace the science of climate change while Biden accused Trump of walking away from the American promise of equity for all and making a race-based appeal.

"This is a president who has used everything as a dog whistle to try to generate racist hatred, racist division," Biden said.

Recent months have seen major protests after the deaths of Black people at the hands of police. Biden said the country faces a problem with systemic racism and that while the vast majority of police officers are "decent, honorable men and women" there are "bad apples" and people have to be held accountable.

Trump in turn claimed that Biden's work on a federal crime bill treated the African American population "about as bad as anybody in this country." The president pivoted to his hardline focus on those protesting racial injustice and accused Biden of being afraid to use the words "law and order," out of fear of alienating the left.

"Violence in response is never appropriate," Biden said. "Never appropriate. Peaceful protest is."

The attacks turned deeply personal when Trump returned to a campaign attack line by declaring that Biden's son, Hunter, had inappropriately benefitted from his father's connections while working in Ukraine. Biden rarely looked at Trump during the night but turned to face the president when he defended his sons, including his son Beau, an Army veteran who died of cancer in 2015, after the commander-in-chief's reported insults of those who served in the military.

A new report from two Republican-led Senate committees alleged that Hunter Biden's work in Ukraine at the same time his father was vice president raised conflict-of-interest concerns for the Obama administration, but the report did not link Joe Biden to any wrongdoing or misconduct. Trump was impeached for pushing Kiev to investigate the Biden family.

The debate was arguably Trump's best chance to try to reframe the campaign as a choice between candidates and not a referendum over his handling of the virus that has killed more people in America than any other nation. Americans, according to polling, have soured on his leadership in the crisis, and the president has struggled to land consistent attacks on Biden.

In the hours before the debate, Biden released his 2019 tax returns just days after the blockbuster revelations about Trump's long-hidden tax history, including that he paid only \$750 a year in federal income taxes in 2016 and 2017 and nothing in many other years. The Bidens paid nearly \$300,000 in taxes in 2019.

Trump, in the debate, insisted that he paid millions in taxes — but refused to say how much he paid in federal income taxes — and insisted that he had taken advantage of legal tax incentives, another angry exchange that led to Biden declaring that Trump was the "worst president" the nation has ever had.

Lemire reported from New York. Price reported from Las Vegas. Additional reporting by Associated Press writers Jill Colvin in Cleveland and Zeke Miller in Washington.

Lawyer for Flynn says she updated Trump on status of case

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A lawyer for former Trump administration national security adviser Michael Flynn told a judge Tuesday that she recently updated President Donald Trump on the case and asked him not to issue a pardon for her client.

The attorney, Sidney Powell, was initially reluctant to discuss her conversations with the president or the White House, saying she believed they were protected by executive privilege. But under persistent

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questioning from U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan, she acknowledged having spoken to the president within the last few weeks to update him and to request that he not pardon Flynn.

She did not elaborate on the request, but it presumably reflected the defense team's desire to secure a legal, rather than political, victory for their client and to have the judge concur with the Justice Department's assertion that the prosecution should be abandoned. Attorney General William Barr, who appointed a U.S. attorney from Missouri to investigate the handling of the case, moved in May to dismiss the case despite Flynn's own guilty plea in the Russia investigation.

That request is pending, with Sullivan not immediately ruling one way or the other on Tuesday.

Powell's acknowledgement that she had recently spoken with the president about the case that arose from special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia probe underscored the politically charged nature of the prosecution. Flynn has emerged as something of a cause célèbre for Trump supporters, while critics of Barr's action — including former FBI and Justice Department officials — have decried what they see as the politicization of law enforcement in the move to drop the case.

Current Justice Department officials vigorously rejected that characterization at Tuesday's hearing, the first since a federal appeals court ruled last month that Sullivan did not have to immediately dismiss the prosecution just because the government wants him to. That decision returned the case to Sullivan for additional proceedings.

At issue before the judge Tuesday was what role courts may play in scrutinizing prosecutors' request to abandon a case they had once brought, and to what extent a judge can second-guess the motives behind such an effort.

Flynn has twice pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about a conversation with the Russian ambassador during the presidential transition period in December 2016, when he encouraged the diplomat not to escalate tensions over sanctions that had just been imposed by the Obama administration for election interference. At the time, the FBI was investigating whether the Trump campaign had coordinated with Russia to tip the election in Trump's favor.

But the Justice Department moved in May to dismiss the case, saying there had been insufficient basis to interview Flynn and that the questioning of Flynn and the statements he made were not relevant to the FBI's broader counterintelligence investigation into the campaign and Russia.

Powell, Flynn's attorney, added her own criticism, calling the case and the way it was handled a "hideous abuse of power that continues until this very minute."

"This is the most egregious injustice I have ever seen in my 30-plus years of practice," Powell said.

Sullivan has so far resisted efforts to dismiss the prosecution and appointed a former federal judge to argue against the Justice Department's position. That ex-judge, John Gleeson, has accused the department of acting for political reasons when it moved to drop the case and of shifting its rationale over several months for doing so.

"These reasons are so patently pretextual that the government feels the need to keep coming up with more of them," Gleeson said.

Lawyers for the federal government revived their efforts to persuade Sullivan that dismissing the Flynn case was in the interests of justice. The lawyers cited what they said was internal uncertainty within the FBI about whether Flynn had even committed a crime, as well as questions about the credibility of law enforcement officials in the case.

Allegations of improper political motives are "just not true," said federal prosecutor Ken Kohl, who identified himself as the most senior career official in the U.S. Attorney's office in Washington.

"I've never seen it in my career in (this) office, and it didn't happen here," Kohl said. "I'm here to say that the U.S. Attorney's office's decision to dismiss this case was the right call for the right reasons."

He also suggested that the case would be impossible for the Justice Department to prove beyond a reasonable a doubt because of credibility issues involving witnesses. He cited the actions of Peter Strzok, an FBI agent who interviewed Flynn but was later fired from the bureau because of pejorative texts about Trump, and former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, who was fired amid allegations that he misled

the Justice Department's inspector general over a news media disclosure.

"Are we going to call Pete Strzok in this case?" Kohl asked rhetorically. "Or do we call the deputy director who ordered the interview, Andy McCabe?"

A spokeswoman for McCabe declined to comment, as did a lawyer for Strzok.

In recent weeks, as part of the review of the Flynn case being conducted by U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Jensen of St. Louis, the Justice Department has identified correspondence that it regards as possibly favorable to Flynn and supportive of the decision to drop the case.

That includes the recent interview of an FBI agent who was part of the Russia investigation and had expressed misgivings about the Flynn case, and had also come to believe that some on the Mueller team exhibited a "get Trump" attitude.

Follow Eric Tucker on <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

Debate Takeaways: An acrid tone from the opening minute

By BILL BARROW and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After more than a year of circling each other, Republican President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden met on the debate stage Tuesday night in Ohio.

The 74-year-old president and the 77-year-old former vice president are similar in age, and they share a mutual dislike. But they differ starkly in style and substance. All of that was evident from the outset on the Cleveland stage.

Here are key takeaways from the first of three scheduled presidential debates before Election Day on Nov. 3.

AND IN THIS CORNER

Trump is no stranger to going on offense, but his pugilistic approach on stage left his Democratic opponent fighting to complete a sentence.

Trailing in public and private polling, Trump advisers have pushed him to reframe the election away from a referendum on his presidency to a choice between him and Biden. Trump, instead, commandeered the debate, trying to trip up Biden by interrupting and insulting him. In the process, Trump made the debate more about himself.

"There's nothing smart about you," Trump said of Biden. "47 years you've done nothing."

While Trump played into his reputation as a bully, it may have been effective at breaking up the worst of Biden's attacks — simply by talking over them.

Trump aides believed before the debate that Biden would be unable to withstand the withering offensive on style and substance from Trump, but Biden came with a few retorts of his own, calling Trump a "clown" and mocking Trump's style by asking, "Will you shut up, man?"

Trump's supporters may have been cheered by his frontal assault. Whether undecided voters, who watched the debate to try to learn about the two candidates, were impressed is another matter.

Moderator Chris Wallace was none too amused, delivering a pointed reproach to Trump for his interruptions. "Frankly, you've been doing more interrupting," Wallace said, appealing to Trump to let his opponent speak.

Trump is fond of superlatives, but in the case of the debate there is little doubt that it was the most acrimonious of since the forums have been televised.

TRUMP CAN'T ESCAPE THE VIRUS

Trump has wanted the election to be about anything but the coronavirus pandemic, but he couldn't outrun reality on the debate stage.

"It is what it is because you are who you are," Biden told the president, referring to Trump's months of downplaying COVID-19 while he said privately he understood how deadly it is.

But Trump didn't take it quietly. He proceeded to blitz Biden with a mix of self-defense and counter-

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offensives. 200,000 dead? Biden's death toll would have been "millions," Trump said. A rocky economy? Biden would've been worse. Biden wouldn't have manufactured enough masks or ventilators.

The kicker: "There will be a vaccine very soon."

Biden fell back on his bottom line: "A lot of people died, and a lot more are going to unless he gets a lot smarter."

For voters still undecided about who'd better handle the pandemic, the exchange may not have offered anything new.

RACIAL RECKONING

Trump said Biden was the politician who helped put millions of Black Americans in prison with the 1994 crime law. Biden called Trump "the racist" in the Oval Office.

For a nation confronting a summer of racial unrest — and centuries of injustice — the debate was the latest cultural flashpoint.

Biden was quiet as Trump blitzed him as a tool of the "radical left" and a weak figure who opposes "law and order." He pressed Biden repeatedly to name any police union that's endorsed him. He falsely accused Biden of wanting to "defund the police."

Biden didn't capitalize when Trump refused to condemn armed militias and insisted, against the guidance of his own FBI director: "This is not a right-wing problem. This is a left-wing problem."

"Proud Boys, stand back and stand by," Trump said when prompted on the far-right group. "But I'll tell you what, somebody's got to do something about antifa and the left."

The former vice president tried to push back, but not until after Trump had made his arguments, including the misrepresentations.

Biden regained some footing mocking the president's warnings about suburbs, saying, "He wouldn't know a suburb unless he took a wrong turn." And perhaps revealing the thinking about allowing Trump the rhetorical upper hand, Biden said, "All these dog whistles and racism doesn't work anymore."

QUESTION ABOUT COURT, ANSWER ABOUT HEALTH CARE

Trump defended his decision to nominate Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court just weeks before Election Day, saying "elections have consequences."

Biden said he was "not opposed to the justice," but said the "American people have a right to have a say in who the Supreme Court nominee is."

But rather than litigate Republicans' 2016 blocking of Merrick Garland to the high court, Biden quickly pivoted to the issues that will potentially come before the court: healthcare and abortion. It's an effort by the Democrat to refocus the all-but-certain confirmation fight for Trump's third justice to the Supreme Court into an assault on Trump and his record.

