

Groton Daily Independent

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Church Services

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

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

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

Emmanuel Lutheran Church - Worship inside at 9 a.m.

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

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

Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden, 10:30 a.m. Worship inside or stay in vehicle and listen on the FM.

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

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



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

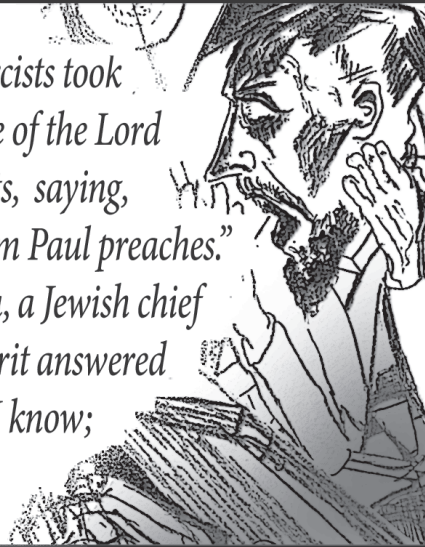
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

Sunday Extras



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

...Some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" – ACTS 19:13-15



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BIBBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. From Matthew 13, what baking item did Jesus compare to the kingdom of heaven? *Eggs, Milk, Salt, Yeast*

3. In Genesis 6:3, how many years did God set as mankind's age limit? *120, 490, 612, 969*

4. Where does one go to find balm, according to Jeremiah? *Corinth, Joppa, Derbe, Gilead*

5. Which of these women wore a nose ring? *Esther, Mary Magdalene, Rebekah, Martha*

6. Who tested the will of the Lord with a fleece? *Jehu, Gideon, Amos, Ahaziah*

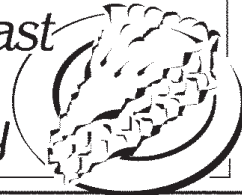
ANSWERS: 1) New; 2) Yeast; 3) 120; 4) Gilead; 5) Rebekah (Gen 24:47); 6) Gideon

Hardcore trivia fan? Visit Wilson Casey's subscriber site at www.patron.com/triviaguy.

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Comfort foods

Made fast
and
healthy



by Healthy Exchanges

Mandarin Orange Pie

Serve this luscious pie to your loved ones on Halloween night. They definitely will think they're getting the best treat in the neighborhood! It almost looks like a big slice of candy corn on a plate.

1 (4-serving) package sugar-free vanilla cook-and-serve pudding mix

1 (4-serving) package sugar-free orange gelatin

1 1/4 cups water

2 (11-ounce) cans mandarin oranges, rinsed and drained

1 (6-ounce) purchased graham cracker crust

1/2 cup reduced-fat whipped topping

1. In a large saucepan, combine dry pudding mix, dry gelatin and water. Cook over medium heat until mixture thickens and starts to boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat.

2. Reserve 8 mandarin orange slices for garnish. Gently stir in remaining mandarin oranges. Let set for 5 minutes. Spread partially cooled pudding mixture into pie crust.

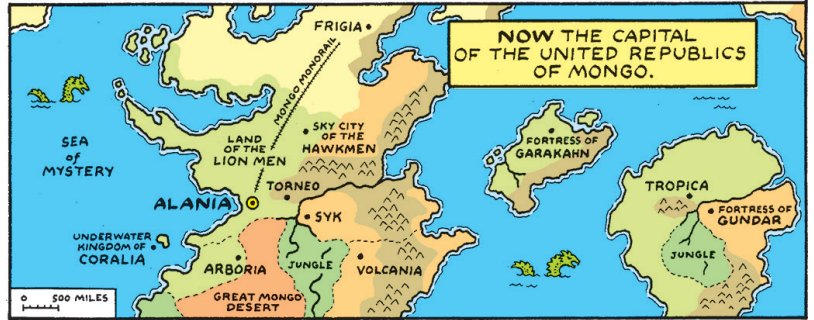
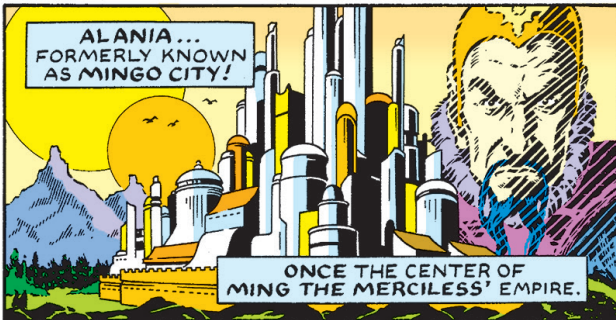
3. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Spread whipped topping evenly over set filling. Evenly garnish top with reserved mandarin orange slices. Serves 8.

• Each serving equals: 141 calories, 5g fat, 1g protein, 23g carb., 195mg sodium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Starch, 1 Fat, 1/2 Fruit.

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FLASH GORDON

10-11 BY JIM KEEFE

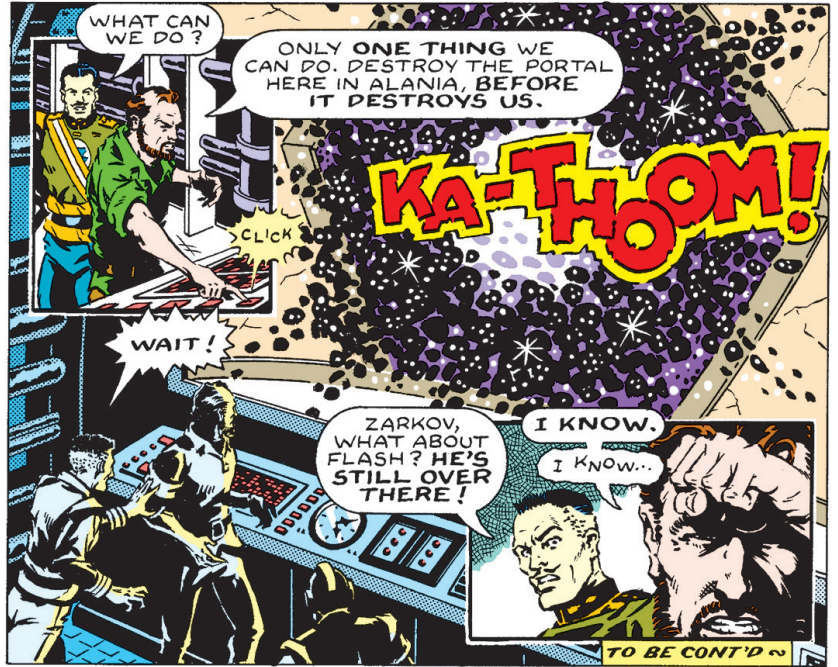
AS DALE ARDEN REACHES OUT TO THE SPOT WHERE X-9'S REMAINS HAVE DISAPPEARED...