Biden said Barrett, who would be the sixth justice on the nine-member court to be appointed by a Republican, would endanger the Affordable Care Act and tens of millions of Americans with preexisting conditions, and would imperil legalized abortion. It was a reframing of the political debate to terms far more favorable to the Democrat, and one Trump played into. Trump said of the conservative Barrett, "You don't know her view on Roe vs. Wade" and he defended his efforts to try to chip away at the popular Obama-era health law.

Biden has tried to press Democrats to use the court confirmation fight as a rallying cry against Trump, and the debate discussion largely played out on his turf.

'INVISIBLE' WALLACE STRUGGLES TO CONTAIN TRUMP

Debate moderator Chris Wallace of Fox News tried mightily to hold his ground Tuesday after saying beforehand that it was not his job to fact-check the candidates, especially Trump, in real time.

But Wallace struggled to stop Trump from interrupting and at times seemed to lose control of the debate. "Mr. President, as the moderator, we are going to talk about COVID in the next segment," Wallace said.

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Soon after: "I'm the moderator, and I'd like you to let me ask my question."

Minutes later: "I have to give you roughly equal time. Please let the vice president talk."

And when Wallace noted that Trump hasn't come up with his health care plan in nearly four years, Trump turned the question back on Wallace.

"First of all, I'm debating you and not him. That's okay. I'm not surprised."

Wallace said he wanted to be "invisible."

Well, that was impossible.

FAMILY BUSINESS

As expected, Trump found a way to bring up Hunter Biden, the former vice president's son, and recycle allegations about the younger Biden's international business practices. Biden called Trump's litany "discredited" and fired back, "I mean, his family we can talk about all night."

But Biden sidestepped any of the specifics of Trump's international business dealings and instead turned straight to the camera. "This is not about my family or his family," Biden said as Trump tried to talk over him. "This is about your family."

In a later exchange, Trump interrupted Biden when he was talking about his late son, Beau Biden, who died of cancer in 2015 after having served in Iraq.

"I don't know Beau, I know Hunter," Trump said.

'I Am Woman' singer Helen Reddy, '70s hitmaker, dies at 78

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Helen Reddy, who shot to stardom in the 1970s with her rousing feminist anthem "I Am Woman" and recorded a string of other hits, has died. She was 78.

Reddy's children Traci and Jordan announced that the actor-singer died Tuesday in Los Angeles. "She was a wonderful Mother, Grandmother and a truly formidable woman," they said in a statement. "Our hearts are broken. But we take comfort in the knowledge that her voice will live on forever."

Reddy's 1971 version of "I Don't Know How to Love Him" from the musical "Jesus Christ Superstar" launched a decade-long string of Top 40 hits, three of which reached No. 1.

The Australian-born singer enjoyed a prolific career, appearing in "Airport 1975" as a singing nun and scoring several hits, including "Ain't No Way To Treat a Lady," "Delta Dawn," "Angie Baby" and "You and Me Against the World."

In 1973 she won the best female vocal pop performance Grammy Award for "I Am Woman," quickly thanking her then-husband and others in her acceptance speech.

"I only have 10 seconds so I would like to thank everyone from Sony Capitol Records, I would like to thank Jeff Wald because he makes my success possible and I would like to thank God because she makes everything possible," Reddy said, hoisting her Grammy in the air and leaving the stage to loud applause. She also performed the song at the ceremony.

"I Am Woman" would become her biggest hit, used in films and television series.

In a 2012 interview with The Associated Press, Reddy cited the gigantic success of "I Am Woman" as one of the reasons she stepped out of public life.

"That was one of the reasons that I stopped singing, was when I was shown a modern American history high-school textbook, and a whole chapter on feminism and my name and my lyrics (were) in the book," she told the AP. "And I thought, 'Well, I'm part of history now. And how do I top that? I can't top that.' So, it was an easy withdrawal."

Reddy's death comes less than three weeks after the release of a biopic about her life called "I Am Woman."

The film's director, Unjoo Moon, said the film resulted in a seven-year friendship with Reddy.

"I will forever be grateful to Helen for teaching me so much about being an artist, a woman and a mother," she said in a statement. "She paved the way for so many and the lyrics that she wrote for 'I am Woman' changed my life forever like they have done for so many other people and will continue to do for

generations to come. She will always be a part of me and I will miss her enormously.”

A performer since childhood, Reddy was part of a show-business family in Melbourne. She won a contest that brought her to the United States and launched her recording career, although she first had to overcome ideas about her sound.

“In my earlier days in Australia, I was considered to be more of a jazz singer,” she told the AP in 1991. “When I won the contest that brought me to this country, one person said, ‘The judges didn’t feel you could have a recording career because you don’t have a commercial sound.’”

Reddy retired from performing in the 1990s and returned to Australia, getting her degree in clinical hypnotherapy.

She later returned to California, where in the 1970s she had served on a statewide Parks and Recreation Commission, and returned to the stage occasionally.

In 2017 she performed “I Am Woman” at a Women’s March in Los Angeles, singing alongside actor Jamie Lee Curtis. Curtis said it was the “honor of my life” to introduce Reddy at the event.

California’s wine country residents facing fire fatigue

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ and TERRY CHEA Associated Press

NAPA, Calif. (AP) — Will Abrams and his family packed their pickup truck with laptops, clothes, sleeping bags and a tent and quickly left their rental home in California’s wine country after seeing flames on a hill about a quarter-mile away Monday morning. It was their third hurried fire evacuation in as many years.

In 2017, Abrams woke up to find their Santa Rosa home on fire and cleared burning branches from the driveway so he could get his wife and children to safety. Their home was destroyed. Then last year, the family evacuated as another wildfire bore down on Sonoma County. They were terrified to cross into the San Francisco Bay Area amid smaller grassland fires sparked by power lines falling in the midst of strong, hot winds.

“This time we hurried up and packed up the car, and we were in gridlock traffic on (Highway) 12 while the flames were approaching from behind,” Abrams said Tuesday. He and his wife tried to entertain the kids by making conversation so they wouldn’t panic. “It was just obviously traumatic on a personal level, but also just that so little has changed since the fires of 2017 in terms of preparedness and prevention.”

They have been told this home is still standing. But with the Glass Fire only 2% contained, the Abrams and their 12-year-old son and 9-year-old daughter are staying in Berkeley until they are allowed to return.

“I’m trying to prepare my kids and let them know that climate change is part of life and they’re going to have to deal with it as they get older and also trying to provide them a sense of safety and security. It’s not easy. But we should not accept this is the way it’s going to be,” he said.

The Abrams family is among thousands of weary wine country residents confronting another devastating wildfire. The Glass Fire, which started Sunday, has scorched nearly 73 square miles (more than 188 square kilometers) and destroyed about 95 structures, including at least 80 homes.

It’s the fourth major fire there in three years and comes ahead of the third anniversary of a 2017 wildfire that killed 22 people. Three fires, driven by gusty winds and high temperatures, merged into one on Sunday, tearing into vineyards and mountain areas, including part of the city of Santa Rosa. About 70,000 people were under evacuation orders, including the entire 5,000-plus population of Calistoga in Napa County.

Numerous studies have linked bigger wildfires in America to climate change from the burning of coal, oil and gas. Scientists say climate change has made California much drier, meaning trees and other plants are more flammable.

The Glass Fire spread rapidly and is now burning through land that was saved from the other recent wine country fires, Cal Fire Assistant Chief Billy See said. Some of the land has not burned for a century, while crews are now using old containment lines to fight the current fire, relieved slightly by easing winds.

It’s one of nearly 30 wildfires burning around California. The state has already seen more than 8,100 wildfires that have killed 29 people, scorched 5,780 square miles (14,970 square kilometers) and destroyed more than 7,000 buildings.

Patrick Ryan, who lives in Sonoma County just outside Santa Rosa, stayed up the whole night trying to fight the flames and save his house, which survived.

"Surreal, let me just put it that way. It brings everything about that night in 2017 right back again," Ryan said.

Mike Christianson and his wife, Mluz Torres, who were at an evacuation center Tuesday, had watched the fire engulf their Napa County home.

"It was within five minutes, the entire side of the hill was on fire. All trees, all burning, all roaring like a jet," he said. "And at that moment, we realized that it was time to go. So we grabbed a few things, jumped in the car."

Sonoma County Sheriff Mark Essick acknowledged "some significant fire fatigue" in the community during a news conference Tuesday.

"Many people are feeling the effects, many people are evacuating, and evacuated multiple times, and I just want everyone to know that we continue to support you," Essick said.

The blaze tore through many iconic wineries in Napa and Sonoma counties and the five-starred Meadowood Resort, home to a three-Michelin-starred restaurant.

Further to the north, in what has already been a historically devastating wildfire season for California, a blaze in a heavily forested area of rural Shasta County has killed three people and destroyed nearly 150 buildings. The circumstances of their deaths are not known. More than 1,200 people were evacuated for the Zogg Fire, which has burned more than 72 square miles (nearly 203 square kilometers).

Zogg incident commander Sean Kavanaugh said winds from the north have subsided, giving firefighters an opportunity to get resources around the large fire.

"The weather has given us a break. We're going to take the opportunity where we can, with the change in the weather, the calmness," he said.

That area, too, has seen recent fire devastation. It was torched just two years ago by the deadly Carr Fire — infamously remembered for producing a huge tornado-like fire whirl.

Associated Press reporters Janie Har in San Francisco, John Antczak in Los Angeles, and Haven Daley in Santa Rosa, California, contributed to this report.

Disney to lay off 28,000 at its parks in California, Florida

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Squeezed by limits on attendance at its theme parks and other restrictions due to the pandemic, The Walt Disney Co. said Tuesday it planned to lay off 28,000 workers in its parks division in California and Florida.

Two-thirds of the planned layoffs involve part-time workers but they ranged from salaried employees to hourly workers, Disney officials said.

Disney's parks closed last spring as the pandemic started spreading in the U.S. The Florida parks reopened this summer, but the California parks have yet to reopen as the company awaits guidance from the state of California.

In a letter to employees, Josh D'Amaro, chairman of Disney Parks, Experience and Product, said California's "unwillingness to lift restrictions that would allow Disneyland to reopen" exacerbated the situation for the company.

D'Amaro said his management team had worked hard to try to avoid layoffs. They had cut expenses, suspended projects and modified operations but it wasn't enough given limits on the number of people allowed into the park because of social distancing restrictions and other pandemic-related measures, he said.

"As heartbreaking as it is to take this action, this is the only feasible option we have in light of the prolonged impact of COVID-19 on our business, including limited capacity due to physical distancing requirements and the continued uncertainty regarding the duration of the pandemic," he said.

California's health secretary on Tuesday said the state was close to working out a way to have the theme

parks reopen in a responsible way.

"We know that a number of Californians are eager and wondering when that is coming, and we're working with those industries to put out something that's thoughtful, allows us to maintain the rest of our framework in a strong way, and really following those principles of slow and stringent to ensure those large activities are done responsibly," said Dr. Mark Ghaly, secretary of California Health and Human Services.

Disney officials said the company would provide severance packages for the employees, where appropriate, and also offer other services to help workers with job placement.

Officials with the union that represents the actors who play Disney characters at the theme parks said they were having conversations with Disney officials about how they would be impacted, according to Actors' Equity Association.

Officials with the Service Trades Council Union, which represents 43,000 workers at Disney World in Florida, said they were having similar conversations.

"We were disappointed to learn that the Covid-19 crisis has led Disney to make the decision to layoff Cast Members," the coalition of six unions said in a statement.

About 950 workers from Unite Here Local 11 in California will be laid off starting Nov. 1, union leaders said.

Disney officials didn't offer a breakdown of the layoffs between the Florida and California operations. Walt Disney World in Florida has around 77,000 employees, while the Disneyland Resort in California has more than 30,000 workers.

With its parks closed due to the pandemic in April, Disney furloughed up to 43,000 workers while still paying for their health insurance at its Florida resort. It brought many of them back after it reopened in July. Furloughed workers in California also received health benefits.

In a statement, U.S. Rep. Val Demings, a Democrat from Orlando, said the layoffs showed the need for more coronavirus-related relief from Congress.

"These layoffs show yet again how desperately that assistance is needed by American households and businesses," Demings said.

Associated Press writers Adam Beam in Sacramento, California, and Amy Taxin in Orange County, California, contributed to this report.

Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

Titans have NFL's 1st COVID-19 outbreak; next game still on

By TERESA M. WALKER AP Pro Football Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The Tennessee Titans won't be back inside their building until Saturday at the earliest because of eight positive tests for the coronavirus, the first outbreak to hit the NFL as it tries to play a full schedule amid the pandemic.

Tennessee is scheduled to host Pittsburgh in a matchup of two of the league's seven remaining undefeated teams on Sunday, and Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said his team has been "given a mandate" to prepare as if the game will be played on time — even if the Titans are unable to practice.

"We're going to trust the medical experts," Tomlin said. "If they deem it safe for us to proceed, we're going to go down there with the intention of playing and playing to win."

Tennessee suspended in-person activities through Friday after the NFL said three Titans players and five personnel tested positive for the coronavirus. The NFL had played three weeks without a COVID-19 outbreak. Now, the Titans will become the first significant in-season test of the league's virus protocols.

The Minnesota Vikings also suspended in-person activities Tuesday following the Titans' test results. The Titans beat the Vikings 31-30 in Minneapolis last weekend.

"Both clubs are working closely with the NFL and the (players union), including our infectious disease experts, to evaluate close contacts, perform additional testing and monitor developments," the league said in a statement.

The Titans placed a pair of key players, defensive captain and lineman DaQuan Jones and long snapper

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Beau Brinkley, on the reserve/COVID-19 list later Tuesday.

The Vikings released a statement saying they had not received any positive results from their testing after Sunday's game and they followed NFL protocol by closing their facility immediately. The Minnesota complex will remain closed at least through Wednesday.

Minnesota is scheduled to visit Houston (0-3) on Sunday.

"All decisions will be made with health and safety as our primary consideration," the NFL said. "We will continue to share updates as more information becomes available."

If they kick off Sunday, the Titans will have spent three days in virtual, video meetings with possibly only a walk-through Saturday. The prospect of a team facing a competitive disadvantage because of the virus was not a surprise to Tomlin.

"Once we left the station and we got all teams into a training camp-like setting, we as a collective, meaning the National Football League, acknowledged that this COVID environment could be challenging to that," Tomlin said. "So we all proceeded with that understanding."

Titans coach Mike Vrabel is scheduled to talk to reporters Wednesday morning.

"I just wanna play," Titans starting left guard Rodger Saffold tweeted.

Commissioner Roger Goodell sent a memo to teams Tuesday noting the protocols set up by the league and the players union are being followed. Those who tested positive will be isolated, monitored and offered medical care, and family members also are offered testing. Officials and others who worked the game will be tested.

"This is not unexpected; as Dr. Sills and others have emphasized, there will be players and staff who will test positive during the season," Goodell wrote in the memo obtained by The Associated Press, referencing the NFL's chief medical officer, Dr. Allen Sills. "We are exploring in more detail the nature of the close contacts to determine where they occurred (locker room, flights, etc.), and identify any additional learnings that can be shared with all clubs."

Goodell asked teams to look at what they've done to limit contact, especially when traveling and within position groups, and to review how they bring in players for tryouts. He noted the test results affirm the need to follow health and safety protocols "to the fullest extent."

The NFL has been fining coaches and teams when coaches have violated league rules requiring face coverings during games.

Steelers defensive tackle Cam Heyward posted on Twitter that if the game were postponed, players would be compromised in their preparation for the following week.

"This is wild but this is the world we live in now," Heyward wrote.

Titans outside linebackers coach Shane Bowen did not travel with the team to Minneapolis following a virus test result Saturday. Vrabel said Monday that Bowen was not with the team.

Rookie offensive lineman Isaiah Wilson, the Titans' top draft pick out of Georgia, also has been on the reserve/COVID-19 list since Sept. 6.

The Titans, like other NFL teams, use devices that detect whenever someone is within 6 feet of another device and records how long they are that close together. That means the league has data on everyone's interactions from inside the team headquarters to the practice field, an airplane, inside a hotel and at a stadium.

That information should help the Titans and the infectious disease experts know which players and coaches were at risk. The closure of Tennessee's facility should also help limit further spread of the virus.

The Titans are due to have about 7,000 fans in Nissan Stadium on Sunday as local restrictions on large gatherings have been eased. That number is set to expand to about 8,500 on Oct. 11 for a game against Buffalo and up to 10,000 on Oct. 18, when Houston is scheduled to visit.

AP Pro Football Writer Dave Campbell in Minneapolis and AP Sports Writer Will Graves in Pittsburgh contributed to this report.

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Azerbaijan and Armenia brush off suggestion of peace talks

By AVET DEMOURIAN Associated Press

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP) — Leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia brushed off the suggestion of peace talks Tuesday, accusing each other of obstructing negotiations over the separatist territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, with dozens killed and injured in three days of heavy fighting.

In the latest incident, Armenia said one of its warplanes was shot down by a fighter jet from Azerbaijan's ally Turkey, killing the pilot, in what would be a major escalation of the violence. Both Turkey and Azerbaijan denied it.

The international community is calling for talks to end the decades-old conflict between the two former Soviet republics in the Caucasus Mountains region following a flareup of violence this week. It centers on Nagorno-Karabakh, a region that lies within Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by the Armenian government since 1994 at the end of a separatist war.

The U.N. Security Council called on Armenia and Azerbaijan Tuesday evening to immediately halt the fighting and urgently resume talks without preconditions. The U.N.'s most powerful body strongly condemned the use of force and backed Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' earlier call to stop the fighting, deescalate tensions, and resume talks "without delay."

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev told Russian state TV channel Rossia 1 that Baku is committed to negotiating a resolution but that Armenia is obstructing the process.

"The Armenian prime minister publicly declares that Karabakh is (part of) Armenia, period. In this case, what kind of negotiating process can we talk about?" Aliyev said. He added that according to principles brokered by the Minsk group, which was set up in 1992 by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to resolve the conflict, "territories around the former Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region should be transferred to Azerbaijan."

Aliyev noted that if Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan says "that Karabakh is Armenia and that we should negotiate with the so-called puppet regime of Nagorno-Karabakh, (he is) trying to break the format of negotiations that has existed for 20 years."

Pashinyan, in turn, told the broadcaster that "it is very hard to talk about negotiations ... when specific military operations are underway." He said there is no military solution to the conflict and called for a compromise.

But first, Azerbaijan must "immediately end (its) aggression towards Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia," Pashinyan said. "We all perceive this as an existential threat to our nation, we basically perceive it as a war that was declared to the Armenian people, and our people are now simply forced to use the right for self-defense."

Since Sunday, the Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Ministry reported 84 servicemen were killed. Aliyev said 11 civilians were killed on its side, although he didn't detail the country's military casualties.

Both countries accused each other of firing into their territory outside of the Nagorno-Karabakh area on Tuesday.

The separatist region of about 4,400 square kilometers (1,700 square miles), or about the size of the U.S. state of Delaware, is 50 kilometers (30 miles) from the Armenian border. Soldiers backed by Armenia also occupy some Azerbaijani territory outside the region.

Armenia also alleged that Turkey, which supports Azerbaijan, was involved. "Turkey, according to our information, looks for an excuse for a broader involvement in this conflict," Pashinyan said.

The Armenian military said an SU-25 from its air force was shot down in Armenian airspace by a Turkish F-16 fighter jet that took off from Azerbaijan, and the pilot was killed.

The allegation of downing the jet was "absolutely untrue," said Fahrettin Altun, communications director for Turkey's president. Azerbaijani officials called it "another fantasy of the Armenian military propaganda machine."

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Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan urged Armenia to withdraw immediately from the separatist region, and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Turkey is "by Azerbaijan's side on the field and at the (negotiating) table."

Armenian officials said that Turkey, a NATO member, is supplying Azerbaijan with fighters from Syria and weapons, including F-16 fighter jets. Both Azerbaijan and Turkey deny it.

Earlier in the day, Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry said Armenian forces shelled the Dashkesan region in Azerbaijan. Armenian officials said Azerbaijani forces opened fire on a military unit in the Armenian town of Vardenis, setting a bus on fire and killing one civilian.

Armenia's Foreign Ministry denied shelling the region and said the reports were laying the groundwork for Azerbaijan "expanding the geography of hostilities, including the aggression against the Republic of Armenia."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has pushed for "an immediate cease-fire and a return to the negotiating table" in phone calls with the leaders of both countries, her office said.

She told them the OSCE offers an appropriate forum for talks and that the two countries' neighbors "should contribute to the peaceful solution," said her spokesman, Steffen Seibert.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said during a visit to Greece that "both sides must stop the violence" and work "to return to substantive negotiations as quickly as possible."

Russia, which along with France and the United States co-chairs the Minsk group, urged every country to help facilitate a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

"We call on all countries, especially our partners such as Turkey, to do everything to convince the opposing parties to cease fire and return to peacefully resolving the conflict by politico-diplomatic means," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday.

Putin spoke to Pashinyan on Tuesday for the second time in three days, urging de-escalation and, like the other leaders, an immediate cease-fire.

Associated Press writers Daria Litvinova in Moscow, Geir Moulson in Berlin, Suzan Fraser in Ankara and Elena Becatoros in Athens contributed.