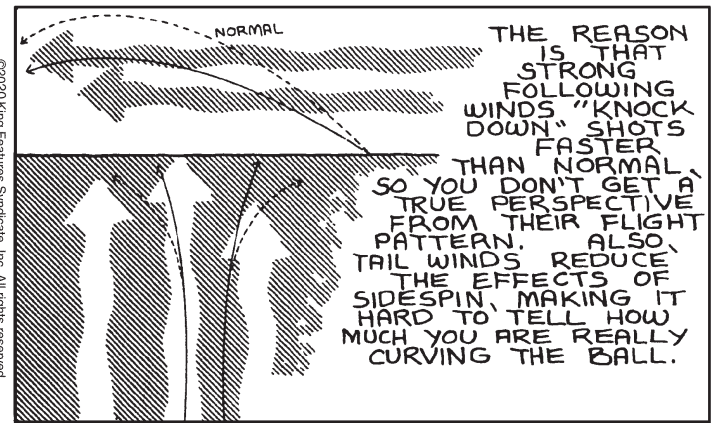
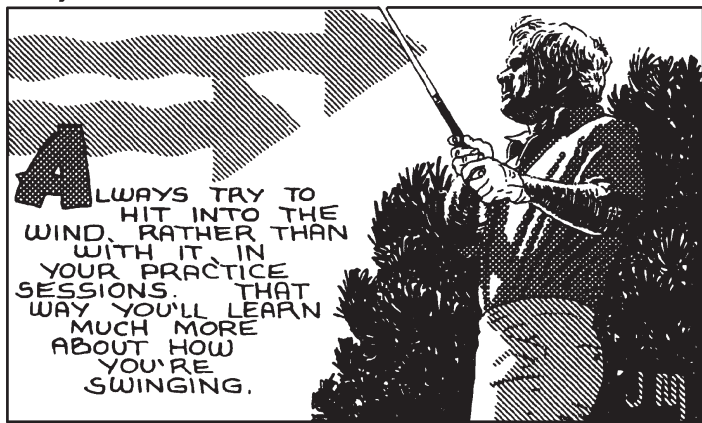
...HALF A WORLD AWAY, DR. HANS ZARKOV WORKS FEVERISHLY TO HALT A DIRE CHAIN REACTION.

THESE READINGS ARE OFF THE CHART.

AS THE SPACE PORTAL IN MING'S FORTRESS GROWS MORE AND MORE UNSTABLE, SO DOES OUR OWN DEVICE.



Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Lab Finds Tiny Amount of Blood in Her Urine

DEAR DR. ROACH: My question is about microscopic hematuria. I see a rheumatologist for sarcoidosis. Last year I had various lab tests, including a urinalysis. That test and several since then have shown microscopic hematuria. The rheumatologist sent me to a urologist, who did scans and a scope of the bladder up through the right kidney. There's a slight stricture of the right ureter. My biopsies were negative.

Tests and scans continue to be OK except for the microscopic hematuria. I am a 60-year-old woman. Is the hematuria a cause for concern? — *K.E.*

ANSWER: "Hematuria" means "blood in the urine." "Gross" hematuria means there is so much blood that it changes the urine color, while "microscopic" hematuria is recognizable only in the laboratory. Blood in the urine can come from anywhere in the urinary system, and there is a long list of possibilities. Although the cause is sometimes never found, your physician should consider urinary tract infection, kidney or bladder stones, and, in the right age group, cancer of the kidney and bladder. CT scans and cystoscopy are commonly performed tests, and the negative result in your case is reassuring.

You have one more reason to have hematuria than others, and that is the sarcoidosis. Sarcoidosis is a condition that can affect any tissue in the body with abnormal clumps of cells called granulomata. (Just one is called a gran-

uloma.) While the lungs are the most common site for sarcoidosis, it can affect the kidney, causing hematuria.

Sarcoidosis also can cause kidney damage, resulting in a high creatinine, so that should be tested. Severe kidney disease from sarcoidosis may be treated with prednisone, but you should see an expert (nephrologist) to consider this diagnosis.

The majority of people with small amounts of blood in the urine with no documented reason for it, including the cystoscopy and scans you had, will not have serious disease. However, it is probably still prudent to keep an eye on the kidneys and bladder periodically.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I was just told that I have brittle veins. I have exhausted every place I can think of to find out more about this condition. What is it? What causes it? What should I do? — *T.M.G.*

ANSWER: There isn't a condition called "brittle veins": Whoever told you that was trying to explain a symptom you have. They may have meant that your capillaries (the smallest type of blood vessel) break easily. That's a cause of easy bruising. They may have meant that you have stiff blood vessels, from calcium or cholesterol. That's a cause of high blood pressure. They may have been trying to draw blood or put in an IV and found that your vein "blew," meaning the needle went through the vein entirely and you had bleeding under the skin.

There are also some rare blood disorders causing blood vessels to become fragile, and sometimes inflamed. These can be quite serious, but I doubt you have one of these. You would have been referred to a specialist.

While I understand why medical professionals will use nonspecific terms like these, they can lead to confusion.

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

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1. What vintage album held the record for most weeks on Billboard's album chart?

2. Name the first company to sign Elvis Presley.

3. Which song mentions Camp Granada?

4. Who were the Eddie Clayton Skiffle Group and Rory Storm and the Hurricanes?

5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "I can't believe you've got a heart of stone, I've seen your tears fall when you thought you were alone."

Answers

1. "Johnny's Greatest Hits," a Johnny Mathis collection from 1958. It stayed on the chart for 490 weeks.

2. Sun Records, in 1954. A year later his manager Colonel Tom Parker arranged for RCA Victor to pick up the contract. Parker stayed with Presley for over two decades.

3. "Hello Mother, Hello Father," also known as "Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh," the 1963 hit about a kid's letter from summer camp.

4. Those were the two groups Ringo Starr played with before he joined the Beatles. Starr was born Richard Starkey and was known as Ritchie until he joined Rory Storm.