COVID-19 cases rising among US children as schools reopen

By LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer

After preying heavily on the elderly in the spring, the coronavirus is increasingly infecting American children and teens in a trend authorities say appears fueled by school reopenings and the resumption of sports, playdates and other activities.

Children of all ages now make up 10% of all U.S. cases, up from 2% in April, the American Academy of Pediatrics reported Tuesday. And the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Monday that the incidence of COVID-19 in school-age children began rising in early September as many youngsters returned to their classrooms.

About two times more teens were infected than younger children, the CDC report said. Most infected children have mild cases; hospitalizations and death rates are much lower than in adults.

Dr. Sally Goza, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said the rising numbers are a big concern and underscore the importance of masks, hand-washing, social distancing and other precautions.

"While children generally don't get as sick with the coronavirus as adults, they are not immune and there is much to learn about how easily they can transmit it to others," she said in a statement.

The CDC report did not indicate where or how the children became infected.

Public health experts say the uptick probably reflects increasing spread of the virus in the larger community. While many districts require masks and other precautions, some spread in schools is thought to be occurring, too. But experts also say many school-age children who are getting sick may not be getting infected in classrooms.

Just as cases in college students have been linked to partying and bars, school children may be contract-

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ing the virus at playdates, sleepovers, sports and other activities where precautions aren't being taken, said Dr. Leana Wen, a public health specialist at George Washington University.

"Understandably, there is quarantine fatigue," Wen said. Many people have a sense that if schools are reopening, then other activities can resume too, "but actually the opposite is true."

Global school studies suggest in-person learning can be safe when transmission rates in the larger community are low, the CDC report said.

Mississippi is among states where several outbreaks among students and teachers have been reported since in-person classes resumed in July and August.

Kathy Willard said she had mixed feelings when her grandson's fourth grade class in Oxford was sent home for two weeks after several teachers and one student tested positive for the virus. The family doesn't have internet access at home, making remote learning a challenge.

"It was a hardship. There's always a worry about him falling behind or not getting access to what he needs for school," Willard said. "But at the same time, I'm glad the school is doing what they can to protect our kids."

Students in her district are required to wear masks and receive temperature checks, and students and teachers who come into contact with the virus are quarantined.

In Alcorn County, Mississippi, where hundreds of community cases have been reported, including dozens among teachers, staff and students, parent Kimberly Kilpatrick-Kelley is keeping her 15- and 17-olds home for virtual learning.

The Corinth mother said the family always wears masks when they leave home and practice social distancing, and she worries about her kids getting sick and infecting her parents.

"I personally don't want to take the risk" she said.

Dr. Yvonne Maldonado, head of the American Academy of Pediatrics' infectious-diseases committee, said the big question is what will happen as schools that have started out with online learning go back to in-person classes.

"It really will depend on how well can you mask and distance in a school setting," she said.

New York City, the nation's largest school district, with over 1 million students, resumed classroom learning Tuesday for elementary school children. Higher grades will resume on Thursday.

The CDC report said more than 277,000 children ages 5 to 17 were confirmed infected between March and Sept. 19, with an increase in September after a peak and a decline over the summer.

The agency acknowledged that may be an underestimate, in part because testing is most often done on people with symptoms, and children with the coronavirus often have none.

The CDC reported 51 deaths in school-age kids, most in them ages 12 to 17. Less than 2% of infected children were hospitalized, and youngsters who are Black, Hispanic or have underlying conditions fared worse than white children.

The findings add to other data showing the pandemic is increasingly affecting younger age groups after initially hitting older Americans hard.

In a separate report Tuesday, the CDC said weekly COVID-19 cases among people ages 18 to 22 increased 55% nationally. The increases were greatest in the Northeast and Midwest and were not solely attributable to increased testing, the CDC said. About one-third of U.S. cases are in adults 50 and older, while one-quarter are in 18-to-29-year-olds.

The AAP research is based on reports from public health departments in 49 states, New York City, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and Guam. New York state doesn't provide data by age. Most states count children's cases up to age 19, though a few use different age ranges.

As of Sept. 24, the AAP counted nearly 625,000 youth cases, up to age 20, a 14% increase over the previous two weeks. Deaths totaled 109, well under 1% of all COVID-19 fatalities in the U.S.

As of Monday, the CDC counted over 435,000 cases in children from age zero through 17 and 93 deaths. The groups' totals differ because they include different ages and time periods.

Overall, 7 million Americans have been confirmed infected and 205,000 have died.

Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner at @LindseyTanner.

AP reporter Leah Willingham contributed from Jackson, Mississippi.

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Trump facing devastating debt load? Experts say not so fast

BERNARD CONDON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump reportedly must pay back more than \$300 million in loans over the next four years, raising the possibility his lenders could face an unprecedented situation should he win a second term and not be able to raise the money: foreclosing on the leader of the free world.

But financial experts say the notion of Trump going broke anytime soon is farfetched.

Even with a total debt load across his entire business empire estimated at more than \$1 billion, they note he still has plenty of assets he could cash in, starting with a portfolio that includes office and condo towers, golf courses and branding deals that have been valued at \$2.5 billion.

Based on Forbes magazine estimates of the value of his buildings, for instance, selling his partial interests in just two properties— an office complex in San Francisco and a Las Vegas tower that houses a hotel and condos — could bring in \$500 million alone.

And even if he doesn't sell, that kind of valuation backing up the loans could make them easier for him to refinance.

"He's going to be able to roll these loans over. They have collateral backing them up. They're not that risky to the lenders," said Phillip Braun, a finance professor at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Business.

Trump's true financial picture has gotten renewed scrutiny in the wake of a New York Times report this week that he declared hundreds of millions in losses in recent years, allowing him to pay just \$750 in taxes the year he won the presidency, and nothing for 10 of 15 years before that.

But the Times report was quick to note that tax filings alone can't help determine someone's net worth. And several experts told The Associated Press that, while the true state of Trump's financial situation is unclear because of a lack of public information, he is probably not scrambling for money.

At issue is the often wide difference between what businesses report as profits and losses to the IRS and what they actually receive in profits they put in their pockets.

Plenty of real estate investors report big losses under tax accounting rules and pay little in federal taxes. That is because the tax code allows them to reduce their tax bills with myriad legal loopholes and breaks, including sometimes generous depreciation charges that reflect expected wear and tear on buildings.

Northwestern's Braun said Trump's minuscule tax payments don't surprise him, nor do the losses claimed. "His accountants work really to make sure he doesn't pay any taxes," he said.

A better idea of how Trump is faring, Braun said, comes from Trump's operating profits.

Forbes, which has been valuing Trump properties for decades for its annual billionaire issue, says Trump's 40 Wall Street office tower generated \$18 million in operating profits in 2019, Trump Tower \$13 million, and Trump's share in San Francisco's 555 California Street tower \$26 million.

According to Forbes' latest valuation, even pandemic-reduced prices leave Trump with \$2.5 billion worth of properties and other assets, and that is after subtracting his \$1.2 billion in debt.

The Times said Trump's real estate company has \$421 million in loans he has personally guaranteed, with \$300 million of that coming due over four years.

The Trump Organization did not immediately respond to an email and phone call requesting comment. Trump dismissed the Times story Monday as "fake news" and said he is "extremely underleveraged."

"I have very little debt compared to the value of assets," he wrote.

Among his lenders listed in his personal financial disclosure are New York-based commercial lender Lad-

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der Capital, which is owed at least \$110 million, and Bryn Mawr Trust Co. a suburban Philadelphia bank, which held Trump debt worth between \$5 million and \$25 million for Seven Springs, a New York estate owned by the Trump Organization.

Trump's biggest lender on his disclosure is Deutsche Bank, his chief financier stretching back two decades. It helped him buy and fix up several buildings in New York and Chicago and his Doral golf club in Miami. It is owed at least \$125 million, with loans coming due in 2023 and 2024.

One option for Trump is to get his lenders to refinance his debt or to take out a new loan. Deutsche Bank is an obvious candidate to help him with either because it has been so forgiving to him over the years.

Trump defaulted on bonds that the bank helped sell to investors to finance his casinos in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and a bank loan for his Chicago hotel and condo tower, and yet the bank has continued to lend to him.

Mike Offit, a former executive at Deutsche Bank who lent to Trump in the late '90s, said that if a property backing a loan was still throwing off good cash, and all else was well, the easiest solution for a bank with a Trump loan not likely to be paid back would be to just push out the due date.

"If I was sitting at my old job and a Trump loan was coming due next year and he's the president, I would just say let's extend the maturity," he said.

But several other real estate experts aren't so sure Deutsche Bank may be willing to help Trump much any more.

The bank has been subject to money laundering and tax evasion investigations in Germany and the U.S., and last year settled with the U.S. stock market regulators for allegedly violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act by hiring relatives of government officials in Asia and Russia to drum up business for its investment banking division. In addition, its U.S. division had failed a few annual "stress tests" administered by the Federal Reserve in recent years, hampering its ability to lend for a while.

Deutsche Bank declined to comment.

Another problem: Not all Trump's lenders are banks and other institutions that he can negotiate with across a table.

Nancy Wallace, a real estate professor at the University of California, Berkeley's Haas School of Business, said that hundreds of millions of Trump's bank loans have been packaged into bonds and sold to investors, and the banks are no longer in charge. If a borrower looks like it is in trouble, there could be less room to cut it a break.

Office buildings and hotels have also been hit especially hard by the lockdowns and travel restrictions. So lenders may not be eager to lend to Trump now, and selling off parts of his sprawling empire to raise cash won't be so easy either, and is not likely to get him full value,

Still, "the real estate lending market is difficult at the moment, but for buildings throwing off cash? That shouldn't be a problem," said Bernard Kent, chairman at Schechter Investment Advisors in Detroit. "For something like Trump Tower, the future cash flow wouldn't be tremendously affected by COVID-19 or people moving out of New York. Top-flight properties there tend to hold value."

If all is lost, and Trump is really in trouble, some experts say there is another way he could raise money to pay off his lender: copy rocker David Bowie, who sold bonds that allow investors to make money off his music royalties.

"Trump Bonds" would enable investors to share in his future earnings from selling his name to, say, condo builders or purveyors of steaks or colognes or neckties.

"Trump has a brand that has value," Kent said.

Liberty disputes reports about Falwell severance payment

By SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Liberty University said it paid its recently resigned president, Jerry Falwell Jr., the two years' base salary owed under his employment contract Tuesday.

The Lynchburg, Virginia-based Christian university issued a brief statement about the compensation that

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did not provide an exact figure but said previous "media reports regarding the size and terms" of Falwell's severance were incorrect. Falwell stepped down in August from his post at the school founded by his late evangelical father after a series of scandals.

"By his pre-existing contract, Mr. Falwell is entitled to two years' base salary as severance," the statement said. "Additional compensation that Mr. Falwell receives under his agreement following his resignation are only accrued retirement benefits. These accrued retirement payments reflect reasonable terms after 30 years of service to Liberty, with 13 as university president."

Falwell, who declined comment in response to questions from The Associated Press last month about the terms of his employment contract and exit package, has previously discussed the matter with other news organizations that reported he would receive \$10.5 million. He could not immediately be reached for comment Tuesday.

Falwell's "reportable compensation" from Liberty was \$1,099,356, according to a 2018 tax form the school provided AP. Other compensation was listed as \$59,655.

Liberty's statement also said there was no severance or retirement negotiated in exchange for Falwell's resignation last month.

Falwell, an early supporter and close ally of President Donald Trump, resigned after Reuters published an interview with Giancarlo Granda, a much younger business partner of the Falwell family, who said that he had a yearslong sexual relationship with Falwell's wife, Becki Falwell, and Jerry Falwell participated in some of the liaisons as a voyeur.

Although the Falwells have acknowledged a sexual relationship between Becki Falwell and Granda, Jerry Falwell has said he had no role in the affair.

Falwell had already been on leave since earlier in August after a swift backlash to a photo he posted on social media. The image showed him with his pants unzipped, stomach exposed and arm high around the waist of his wife's pregnant assistant. He also held a glass of dark liquid that he described in a caption as "black water." Falwell has said the photo was taken at a costume party during a family vacation.

The week after Falwell's resignation, Liberty's board announced it had retained an outside firm to conduct a wide-ranging inquiry into Falwell's tenure as president that would include financial, real estate and legal matters.

Liberty has so far declined to identify the firm it has retained, but spokesman Scott Lamb told AP Tuesday that the work had commenced.

"They have begun their investigative work and those who want to know should understand who they are in a week or so," he wrote in an email.

Black Appalachians find hope in national reckoning on race

By PIPER HUDSPETH BLACKBURN Associated Press/Report for America

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Dayjha Hogg has known racism her entire life, but until recently she thought she and her family had to face it on their own.

Hogg, 19, lives in Whitesburg, Kentucky, a town of 2,000 people in the heart of Appalachia. She is biracial — born to a Black father and a white mother — and can recall times when she and her brothers were targets of racial slurs, suspicious glances and rude comments.

But in the wake of this year's nationwide protests against institutional racism — sparked by George Floyd's killing in Minnesota — Black Appalachians have found an opportunity for their history and struggles to be recognized more widely. Though the national reckoning on racism has raised awareness about the issue for many white Americans, that it is also echoing in the hills of Appalachia is particularly striking in a region that isn't known for its diversity.

Hogg saw how the message of the protests — which were also fueled by the police killing of Breonna Taylor in Kentucky — was resonating when she organized a rally in her home county of Letcher, where 2% of the population of about 20,000 is Black. She thought only a few people would show up, but roughly 200 did, most of them white.

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"This is my home," Hogg said. "All my friends and all these young people, they're ready to fight."

The experience helped transform Hogg's own idea of her community in eastern Kentucky.

Though the majority of Black Kentuckians live in the metropolitan areas of Louisville and Lexington, many have resided in the mountains in the east for generations. However, pervasive stereotypes of Appalachia — that its residents are predominantly white, poor and, at best, ignorant about race relations and, at worst, racist — ignore the presence of Black people in the region and the history of multiracial coalitions that marched for racial justice and workers' rights there, notes University of Tennessee at Knoxville sociologist Enkeshi El-Amin.

"Invisibility is a major part of the experience of Black folks in Appalachia," said El-Amin, who also co-hosts the Black in Appalachia podcast. "You don't think of a movement like Black Lives Matter of being something that is vibrant in a region like this, right? Because you don't think of Black people when you think of this region."

But many are working to increase the visibility of Black people in the region — and the demographics are changing as well: Racial minorities made up nearly half of Appalachia's population growth in the past two decades.

This year, a Black lawmaker from Louisville nearly pulled off an upset in the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate with a campaign built around the slogan, "From the hood to the holler." State Rep. Charles Booker bet his campaign on the idea that concern about injustices done to Black Americans by police mattered to people everywhere, and he nearly defeated a heavily bankrolled opponent.

Mekyah Davis, a 24-year-old who grew up not far from the Kentucky border in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, has also been trying to change perceptions about Appalachia and the Black community's place in it. At the STAY Project, a multiracial youth coalition, he organizes programs for young Black Appalachians that educate them about their history and encourage more community involvement.

Davis long felt his blackness made him an outsider in Appalachia, and that he had no choice but to leave. If economic prospects were already bleak, racism seemed to exacerbate those challenges.

But working with STAY has given him hope about his future in his hometown.

"It made me realize that I don't have to make this exodus from the region to be successful, to thrive," he said. "I never would have thought about identifying as Appalachian before that."

This summer's protests have him feeling optimistic about the work he has been doing, trying to alleviate the impact of racism on Black people and confronting the prejudices he sees in everyday interactions.

The protests also made him feel more connected to the larger Black experience in the U.S., despite the different challenges faced by urban and rural communities.

"If you're Black in America, you're Black in America," he said. "It may not be overt police brutality caught on camera, sometimes it's a lot more covert, a lot more malicious."

In Kentucky, Booker is trying to show people of different racial backgrounds that they're connected, too. His Senate campaign particularly focused on economic inequality, in a state rife with poverty.

Out of the 80 Appalachian counties designated as "distressed" by the Appalachian Regional Commission in 2019, nearly half are located in Kentucky.

Since his loss, he's founded an organization called "Hood to the Holler" to continue discussing this issue as well as democratic participation and climate change.

While some Appalachians — like Americans elsewhere — have rejected the ongoing protests as a threat to their way of life and interest has waned for others, Hogg is still hopeful for the future. And though she's disappointed that no officers were charged in the killing of Breonna Taylor, she doesn't see it as a reason to give up. Some close friends and family haven't been as supportive as predicted, but she's inspired by the encouragement she's received, especially from Whitesburg artists who have used their work to spread awareness.

"Don't get me wrong, there are people that need to change," Hogg said. "I'm hopeful that we'll change a few more hearts."

Hudspeth Blackburn 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.

Justice Ginsburg buried at Arlington in private ceremony

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. (AP) — Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was buried Tuesday in a private ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, laid to rest beside her husband and near some of her former colleagues on the court.

Washington last week honored the 87-year-old Ginsburg, who died Sept. 18, with two days where the public could view her casket at the top of the Supreme Court's steps and pay their respects. On Friday, the women's rights trailblazer and second woman to join the high court lay in state at the U.S. Capitol, the first woman to do so.

Already the capital is looking ahead to confirmation hearings expected to begin Oct. 12 for Amy Coney Barrett, whom President Donald Trump announced Saturday as his nominee for Ginsburg's seat. Barrett was meeting with senators on Tuesday.

Arlington, just over the Potomac River from Washington, is best known as the resting place of approximately 400,000 service members, veterans and family members. But Ginsburg is the 14th justice to be buried at the cemetery.

Ginsburg's husband Martin Ginsburg was buried at Arlington in 2010 following his death from cancer. He had served in the Army as an artillery school instructor at Fort Sill in Oklahoma when the couple were newlyweds. The couple was married for 56 years and had two children. The justice had kept the framed, folded flag from her husband's casket in her office at the court.

While the cemetery is known for its rows of white headstones, the section where the Ginsburgs are buried, called Section 5, is an older section of the cemetery where markers chosen by families are allowed, and their headstone is black, with a Star of David at the top.

Supreme Court spokeswoman Kathy Arberg said in a statement that according to the justice's family, Rabbi Lauren Holtzblatt — who spoke at ceremonies last week for the justice at the Supreme Court and the U.S. Capitol — officiated at Tuesday's burial and offered traditional Jewish prayers. There were no formal remarks. Family, close friends, justices, and Ginsburg's staff attended, Arberg said. Ginsburg was an opera lover, and the ceremony concluded with recordings of two arias by Giacomo Puccini sung by Leontyne Price.

Ginsburg's gravesite is just below the final resting place of former President John F. Kennedy. The Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument are in the distance. Nine other justices are buried in that section, including three that Ginsburg served with.

Other justices buried at the cemetery include President William Howard Taft, who served as chief justice after he was president, and Thurgood Marshall, the civil rights champion who argued the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* school desegregation case and became the court's first black justice when he joined the bench in 1967. Harry Blackmun, the author of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision establishing a woman's right to an abortion, is buried next to Marshall in Section 5.

The last justice to be buried at the cemetery was retired Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, who died in 2019 at the age of 99. In addition to Stevens, the other justices Ginsburg served with who are buried at the cemetery are Blackmun and Chief Justice William Rehnquist.

Follow Jessica Gresko on Twitter at twitter.com/jessicagresko.

Unfriendly skies: Airline workers brace for mass layoffs

By TOM KRISHER and CATHY BUSSEWITZ AP Business Writers

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DETROIT (AP) — The worries are growing for United Airlines flight attendant Jordy Comeaux. In a few days, he'll be among roughly 40,000 airline workers whose jobs are likely to evaporate in an industry decimated by the coronavirus pandemic.

Unless Congress acts to help for a second time, United will furlough Comeaux on Thursday, cutting off his income and health insurance. Unemployment and the money made by his husband, a home health nurse, won't be enough to pay the bills including rent near Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.

"I don't have enough, unfortunately, to get by," said Comeaux, 31, who has worked for United for four years. "No one knows what's going to come next and how to prepare."

Since the pandemic hit, thousands of flight attendants, baggage handlers, gate agents and others have been getting at least partial pay through \$25 billion in grants and loans to the nation's airlines. To receive the aid, companies agreed not to lay off employees through Sept. 30. That "Payroll Support Program" helped many stay on, and keep health care and other benefits.

It all runs out on Thursday.

With air travel down about 70% from last year, many carriers including United and American say they'll be forced to cut jobs without additional aid. Delta and Southwest, two other big carriers, tapped private capital markets and say they'll avoid layoffs.

Industry analysts say fear of air travel and businesses keeping employees close to home have brought an unprecedented crisis to the industry, resulting in cataclysmic losses. The four largest U.S. airlines — Delta, United, American and Southwest — together lost \$10 billion in the second quarter alone.

Fewer airline passengers also means less demand for rental cars, hotels and restaurants. With demand for new planes down, airplane manufacturer Boeing has cut thousands of jobs. And with tourism down, The Walt Disney Co. said Tuesday it planned to lay off 28,000 workers in its parks division in California and Florida.

"To my understanding, this is the steepest demand shock for commercial aviation in human history," said Morningstar aviation analyst Burkett Huey.