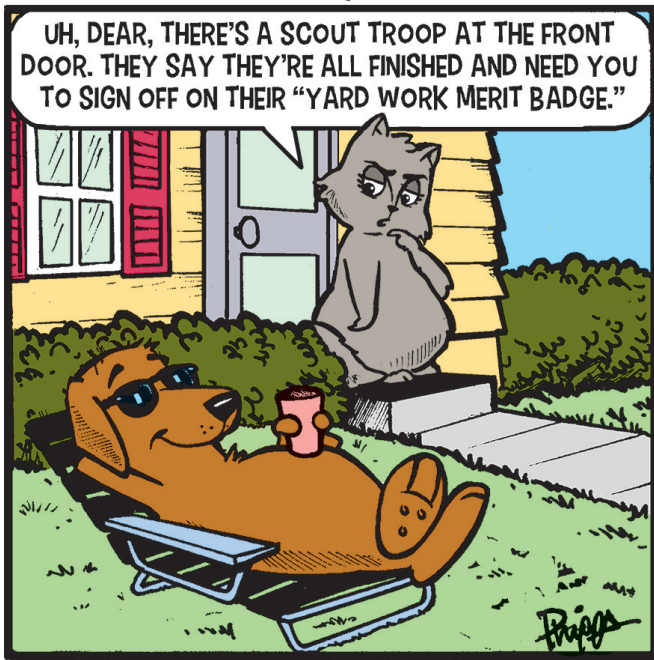
5. "Don't Rush Me," by Taylor Dayne, 1988. Despite having six Top 10 singles and three Grammy noms, her music career wound down and she turned to acting and songwriting.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}

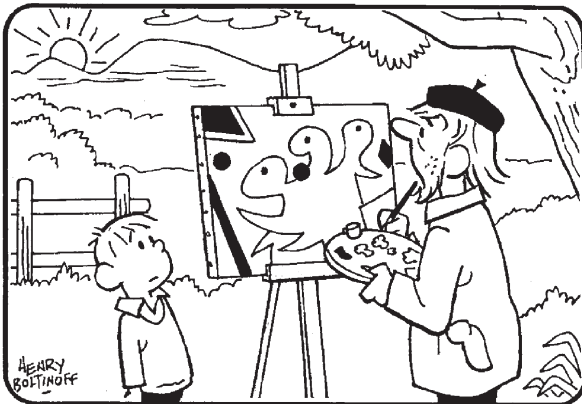


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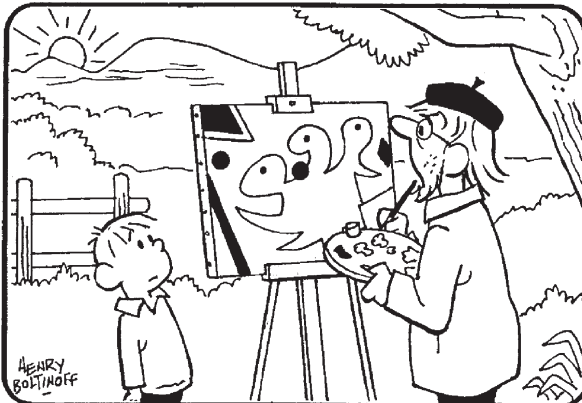
Wagner

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Cloud is missing. 2. Artist has glasses. 3. Boy's neckline is different. 4. Easel has third leg. 5. Painting is different. 6. Artist's paint rag is gone.

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- “Use a permanent marker to put your initials on your charging cord. They all look the same, especially if they are white. This way you will know if someone — say, your sister — takes your cord!” — *V.V. in Georgia*

- “I use Milk of Magnesia on a cotton ball applied to my toes to ward off itchy feet from athlete’s foot or whatever causes itching. I just apply it when I get out of the shower, and it dries before I put socks on. It really works!” — *E.L. in Kentucky*

- “An online grocery order mistake landed me with way too many bananas. In addition to banana muffins and breads, I sliced and froze a few bananas to use in smoothies, and mixed mashed bananas together with some other fruit pieces to make a sorbet of sorts.” — *Y.D. in Arizona*

- When painting, most people know to place a roller in a plastic bag to keep it moist between paint sessions. An added layer of protection is to then stick the

roller (in the bag) inside a Pringles chip can. It’s the right size, and it can keep it safe until the next day.

- “When my curly curly hair gets the frizz, I use a sheet of fabric softener to take the static electricity out of it. This works so well that in the winter, I keep several in my purse.” — *P.M. in Michigan*

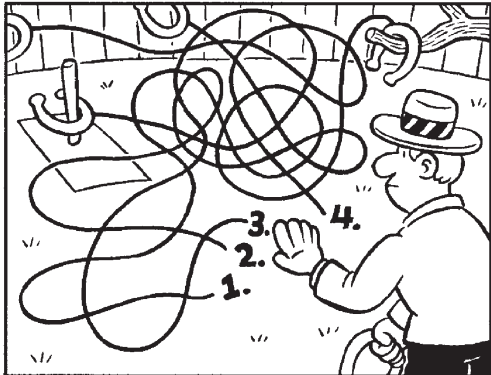
- Childproofing in a pinch: Slip a thick sock over a doorknob, and secure with a rubber band. Little kids will have to work much harder to grip and turn the doorknob, and it can help keep kids from opening doors.

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

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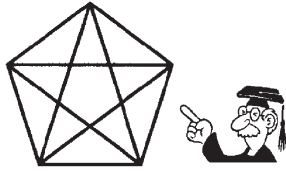
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A RINGER FOR MR. DINGER! Can you guess which of the four pitches was a ringer for Mr. Dinger?

Answers: Pitch 3.

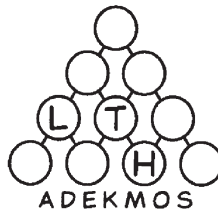
Illustrated by David Coulson

YOU'LL SEE STARS before you finish this one. Professor Flunkum challenges you to find all of the triangles in this figure in under six minutes.



Answer: There are 35 triangles of different sizes in the drawing.

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



Answers: Top to bottom, left to right: Mold, mole, mote, moth, mate, math, mash, mask.

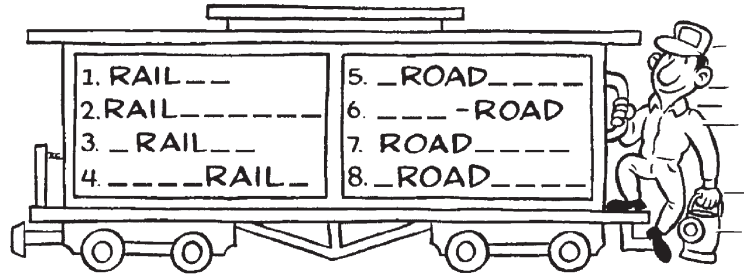
Casey has painted eight partially spelled words on the caboose. Each word contains "rail" or "road" in it. Use the hints below to complete each word.

1. Expressed objections bitterly.
2. Unfairly convicted.
3. Type of writing.
4. Streaks in the sky.
5. Way to sow seeds.
6. Type of motoring.
7. Old-time car.
8. Type of carpeting.

Answers: 1. Railed. 2. Railroaded. 3. Braille. 4. Contrails. 5. Broadcast. 6. Off-road. 7. Roadster. 8. Broadloom.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



I'VE BEEN 'SPELLING' ON THE RAILROAD!

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



BUD BLAKE

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Manhandle
- 5 Kimono sash
- 8 Hollywood clashers
- 12 Otherwise
- 13 Paid athlete
- 14 Swindle
- 15 Glass made of lava
- 17 Small song-bird
- 18 Series of battles
- 19 Individual
- 20 Too thin
- 21 Prompt
- 22 Evergreen type
- 23 Happen
- 26 Andean vultures

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

- 30 Courts
- 31 Email alternative
- 32 Pedestal occupant
- 33 Panacea
- 35 Golfer's aid
- 36 Rowing need
- 37 Junior
- 38 Suspicious
- 41 Pal
- 42 Hot tub
- 45 Stereo hook-up
- 46 — bacon
- 48 Pod vegetable
- 49 Plant bristle

- 50 Fairy tale side
- 7 Charged bit
- 8 Early era in England's
- 9 Mentor
- 10 File command
- 11 Transmitted
- 16 Gloomy
- 20 Card player's call
- 21 Janitor
- 22 Hounds' prey
- 23 Possess
- 24 Bill's partner
- 25 Trig ratio
- 26 Rotating part
- 27 Peculiar
- 28 Scepter
- 29 Like 22-Down
- 31 Bear hair
- 34 Shaft of light
- 35 Last few notes
- 37 Optimistic
- 38 Buy stuff
- 39 Woodsy walk
- 40 Frizzy 'do
- 41 Cry loudly
- 42 Portent
- 43 Law firm aide, for short
- 44 From the beginning
- 46 Upper limit
- 47 Mutt

DOWN

- 1 Cat call?
- 2 Actress Jessica
- 3 Cold War abbr.
- 4 Muumuu accessory
- 5 Put one's two cents in
- 6 Highland hill-

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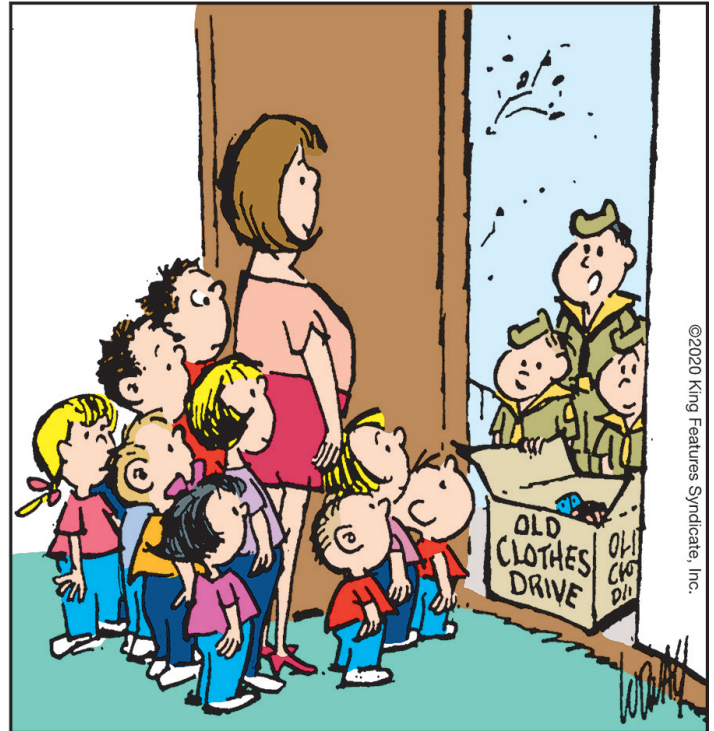
— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

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

LAFF - A - DAY

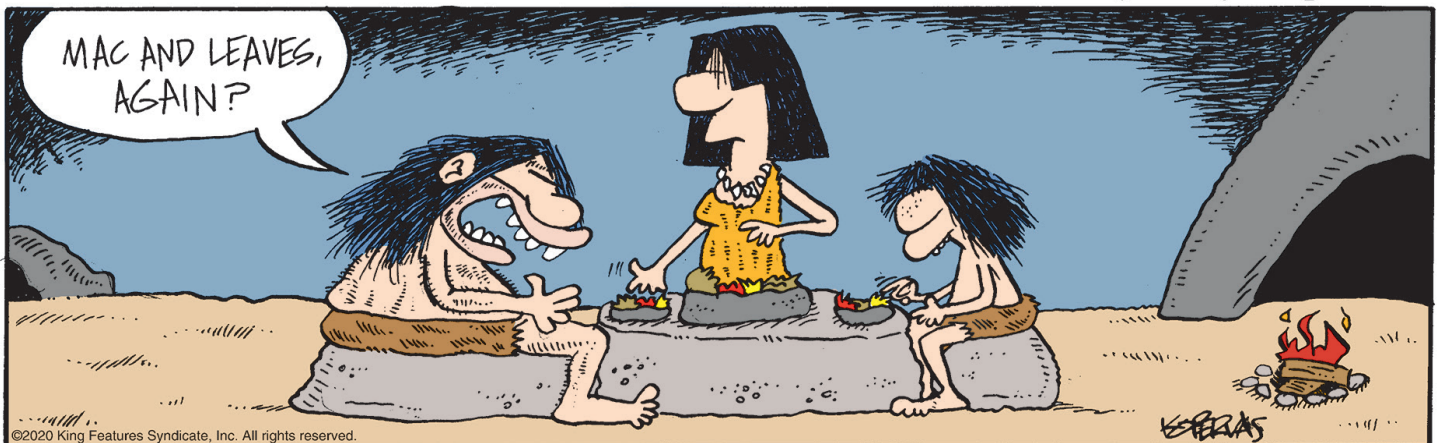


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“Do you have any old — ah — never mind.”

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

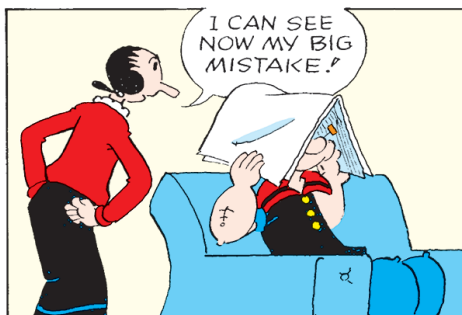
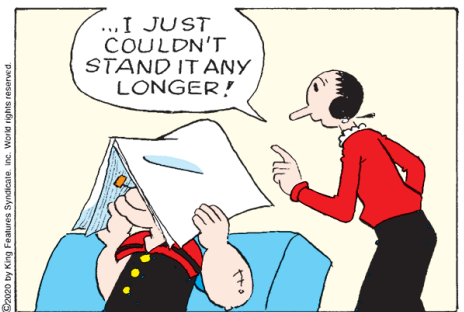
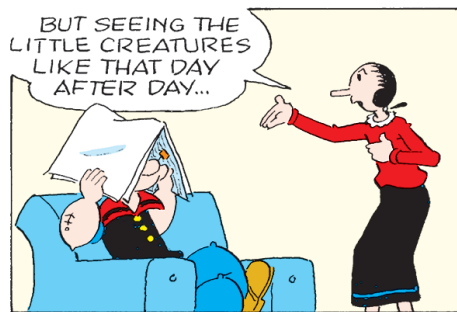
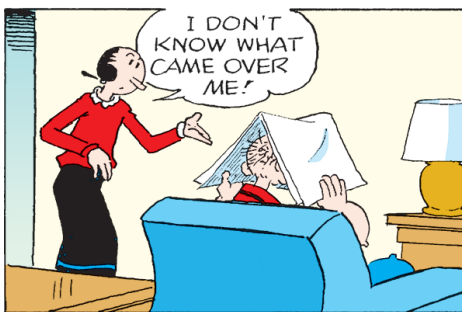
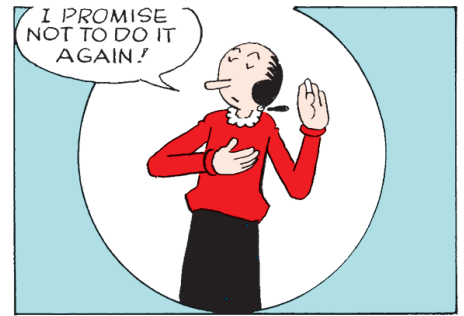
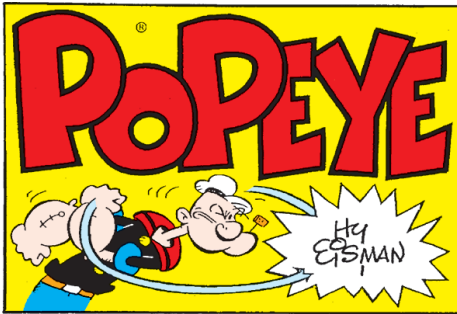