The International Air Transport Association on Tuesday lowered its full-year traffic forecast. The trade group for airlines around the world now expects 2020 air travel to fall 66% from 2019, compared to its previous estimate of a 63% decline.

Airlines in Europe are expecting years of trouble and have acted quickly to cut jobs even as they get government rescue loans.

Germany's Lufthansa won a 9 billion-euro government bailout, but announced an additional round of cuts after a summer bump in vacation travel dwindled in September. The company has parked its jumbo jets and has plans to eliminate 22,000 full-time positions. British Airways parent company IAG has said it would cut some 12,000 of its 42,000-person workforce.

In the U.S., Congress has been considering a second round of airline aid for weeks, but it's hung up in the debate over a larger national relief package. The Airlines for America trade group said a House proposal unveiled Monday raises some hope because Democrats and Republicans appear to be talking. Layoffs could be delayed if a deal is imminent.

Toni Valentine, 41, a United reservations agent in Detroit who has been with the airline for 15 years, has been told she'll be laid off this week. She has six children ranging in age from 2 to 22, and her husband can't work because he's recovering from a massive stroke.

"Knowing that I may not have insurance benefits, I feel like I have failed," she said on a conference call set up by the Machinists Union. "I'm the primary breadwinner in this family."

Before the pandemic, the airlines were thriving. Planes were full, profits were fat and workers were getting big overtime checks. That helped Valentine, who said she worked 80 hours per week but still was barely making it after her husband's illness.

Now, her 19-year-old son has dropped out of college to help support the family, she said. "We're crying for help and no one is hearing," she said.

Tevita Uhatafe also was a big beneficiary of overtime pay, working 60 hours a week hauling baggage

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and loading airplanes for American Airlines in Dallas. He and his wife, who holds the same fleet service job, earned enough to buy a house and purchase a new car in January.

Then came the pandemic. Overtime went away. Uhatafe and his wife cut expenses and staggered their shifts so one could stay home to supervise remote learning for two sons and a niece.

But come Thursday, they both are likely to get only part-time hours, meaning their household income could be halved. "We can't afford our mortgage, our car payment, our other utilities," he said.

They also fear they won't be able to make health care copays and deductibles. They've looked for jobs, but in a market with high unemployment "there really isn't anything out there for us right now," Uhatafe said.

Allie Malis, an American Airlines flight attendant in Washington, D.C., also faces layoff Thursday. "At this point I don't have a Plan B," she said.

With early retirements and other incentives to quit, U.S. airlines have already shed about 45,000 jobs during the pandemic, or 48,000 including cargo carriers. Government figures are only available through July, however.

Compare that to the first six months after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks, when passenger and cargo airlines cut more than 90,000 jobs, and employment drifted lower for the next two years.

Two decades later, airline employment still had not fully recovered. Malis said American didn't hire any new flight attendants until 2013 because it was still calling back those who were laid off.

While job losses in the airline industry since the pandemic could be about 20% of the total workforce when accounting for the next round of cuts, there are other sectors feeling even more pain, including the restaurant, bar and hotel businesses. From February, before the coronavirus took hold in the U.S., through August, those businesses shed nearly 5.8 million jobs, or around 22% of the total number employed, according to federal statistics.

Flight attendants likely will be the hardest hit if the airline layoffs come this week because there are over 25,000 of them, more than any other job in the industry, said Savanthi Syth, an airlines analyst for Raymond James.

Pilots may not be affected as much because airlines want to avoid the cost of retraining them once they're in a position to rehire. On Monday, United Airlines pilots ratified an agreement that the union and the airline say will avoid about 2,850 furloughs set to take effect later this week, and another 1,000 early next year.

It's anyone's guess when or even if air travel will recover from the pandemic and if airlines can fly through the turbulence. Morningstar expects a vaccine to be available by the end of this year with widespread distribution by the middle of 2021, but recovery could still take years.

Comeaux holds out hope that his union, the Association of Flight Attendants, can successfully lobby Congress for help in the next few days. Many United flight attendants, he said, took special leaves with no pay to preserve jobs for others.

"How long is it going to take for us to get back up and going?" he asked. "That's the really difficult part."

Krisher reported from Detroit. Bussewitz reported from New York. AP Airlines Writer David Koenig in Dallas and AP Researchers Jennifer Farrar in New York and Monika Mathur in Washington contributed to this report.

Biden releases 2019 taxes as pre-debate contrast with Trump

By STEPHEN BRAUN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden paid nearly \$288,000 in federal income taxes last year, according to returns he released just hours before his Tuesday night debate with President Donald Trump.

The move came following a report from The New York Times that Trump paid just \$750 in income taxes in 2016, the year he ran for president, and in 2017, his first year in the White House.

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Biden and his wife, Jill, along with Biden's running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris, released their 2019 federal and state returns as the president contends with the political fallout from a series of Times reports about Trump's long-hidden tax returns. The Times also reported that Trump paid no income tax at all in 10 of the 15 years prior to 2017.

The Bidens' payment of \$287,693 to the federal government in 2019 showed a substantial drop from the \$1.5 million they paid in income taxes in 2018, reflecting a decline in Biden's book revenue, his decision to run for the presidency and his leave of absence from an academic post at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

After paying \$91,000 in 2016, Biden's last year as vice president in the Obama administration, the Bidens paid \$3.7 million to the government in 2017, largely because of income from book deals. Their latest return shows that the couple's adjusted gross earnings of \$985,233 came from his vacated Penn position, Jill Biden's community college teaching job and corporate entities that hold their speaking and writing payments.

Harris and her husband, attorney Douglas Emhoff, paid \$1,185,628 in combined federal and state taxes on earnings of \$3,018,127.

The Biden campaign has moved aggressively to capitalize on the Times reports about Trump's tiny tax payments. The campaign released a media ad showing that nurses, firefighters and other working-class Americans pay far more in annual federal taxes than the \$750 Trump tax payments described by the Times.

Trump has denied the Times report, dismissing it as "fake news" at a press conference, but he has provided no evidence to refute it.

With the release of their 2019 returns, the Bidens have now made public 22 year of tax documents, dating back to the late 1990s, when he was a U.S. senator representing Delaware. Harris has released 15 years of tax returns dating to her stint as San Francisco district attorney.

Kate Bedingfield, a Biden deputy campaign manager, said the release of the documents shows "a historic level of transparency meant to give the American people faith, once again, that their leaders will look out for them and not their own bottom line."

It was a not-too-subtle dig at Trump's refusal — since his 2016 presidential campaign — to make public his personal income taxes. Trump has long insisted that he is unable to provide his tax returns because they are under audit by the Internal Revenue Service, despite no legal conditions preventing him from making them available.

The Times reported that Trump has, in fact, been under audit from the IRS for his request for a \$72 million refund in 2010 by claiming a questionable \$1.4 billion worth of losses in 2008 and 2009.

Barry Jenkins to direct 'Lion King' follow-up

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Walt Disney Co. will make a follow-up to the 2019 live-action "The Lion King," with Barry Jenkins, the director of the Oscar-winning "Moonlight" and the James Baldwin adaptation "If Beale Street Could Talk," set to direct.

Disney announced plans Tuesday for a kind of prequel to last year's poorly reviewed but highly popular photorealistic remake. The new "Lion King" grossed more than \$1.6 billion worldwide, so a sequel was perhaps always likely. Less expected was a "Lion King" with Jenkins directing. The film, Disney said, will explore the mythology of "The Lion King," including Mufasa's origin story.

"Helping my sister raise two young boys during the '90s, I grew up with these characters," Jenkins said in a statement. "Having the opportunity to work with Disney on expanding this magnificent tale of friendship, love and legacy while furthering my work chronicling the lives and souls of folk within the African diaspora is a dream come true."

Jenkins earlier this year completed shooting on the Amazon limited series "The Underground Railroad," based on the Colson Whitehead novel. He won an Oscar for the script to the best-picture-winning "Moonlight" and was nominated for the screenplay to 2018's "If Beale Street Could Talk." He also last year made plans to direct a film based on the life of choreographer Alvin Ailey for Disney's Searchlight Pictures.

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Disney didn't announce any further plot details or casting on the new "Lion King" project, which was first reported by Deadline Hollywood. Jeff Nathanson, who wrote the 2019 movie, is returning to pen the follow-up.

Directed by Jon Favreau, "The Lion King" featured a voice cast including Donald Glover, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, Jon Oliver, Billy Eichner, Seth Rogen and James Earl Jones. Reviews weren't good (52% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes) but it was more lucrative than any other "live-action" remake of a Disney classic. Unadjusted for inflation, 2019's "Lion King" ranks as the seventh highest grossing film ever.

Hybrid Paris Fashion Week, both physical and digital, begins

By THOMAS ADAMSON AP Fashion Writer

PARIS (AP) — Christian Dior on Tuesday was the first major fashion house to stage a traditional ready-to-wear runway show in Paris since the coronavirus pandemic hit in March.

The show headlined the first full day of a hybrid-style Paris Fashion Week. A giant "DIOR"-emblazoned white annex in the chic Tuileries Gardens stood against the backdrop of the Eiffel Tower, hazy in the drizzle.

Guests were unusually relaxed, with some fashion editors commenting that it was because they had not just flown in, exhausted, from a week of covering Milan. Italy had restricted travelers coming from Paris due to the virus. At Dior, many of the Asian and American editors were missing, making this season a largely European affair. .

Paris, like Milan, is trying to kick off an unusual fashion season for spring-summer 2021. For nine days, the calendar flits between some 16 in-person, ready-to-wear runway collections, with masked guests, celebrities and editors in seated rows; around 20 in-person presentations; and several dozen completely digital shows streamed online with promotional videos.

Some show highlights:

DIOR'S CHURCH

It was serene and airy at Christian Dior. Masked guests -- including a smaller-than-average sprinkling of VIPs, such as model Natalia Vodianova -- were seated in church-like socially-distanced pews. On the walls, '70s-era magazine clippings helped provide flashes of bright color like stained-glass windows. It was part of an art installation by Lucia Marcucci that aimed to transform the space into a Gothic cathedral.

A dozen singers, each behind a lectern surrounding the runway, broke into rousing a cappella singing, led by a conductor. The church was a clever theme because the congregation-style pews, sprawling by nature, allowed for social distancing without it seeming awkward in the context of a fashion show.

There was little religious in the fluid spring-summer styles. Designer Maria Grazia Chiuri took as her starting point a reinterpretation of the house's iconic Bar Jacket -- the staple of the New Look -- as designed for Japan in 1957. But Chiuri's version was loose and patterned and featured ethnic motifs, re-creating the boho mood of the '70s.

That decade pervaded the entire collection. Patchwork on scarves, paisley patterns, long flowing flutery skirts, and sheer silk chiffon shirts captured the exuberance of that era. So did the accessories and makeup: Silk scarves were worn like turbans, and complemented Cleopatra-style eyeliner, long gold flower pendants and plaited leather Roman sandals.