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KOPERVAS

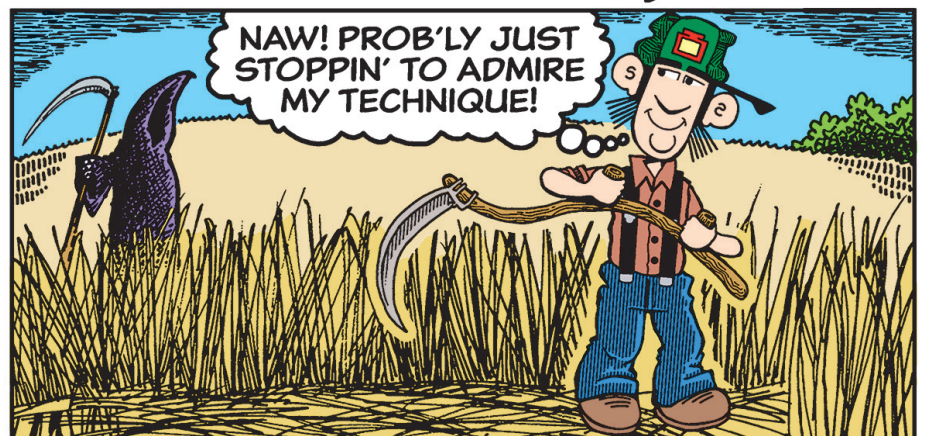
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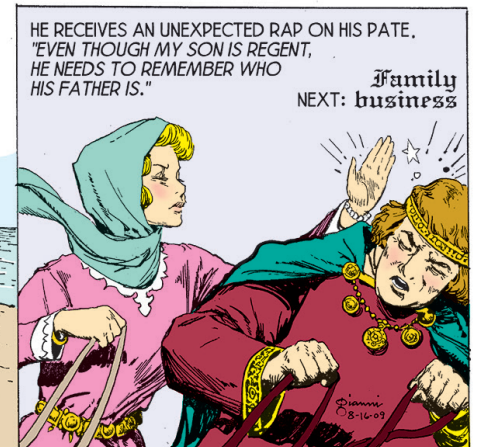
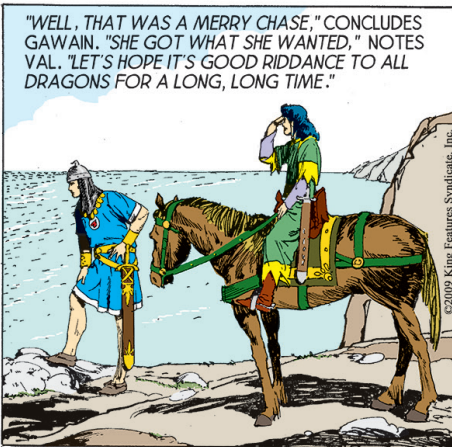
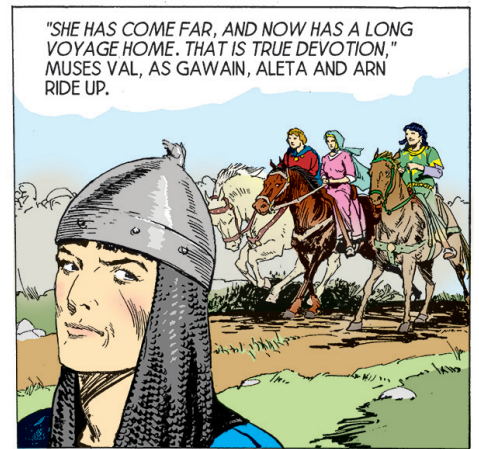
R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



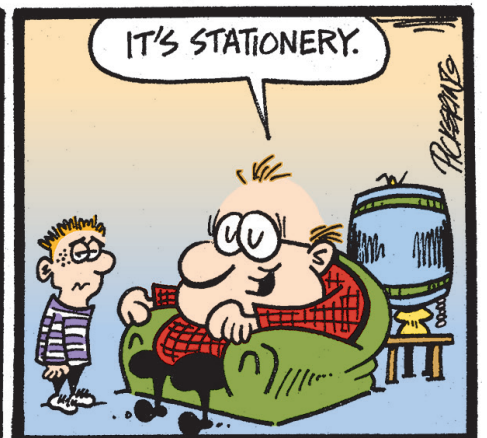
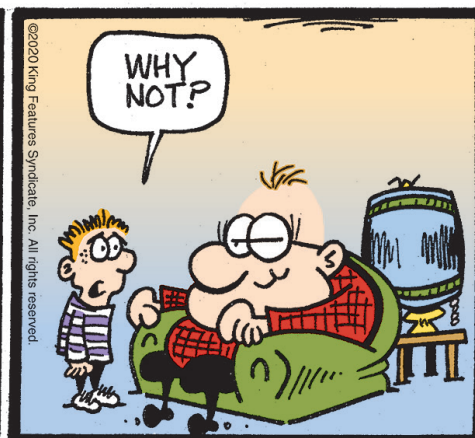
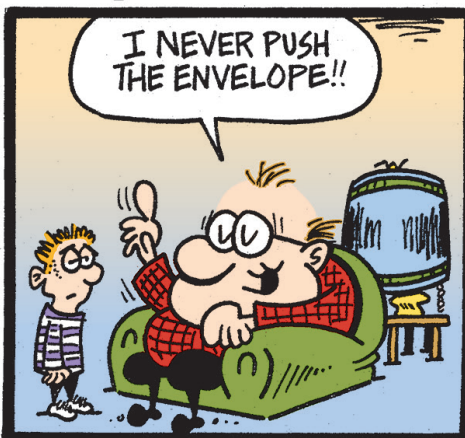
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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

A Comfy Nest for Winter

Since it looks like this horrible coronavirus isn't going away soon, we might as well take a few steps to make our lives more comfortable over the winter. Here are some ideas:

— Investigate a new wireless router to speed up your Wi-Fi connection, especially if you have multiple devices that put a drag on your connection. Be sure it's at least Wi-Fi 5, not Wi-Fi 4. The newest, Wi-Fi 6, is top of the line.