At moments, the exuberance went too far, such as a multicolored striped poncho that clashed with the delicate floral print on the bronze silk skirt. But some long embroidered cape coats that hung down regally, with silken patterned insides, more than made up for it.

KOCHE GOES TO THE PARK

The setting for Koché's fashion show could not have been more safe during a pandemic -- next to a lake outside in one of Paris' biggest parks. The fashion-forward brand thinks outside the box for its clothes, and a rebellious spirit infused the presentation of its collection on Tuesday evening.

Pipe players descended ceremoniously down a hill, providing a sound the house described as the "resonance of hope." Dozens of quacking ducks were suddenly scared away by a house-run drone that buzzed around the water.

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Koché, a brand founded in 2015 by designer Christelle Kocher, celebrates diversity and difference. This season, members of the public who identify as transgender, gender-fluid and non-binary were selected to showcase the designs. Kocher said that "all the models are from Paris. They're not pros, they're just beautiful."

The black ribbed wading boots that opened the show certainly looked the part next to the lake setting. While that same look's oversize laurel green and tangerine urban coat, champagne tube top and feather headdress set the quirky tone.

Some of the nicest designs were the simplest. A little white dress worn with knee high black stockings had a lace fringe and a slight slit at the side of the leg that evoked subtle provocation.

On a serious note, Kocher touched upon the existential uncertainty circling the fashion industry. She wrote in the program notes that "a fashion show is...like a newborn, like a ghost, like a beautiful memory that will stay forever...Maybe there will be no more shows for the years to come. So...enjoy this one!"

COPERNI'S PROTECTION

The brand founded by former Courreges designers Arnaud Vaillant and Sebastien Meyer seemed to have a blast this season. Coperni put on the first runway show of Paris Fashion Week, atop the Montparnasse Tower skyscraper building.

The show itself seemed to be about protection and exposure, themes understandably on many a mind in the virus-beaten fashion industry.

Leggings with angular patterns on the knees that resembled padding mixed with garments featuring shell-like square paneling. A hexagonal shape, like a honeycomb lining a beehive, cut a funky style. A violet knit bodice wrap looked like it was protecting the model from the outside world. Silhouettes were streamlined, sporty and monochrome with a flash of color. Zippers exposed models' skin to the grim autumn weather.

MARINE SERRE GETS SURGICAL

French wunderkind Marine Serre found new fame last season for a series of masked looks in her Paris ready-to-wear show in February that were branded prophetic. This season, Serre, one of the best of a new generation of French designers, kept up her creativity and used the new, limited digital platform to its fullest by showcasing her spring-summer 2021 designs via an atmospheric video called "Amor Fati," or "Love of Fate."

The clip, which fuses the line between fashion and art, features a naked model on a futuristic surgeon's table. Models in utilitarian black combat gear, with chains and visors, push a tray of surgeon's tools through a sanitized white space to unnerving Hitchcockian music. It seemed more like high-advertising than a platform to showcase new designs -- but it was slickly executed

Reggaeton redemption: Balvin, Bunny top Latin Grammy nods

By MESFIN FEKADU AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — At last year's Latin Grammy Awards, popular reggaeton and Latin trap musicians such as J Balvin, Bad Bunny and Ozuna were dismissed in the show's top categories. This year, they dominate.

Balvin scored a whopping 13 nominations for the 2020 Latin Grammys, including two nominations for album of the year and two for record of the year. The Latin Academy announced Tuesday that Bad Bunny and Ozuna are behind Balvin with nine and eight nominations, respectively.

Balvin has a chance to win his first album of the year prize — a category with 10 contenders — thanks to his fifth solo album "Colores" and "Oasis," his collaborative project with Bad Bunny. Other nominees include Bad Bunny's sophomore release "YHLQMDLG" as well as albums from Ricky Martin, Carlos Vives, Jesse & Joy, Kany García, Natalia Lafourcade, Camilo and Fito Paez.

For record of the year, which also has 10 nominees, contenders include popular hip-hop-flavored Latin songs that have dominated the Latin music charts and earned hundreds of millions plays on streaming services, with some even reaching the billion-mark on YouTube, including Karol G and Nicki Minaj's global hit "Tusa" and "China" by Anuel AA, Daddy Yankee, Karol G, Ozuna and Balvin. Other nominees include Balvin's "Rojo" and Bad Bunny's "Vete."

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"Tusa" is the sole Latin trap nominee in the song of the year category, where 11 tracks are in contention. It's a departure for Karol G, who didn't receive a single nomination last year and was part of the group of uber-successful Latin trap and reggaeton artists who were dissed in top categories like album, song and record of the year.

This year, the Colombian performer who was named best new artist in 2018 has four nominations, including two shared with Minaj. Karol G's fiancée, Puerto Rican rapper-singer Anuel AA, marked a major breakthrough this year as a first-time nominee. He scored seven nominations, including a bid for best new artist.

"Over the last year, we continued engaging in discussions with our members to improve the awards process and actively encouraged diverse Latin music creators to join and participate," Latin Academy President and CEO Gabriel Abaroa Jr. said in a statement, calling this year's nominees "a group that reflects the constant evolution of Latin music."

As a result of last year's debacle social media exploded as Latin artists posted images of the Grammy logo with a large red "X" across it, with words on the image reading in Spanish: "Without reggaeton, there's no Latin Grammys." Balvin even skipped the live show and Bad Bunny, who won best urban music album during the telecast, told the audience: "With all due respect, reggaeton is part of the Latin culture."

To honor Latin rap and reggaeton performers, the Latin Grammys added new categories this year, including best reggaeton performance and best rap/hip-hop song.

Balvin's 13 nominations includes several categories where he will compete with himself: Outside of album and record of the year, he's a double nominee in the best urban music album, best urban fusion/performance and best reggaeton performance categories. Ozuna and Bad Bunny will also compete with themselves in several categories.

Others who scored multiple nominations include Juanes, Martin, Alejandro Sanz, Camilo, Carlos Vives, Kany García and Residente, the most decorated winner in the history of Latin Grammys. Rosalía, who won album of the year last year and became the first solo female performer to win the top honor since Shakira's triumph in 2006, earned four nominations this year.

Apart from Minaj's two nominations, other popular American artists who will compete for awards include rapper Travis Scott (best short form music video for "TKN" with Rosalía); jazz master Chick Corea and his Spanish Heart Band (best Latin jazz/jazz album for "Antidote"); DJ-producer Diplo (best urban song for "Rave de Favela"); and rapper Tyga (best reggaeton performance for "Loco Contigo" with DJ Snake and Balvin). Justin Bieber's right-hand songwriter, Jason Boyd aka Poo Bear, earned an album of the year nomination for his work on Jesse & Joy's "Aire (Versión Día)."

The 21st annual Latin Grammy Awards will air live on Nov. 19 on Univision. The nominees in the 53 categories were selected from more than 18,000 entries. Songs and albums released between June 1, 2019 through May 31, 2020 were eligible for nomination.

Dying winds give crews hope in Northern California fires

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Easing winds gave California firefighters a break Tuesday as they battled a destructive wildfire that was driven by strong winds through wine country north of San Francisco and another rural blaze that killed three people.

Breezes replaced the powerful gusts that sent the Glass Fire raging through Napa and Sonoma counties Sunday and Monday, scorching more than 66 square miles (170 square kilometers).

At least 95 buildings have burned in wine country, including homes and winery installations. A wildfire burning farther north in rural Shasta County has destroyed another 146 buildings.

The fire in wine country pushed through brush that had not burned for a century, even though surrounding areas were incinerated in a series of blazes in recent years.

As the winds eased Monday evening, firefighters were feeling "much more confident," said Ben Nicholls, a division chief with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, known as Cal Fire.

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"We don't have those critical burning conditions that we were experiencing those last two nights," he said.

The Glass Fire in wine country is one of nearly 30 wildfires burning around California. The National Weather Service warned that hot, dry conditions with strong Santa Ana winds could continue posing a fire danger in Southern California through Tuesday afternoon.

In a forested far northern part of the state, more than 1,200 people were evacuated in Shasta County for the Zogg Fire, which has burned at least 62 square miles (160 square kilometers).

Three people have died in the fire, Shasta County Sheriff Eric Magrini said Monday. He gave no details but urged people who receive evacuation orders: "Do not wait."

Numerous studies in recent years have linked bigger wildfires in America to climate change from the burning of coal, oil and gas. Scientists say climate change has made California much drier, meaning trees and other plants are more flammable.

Residences are widely scattered in Shasta County, which was torched just two years ago by the deadly Carr Fire — infamously remembered for producing a huge tornado-like fire whirl.

The Pacific Gas & Electric utility had cut power to more than 100,000 customers in advance of gusty winds and in areas with active fire zones. The utility's equipment has caused previous disasters, including the 2018 Camp Fire that killed 85 people and devastated the town of Paradise in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

By Monday night, the utility said it had restored electricity to essentially all of those customers. However, PG&E said about 24,000 people remained without power in areas affected by two fires in Napa, Sonoma, Shasta and Tehama counties.

So far in this year's historic fire season, more than 8,100 California wildfires have killed 29 people, scorched 5,780 square miles (14,970 square kilometers) and destroyed more than 7,000 buildings.

The Glass Fire began Sunday as three fires merged and drove into vineyards and mountain areas, including part of the city of Santa Rosa. About 70,000 people were under evacuation orders, including the entire 5,000-plus population of Calistoga in Napa County.

Some people were injured and Sonoma County sheriff's deputies had to rescue people who ignored evacuation orders, officials said.

Sonoma County Supervisor Susan Gorin, who lives in Santa Rosa, said she was stuck in two hours of heavy traffic Monday night to reach safety.

Gorin's home was damaged in another fire three years ago and she was rebuilding it. She saw three neighboring houses in flames as she fled.

"We're experienced with that," she said of the fires. "Once you lose a house and represent thousands of folks who've lost homes, you become pretty fatalistic that this is a new way of life and, depressingly, a normal way of life, the megafires that are spreading throughout the West."

Gorin said it appeared the fire in her area was sparked by embers from the Glass Fire.

Ed Yarbrough, a wildfire evacuee from St. Helena in Napa County, watched firefighters douse flames across from his house Monday.

"I can see in the distance that it looks like it's intact," he said but said spot fires were still being doused.

"So I know we're not really out of the woods yet, and the woods can burn," he said.

The fires came as the region approaches the anniversary of the 2017 fires, including one that killed 22 people. Just a month ago, many of those same residents were evacuated from the path of a lightning-sparked fire that became the fourth-largest in state history.

"Our firefighters have not had much of a break, and these residents have not had much of a break," said Daniel Berlant, an assistant deputy director with Cal Fire.

Officials did not have an estimate of the number of homes destroyed or burned, but the blaze engulfed the Chateau Boswell Winery in St. Helena and at least one five-star resort.

Associated Press reporters Christopher Weber and John Antczak in Los Angeles, Juliet Williams in San Francisco and Haven Daley in Santa Rosa, California, contributed to this report.

How can I volunteer for a COVID-19 vaccine study?

By The Associated Press undefined

How can I volunteer for a COVID-19 vaccine study?

Governments and companies are setting up websites where people can sign up.

Enthusiasm is high: More than 400,000 people have signed a registry of possible volunteers that's part of a vaccine network set up by the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

But before raising your hand, it's important to understand how the research works.

Initial studies include only a few dozen young, healthy volunteers, since this is the first chance to see if a shot causes a risky reaction in people. Older adults, anyone with a serious underlying illness, and pregnant women are typically excluded from this testing stage.

Mid-stage studies of COVID-19 vaccines recruit a few hundred people, including some older adults. The focus is on comparing how people's immune systems react to different doses, as well as getting more safety data.

In final-stage studies, scientists need tens of thousands of volunteers who reflect the diversity of the population, including those at high risk of severe illness from the virus. So volunteers can include people who are over age 65 and people with chronic health problems such as diabetes.

Enough study participants have to be exposed to the virus for researchers to be able to tell if the vaccine works. That's why essential workers, such as grocery or transportation workers who come into frequent contact with others, are especially sought after for the last testing phase. It's also why researchers are recruiting in places where the virus is spreading, not areas that have it under control — so even if you meet the eligibility criteria, you might not be called back, depending on where you live.

Volunteers won't know if they're getting the vaccine or a dummy shot.

The World Health Organization counts 10 vaccines worldwide in this final stage of testing, and dozens more are in earlier stages. A few websites list vaccine studies for people interested in volunteering.

— The website clinicaltrials.gov lets people search for COVID-19 vaccine studies by country.

— Many regions, such as the European Union, also have their own research registries.

— And if local hospitals, clinics or testing labs in your area are looking for volunteers, you'll likely see advertisements or flyers with a number to call for information.

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

Does a face mask protect me, or just the people around me?

Does the coronavirus spread easily among children?

Can I get the coronavirus twice?

A viral march across the planet, tracked by a map in motion

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

On a Thursday night in early January, the disease that would become known as COVID-19 claimed its first victim, a 61-year-old man who succumbed to the newly identified coronavirus in the city of Wuhan, in the People's Republic of China.

Nine months later, the pandemic took its millionth life. And while the vagaries of record-keeping mean we may never know who that victim was, the fact remains: COVID has killed a million people.

Tens of millions of things undone. Daughters and sons unborn, works of genius uncreated. Pieces of communities — excised. Entire residential complexes filled with older people — ravaged. Human contribution melted away, with no way of ever knowing or chronicling what was lost. Accounting for what's missing when people die is never an easy task; now it is one multiplied by an entire million.

A new Associated Press interactive map of the coronavirus' spread — represented by the lives it has claimed — blends data and geography in a way that forces us to see what has happened to the world. And what is still happening to it.

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Like so many things in the world, it started small. At first, the map shows only one splash of color: China, the place where the coronavirus silently began its march.

As it began to move around, the map evolved. Month by month, week by week, day by day, the coronavirus spread. Pandemic was declared. Hospitals girded. Cities and countries, shut down. The world changed so fast that its people could barely keep up.

How did something so contained at first, so localized, upend the routines and activities of huge chunks of human civilization?

We all have watched it, lived through it, but the visual is striking. From a world largely unsullied by the virus to one merely touched by it to an entire planet feeling its effects. Choose a place to pause. Each juncture offers a window into that moment.

— March 18, 2020. China still leads the world in deaths. In the United States, President Donald Trump has just declared a state of emergency. The United States has lost 191 people. The wide belief among Americans: This can still be contained.

— April 6, 2020. Italy is being ravaged; 16,523 have been lost. China has dropped out of the top five when it comes to deaths. The United States is second by now at 14,199 dead.

— May 22, 2020. The United States has shot ahead of the rest of the world and sits on the cusp of 100,000 dead — 99,166. It, like the United Kingdom (35,440), Italy (32,616), Spain (28,626) and France (28,292), is rendered in a darker forest green, along with Brazil. The march is accelerating.

— July 26, 2020. In the heart of the summer, the United States remains the country with the most dead: 147,656. Brazil, whose president has just tested positive for coronavirus, is second at 87,004. Darker greens are starting to fill the map, including in India. In China, blamed by Trump for the virus in terms some deem racist, the hue is light after strict and protracted containment measures.

— Sept. 27, 2020. This past Sunday. India is third in the world with 95,542 deaths. The United States, still No. 1 and criticized for its haphazard efforts at containment, has just passed the 200,000 mark. Brazil sits at 141,741, with no apparent detrimental political effect on its leader. Russia is now darker green. Africa, Australia and much of Asia are lighter, though swaths of Southeast Asia are showing higher death rates.

This map tells the story of an invisible virus that upended the world. It tells of first responses and fear and decisions good and bad. Stories of valiant women and men who tried to stop it, and were sometimes claimed by their efforts. It tells stories of leaders who measured up and leaders who didn't. And how simple human touch ended up killing.

Most of all, it tells of the 1 million dead and gone. These are the stories of the human beings who, had they been able to stick around, might have done things we'd all remember — or might have done things just as important that only a few people they loved would remember. The map contains their stories, too, and even amid the elegant lines of the map and the illuminating contours of the data they should not be forgotten.

Ted Anthony, director of digital innovation for The Associated Press, oversees the news organization's coverage of the pandemic's ripple effect on society. Follow him on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/anthonyted>

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 30, the 274th day of 2020. There are 92 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 30, 1938, after co-signing the Munich Agreement allowing Nazi annexation of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain said, "I believe it is peace for our time."

On this date:

In 1777, the Continental Congress — forced to flee in the face of advancing British forces — moved to

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York, Pennsylvania.

In 1791, Mozart's opera "The Magic Flute" premiered in Vienna, Austria.

In 1912, the Columbia Journalism School in New York held its first classes.

In 1939, the first college football game to be televised was shown on experimental station W2XBS in New York as Fordham University defeated Waynesburg College, 34-7.

In 1949, the Berlin Airlift came to an end.

In 1955, actor James Dean, 24, was killed in a two-car collision near Cholame, California.

In 1962, James Meredith, a Black student, was escorted by federal marshals to the campus of the University of Mississippi, where he enrolled for classes the next day; Meredith's presence sparked rioting that claimed two lives.

In 1972, Roberto Clemente hit a double against Jon Matlack of the New York Mets during Pittsburgh's 5-0 victory at Three Rivers Stadium; the hit was the 3,000th and last for the Pirates star.

In 1984, the mystery series "Murder, She Wrote," starring Angela Lansbury, premiered on CBS.

In 2001, under threat of U.S. military strikes, Afghanistan's hard-line Taliban rulers said explicitly for the first time that Osama bin Laden was still in the country and that they knew where his hideout was located.

In 2014, the first case of Ebola diagnosed in the U.S. was confirmed in a patient who had recently traveled from Liberia to Dallas. California Gov. Jerry Brown signed the nation's first statewide ban on single-use plastic bags at grocery and convenience stores.

In 2018, U.S. and Canadian officials announced an agreement for Canada to take part in a revamped North American free trade deal with the U.S. and Mexico; the new agreement would be called the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or USMCA, and would take effect on July 1, 2020.

Ten years ago: Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton called Guatemalan leaders to apologize for 1940s U.S.-led experiments that infected occupants of a Guatemala mental hospital with syphilis, apparently to test the effectiveness of penicillin against some sexually transmitted diseases. The government of Ecuador declared a state of siege after rebellious police angered by a law that cut their benefits plunged the small South American nation into chaos.

Five years ago: Just hours before a midnight deadline, a bitterly divided Congress approved, and President Barack Obama signed, a stopgap spending bill to keep the federal government open. Kelly Renee Gissendaner, the only woman on Georgia's death row, was executed by injection, making her the first woman put to death by the state in seven decades. (Gissendaner was convicted of murder in the 1997 slaying of her husband after she'd conspired with her lover, who stabbed Douglas Gissendaner to death.) Prosecutors declined to charge Caitlyn Jenner in a California car crash the previous February that killed another driver, Kim Howe, citing insufficient evidence.

One year ago: House Democrats subpoenaed President Donald Trump's personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, for documents related to his interactions with Ukrainian officials. The Justice Department said President Donald Trump had recently asked Australia's prime minister and other foreign leaders to help Attorney General William Barr investigate the origins of the Russia probe. International opera star Jessye Norman died in New York at 74. Oakland Raiders linebacker Vontaze Burfict was suspended for the rest of the season for a helmet-to-helmet hit on Indianapolis Colts tight end Jack Doyle; it was the league's most severe punishment ever for an on-field infraction. Defying the NCAA, California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a first-in-the-nation law allowing college athletes at public and private schools in California to hire agents and make money from endorsement deals.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Angie Dickinson is 89. Singer Cissy Houston is 87. Singer Johnny Mathis is 85. Actor Len Cariou is 81. Singer Marilyn McCoo is 77. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is 75. Pop singer Sylvia Peterson (The Chiffons) is 74. Actor Vondie Curtis-Hall is 70. Actor Victoria Tennant is 70. Actor John Finn is 68. Rock musician John Lombardo is 68. Singer Deborah Allen is 67. Actor Calvin Levels is 66. Actor Barry Williams is 66. Singer Patrice Rushen is 66. Actor Fran Drescher is 63. Country singer Marty Stuart is 62. Actor Debrah Farentino is 61. Former Sen. Blanche Lincoln, D-Ark., is 60. Actor Crystal Bernard is 59. Actor Eric Stoltz is 59. Rapper-producer Marley Marl is 58. Country singer Eddie Montgomery (Montgomery-Gentry) is 57. Rock singer Trey Anastasio is 56. Actor Monica Bellucci is 56.

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Rock musician Robby Takac (Goo Goo Dolls) is 56. Actor Lisa Thornhill is 54. Actor Andrea Roth is 53. Actor Amy Landecker is 51. Actor Silas Weir Mitchell is 51. Actor Tony Hale is 50. Actor Jenna Elfman is 49. Actor Ashley Hamilton is 46. Actor Marion Cotillard is 45. Actor Christopher Jackson is 45. Actor Stark Sands is 42. Actor Mike Damus is 41. Actor Toni Trucks is 40. Former tennis player Martina Hingis is 40. Olympic gold medal gymnast Dominique Moceanu is 39. Actor Lacey Chabert is 38. Actor Kieran Culkin is 38. Singer-rapper T-Pain is 36.