— Buy a warm fleece blanket, one-person size, for watching TV at night. These 50x70 throws are just the right length.

— Consider getting a Kindle, with a free three-month subscription to Kindle Unlimited. You can grab up to 10 free books or magazines at a time. Once you've read one, delete it and get another one. After three months you can decide if you want to spend \$9.99/month to keep the subscription going. Depending on your reading habits, this can be a good deal.

— If you have someone who can deliver and assemble it, an outdoor propane grill can be a bit of summer fun in the middle of a cold winter.

— Keep an eye on sales if you need an additional pot for the extra cooking you're doing. Stores like Target and Bed, Bath & Beyond have curbside delivery, so if you pay online you don't have to go in the store. Get freezer bags to store individual portions you can pull out and heat up without cooking every day.

— Splurge on one good, thick sweater or zip sweatshirt to wear in the house.

— Think about getting an air cleaner for inside the house to clean up dust mites, stale air and pet dander. Be cautious about the price of replacement filters.

— Reorganize your kitchen cabinets, pantry or linen closet shelves.

— And don't forget to stock up on batteries!

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1. Name the race-car driver who won the 1996 Indianapolis 500 and the 2000 Indy Racing League season championship.

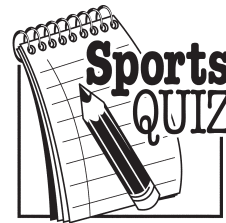
2. What Chicago Cubs manager went on a profanity-laden tirade to reporters after Wrigley Field fans booed the team during a one-run loss to the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1983?

3. For what college team did U.S. softball pitching great Jennie Finch compile a 119-16 record from 1999-2002?

4. What Golden State Warriors player attacked head coach P.J. Carlesimo with a choke hold during a practice in 1997?

5. What is the name of the muscular bundle of wheat that serves as the Wichita State University Shockers mascot?

6. What women's basketball legend recorded the first quintuple double with 25 points, 18 rebounds, 11 assists, 10 steals and 10 blocks in a 1997 game for Texas' Duncanville High School?



by Ryan A. Berenz

7. What sportswriter and author was host of ESPN's "The Sports Reporters" from 1988-2001?

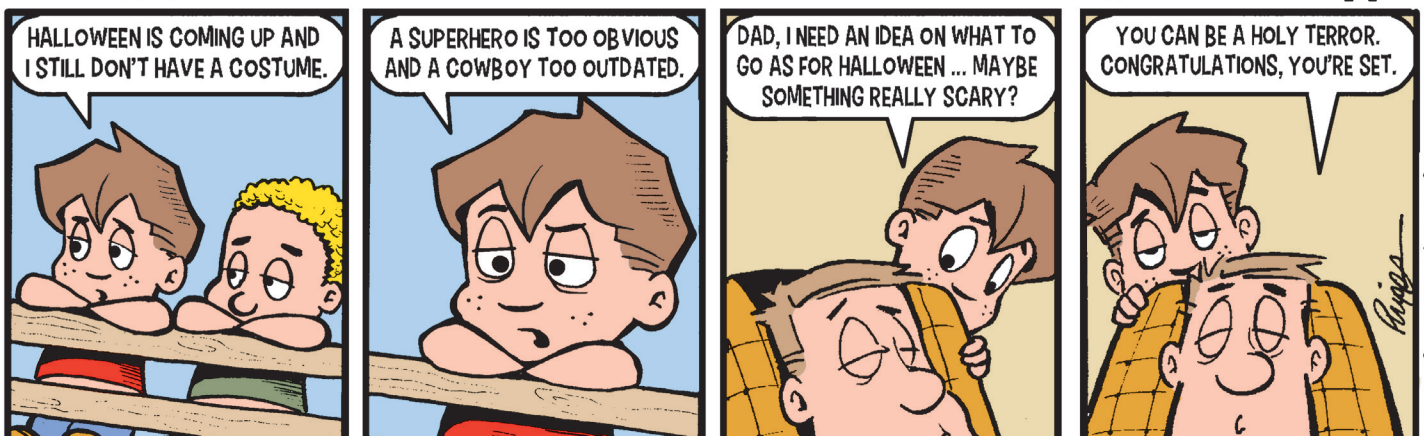
Answers

1. Buddy Lazier.
2. Lee Elia.
3. The University of Arizona Wildcats.
4. Latrell Sprewell.
5. WuShock.
6. Tamika Catchings.
7. Dick Schaap.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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



Happy National School Lunch Week

This week I hit the road and traveled across the state to sit down with our students and enjoy a hot meal during school lunch. It's National School Lunch Week, so I toured schools from Box Elder to Vermillion.

As the top Republican on the Agriculture Subcommittee on Nutrition, Oversight, and Department Operations and as a member of the Education & Labor Committee, our kid's lunches are more important to my work than you might think.

The National School Lunch Program serves nearly 30 million children every school day. Nutrition impacts so many aspects of a student's daily life, from how engaged they are on a subject to how focused they are in the classroom. We all focus better when our stomachs aren't growling.

Without a doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us just how important school meals are to our students and their families.

School lunch became a front-facing issue at the beginning of the pandemic. With millions of children depending on school lunch for their next meal – what was going to happen now that schools were closed?

People stepped up, people volunteered, people donated.

But the federal government had to get involved too, and that's where my job comes in. To ensure students were staying fed during the peak of the pandemic, Congress passed the CARES Act, which included flexibility for schools to continue running their school lunch program even while closed. Schools hosted drive-thru meal lines or used busses to drop meals off to homes that needed them, and packed sack lunches for kids to come pick up.

There's a lot I took away from this week, but two things stuck out: Our kids are happy to be back in school, even with masks and distanced seating, and they love their lunch time.

I was grateful to eat lunch in person this week with students from Francis Case Elementary in Box Elder, Hill City Elementary, Jolley Elementary in Vermillion, and Washington Elementary in Huron. I'm happy to report every meal was delicious and nutritious, but I have to admit the sweet and sour chicken in Hill City was my favorite.

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Impressive Indeed

"I'm really impressed." Words spoken about Judge Amy Coney Barrett. Words spoken by a surprising voice, Senator Dianne Feinstein, the top ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Like many Americans, I watched the confirmation hearings of Judge Barrett this past week. Senator Feinstein put to words what many of us were thinking. Judge Barrett is strong and confident. Her legal prowess was evident as she dissected with ease complicated doctrines like severability and could easily recall from memory the extensive background of obscure cases. She remained calm, cool and collected under fire. And did it all with only a blank pad of paper sitting on the table in front of her. No notes. Really impressive indeed.

It's plain to see Judge Barrett holds a deep respect for the judicial process and the United States Constitution. She recognizes the job of a justice is not to make laws, it's to interpret them. She will be an independent and impartial justice, or as Chief Justice Roberts would put it, an umpire calling balls and strikes. She understands a justice's responsibility is to interpret the Constitution and apply the law as written, not based on their personal views or political ideologies.

Standing on its own, Judge Barrett's legal expertise makes her incredibly distinguished and qualified for a lifetime appointment to the Supreme Court. But when you hear her full story, you gain a new appreciation for the woman who could sit on the highest court in the land.

Judge Barrett grew up in New Orleans, the oldest of seven kids and 29 grandchildren – a good Catholic family. Her mother was a high school French teacher who inspired her to choose the language as a minor in college. Her father was a lawyer who inspired her to join the legal profession. She attended an all-girls Catholic high school where she was elected student body vice president. After high school, she attended Rhodes College where she majored in English literature and graduated magna cum laude.

After earning her undergraduate degree, Judge Barrett made the decision to follow in her father's footsteps and attend law school. When it came to choosing where she would attend, there were many options. She was looking for a law school that wouldn't just educate her as a lawyer, but also develop and inspire her as a whole person. She landed on Notre Dame, a school where she would receive a full-tuition scholarship, serve as executive editor of the law review, graduate the top of her class, and most importantly, meet and fall in love with Jesse Barrett, a fellow Notre Dame Law graduate.

While Jesse was an only child, they knew they wanted to have a big family. Together, the Barretts have seven children – five biological and two adopted from Haiti. Their daughter Vivian was adopted in 2005. When she joined the family, she was so malnourished that doctors said she might never talk or walk normally. She couldn't make any sounds, had rickets and at 14 months old was wearing 0-3 month clothing. Today, Vivian is a strong young woman. She does CrossFit training and can deadlift as much as the male athletes at her gym. And as for the speech problem, Judge Barrett, says, "I assure you that she has no trouble talking." Spoken like a true mother.

In 2010, after an earthquake devastated the country of Haiti, the Barretts received a call saying another baby had come up for adoption. This news came at an interesting time for their family as they had recently learned they were expecting their fifth child. Not knowing quite what to do, Mrs. Barrett threw on her coat, because it was January in Indiana, and went for a walk. She ended up finding a seat on a bench in a nearby cemetery. As she sat, she thought to herself, "If life is really hard, at least it's short." She went home and made the decision to adopt the baby, John Peter.

Every parent wants what's best for their children. During her confirmation hearing, Judge Barrett was

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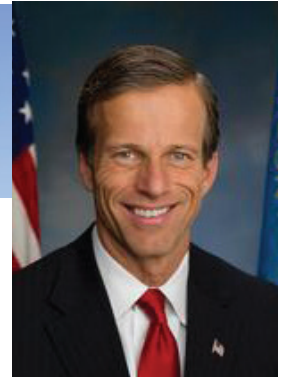
asked the question that's on all of our minds. Why are you doing this? Why put yourself through such an excruciating process, one that combs over everything you've done your entire life, one that opens you and your children up to being mocked and attacked? Her answer speaks for itself: "In many ways, the children are the reason not to do it, but they're also the reason to do it, because if we are to protect our institutions, and protect the freedoms, and protect the rule of law that's the basis for the society and the freedom that we all enjoy, if we want that for our children and our children's children, then we need to participate in that work."

I look forward to meeting with Judge Barrett this coming week and gaining additional insight into her life and judicial philosophy.

Photo: Judge Amy Coney Barrett introduces her family on the second day of her Supreme Court confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Getty Images



John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



A South Dakota Tradition

It's been a long year filled with a heavy dose of uncertainty and unpredictability. As we continue to face this unprecedented challenge head on, public health and safety are our top priorities. As a result, many annual events and other seasonal traditions have been upended in South Dakota and around the country.

If you're anything like me, though, you've kept your eye on the bright spots – on the semblances of normalcy that make things feel right. For me, that means spending more time with family and cherishing the special moments we get to share with one another. It also means keeping an eye on the calendar and counting down the days until the third Saturday in October – an unofficial holiday here in South Dakota.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of hunters flood to our state to experience the tradition of the pheasant hunting opener and season. With them comes millions of dollars that are added to our economy in food and lodging, transportation, and other related expenses. Since the pandemic has hit some parts of our economy harder than others, many businesses throughout our state that depend on this economic infusion each year have been eagerly awaiting this year's season. Speaking on behalf of all business owners, I hope it's a successful one.

Aside from the massive economic effect that pheasant hunting brings to our state each year – and the excitement of bagging a limit of birds – I think the greatest value comes in the time hunters are able to spend with family and friends. I've participated in this tradition since I was a kid. I have so many great memories hunting with my father, who we lost in August, my brothers and their kids, and my daughters and sons-in law. It's been fun to help pass this tradition down to the next generation. I'm already looking forward to the day my grandkids can join me in the field, too. Until they're a little older, I'll settle on sharing the bounties of a successful hunt with them instead.

Anyone who has hunted ringnecks in South Dakota understands why we're known as the pheasant hunting capitol of the world. In addition the beautiful and unmatched landscapes, we also have a plentiful amount of roosters. A large reason for our thriving population can be credited to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for creating an environment where pheasants can safely nest and raise their brood. I've been a longtime champion of the program during my time in Congress.

When we passed the farm bill in 2018, I fought to raise the CRP acreage cap to ensure additional acres could be enrolled in the program. While we're currently behind the CRP enrollment target, I'll continue to fight to increase the acres enrolled in this program so our wildlife has the habitat it needs to flourish – and so we can maintain our dominance in this hunting tradition.

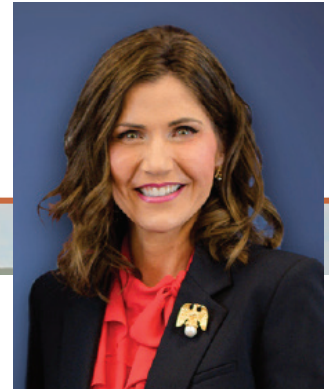
South Dakota's pheasant hunting season is a special time, and I'm thankful that I'll be able to participate in it this year. I wish everyone a safe and plentiful hunt.

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SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR
KRISTI NOEM



More Hunting

Every year when the third weekend in October rolls around, South Dakota comes alive with hunters looking to enjoy the very best pheasant hunting in the world. The pheasant is South Dakota's state bird (as far as I know, we're the only state that shoots our state bird) and blaze orange may as well be our state color.

For my family, pheasant hunting is more than an event, it's a tradition. Dad took us big-game hunting growing up, but it was my Grandma Dorris who inspired me to love bird hunting. She showed me how pheasant hunters work as a team. She taught me about the tremendous work the dogs do – flushing the birds, finding and bringing them back after they've been shot – all with a smile on their face. And Bryon and I did the same for our kids – all great hunters as well.

Visitors from around the country and across the world come to shoot pheasants in our great state, spending more than \$175 million annually and supporting roughly 18,000 South Dakota jobs. This year, as South Dakota is increasingly in the national spotlight due to how we've responded to the pandemic, we can expect many visitors to come shoot our state bird with us.

After more than 100 years of pheasant hunting tradition, we want to ensure that the second century of pheasant hunting in South Dakota is as fantastic as the first. My Second Century Initiative to expand pheasant habitat is a program that encourages farmers to increase habitat opportunities on their land. Farmers often plant marginal acres just to help make ends meet; this program gives them another option to expand habitat without losing the ability to cash-flow their operations. I'm so grateful to our many partners for their help to raise awareness about these vital efforts.

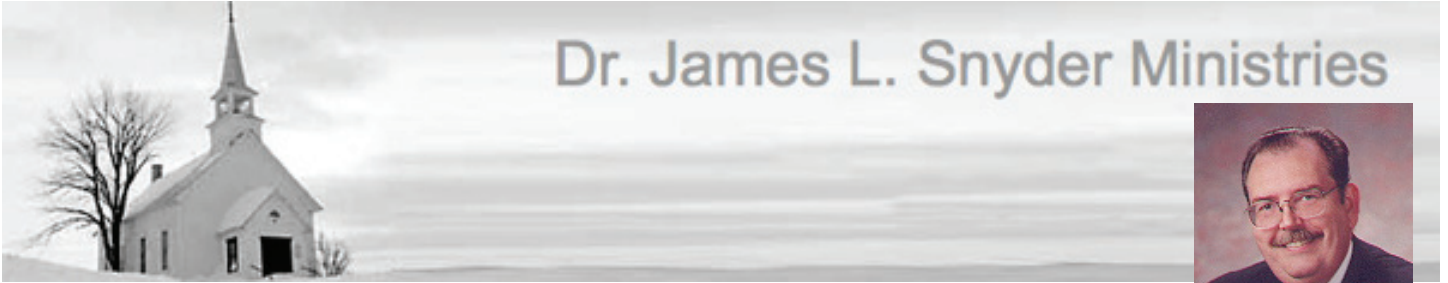
Hunt for Habitat is an important component of my Second Century Initiative. Through this program, the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks (GFP) raffles off several big game hunting tags, with all of the proceeds going towards habitat. Additionally, you can donate to the Second Century Habitat Fund by going to GFP's website or calling 605-773-4503.

Let's keep in mind, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, that pheasant hunting is one of the very best ways that we can enjoy time with loved-ones while practicing social distancing. CDC is clear that time spent outdoors is safer than time spent indoors. And if you're not 6 feet apart while pheasant hunting, you're doing it wrong!

So I'd encourage each and every one of you to get out and enjoy our pastime these next few months. The season has been extended this year, so there's even more time to enjoy it! Let's get our families outside and mentor some new hunters, just like Grandma Dorris did for me. And let's all remember to be safe. Enjoy this pheasant season, and I hope to see you in the fields!

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All in Due Time, So She Says

For several weeks, or has it been years, I've been waiting for an important package to come through the mail. I don't know why they call it snail mail because I have seen snails crawl faster.

With all our technology today, you would think that mail could come in on a particular schedule, and I'm thinking of a fast-paced schedule.

I've been going to the mailbox every day for several weeks, and I find a lot of junk mail, but I don't find the mail that I'm looking for. They promised it would arrive between seven and ten days. Of course, they didn't mention what days they would come, nor did they say those days would be consecutive.

Each day that mail hasn't come has made me more jittery.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage is always encouraging me to be patient. I once responded to her, "I'm not a doctor, and I don't have any patients."

There are times when I should not verbalize what I'm thinking. It would keep me out of trouble. When I mentioned I didn't have any patients, my wife looked at me and said, "Well, you silly boy, get some and get some today because I'm running out of patience."

In my diary that night, I made a little note, "Do not respond to the wife verbally until you have had seven days to think it through."

At my age, within three days, I have totally forgotten what I was going to say.

The interesting thing was that I checked my bank account and saw the day I ordered that package, the money came out of my account immediately. They had my money, but I didn't have their package.

I think it strange that money goes out of my account much faster than anything in this world. Where does it go? Not too long ago, somebody withdrew \$1700 from my account. Evidently, they had applied for a card on my account, got it, and used it.

If only my mail arrived as quickly as my money disappears, I would be a happy camper.

It took several weeks for the bank to get that \$1700 back into my account. As I say, it goes out faster than it comes in.

In the last few days, I've been getting a little jumpy, more than normal. I stand at the window, watching for the mailman, and he never comes on a regular schedule.

Then the mailman shows up, I jump up, run out the door, get to the mailbox, and much to my disappointment, the package is not in the mail. I have mail from everybody and everything but not the mail that I really want. How aggravating is that?

I stomped back into the house, grumbling under my breath, careful not to vocalize what is chopping in my head.

Walking into the house, all I did was say grrrrrrrrrr. And then I let it spill, "When will that package arrive?" I didn't know somebody in the house was listening.

"Are you still worrying about that package?"

She knew I was, so I just looked at her, smiled, nodded my head, and went to my office area.

Looking at me, trying to encourage me, I think, she said, "All in due time." And then she smiled in my direction.

I didn't know what she meant by "due time." Did she mean, "dew time?" Or did she mean, "do time?"



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As it was, I was "doing time," and not too happy with it.

"There's always a reason," she explained, "for everything. There certainly is a reason why this package is late."

I knew what she was saying was right, but I wasn't in the mood to hear a sermon. In listening to one of her sermons, I was afraid she would start taking up a collection. I certainly wasn't in a mood for that. I wanted to give something but certainly not money.

I remember there was a time when you went to a store to buy something, look for it and then take it up to the counter, pay the cashier and then walk out the door with it. I sure miss those good old days.

When I called the customer service, they assured me they sent the package out at the correct time, and according to their records, it was delivered within the proper time.

Hanging up the phone, I sat there, grumbling about my misfortune. Then the doorbell rang.

I got up and opened the door, and a man said, "I got this package several weeks ago, but it's not anything I ordered. Is this something you ordered?"

I looked at the package. It had my name on it, but it did not have my address on it. I cheerfully thanked the guy, shook his hand, and wished him a good day.

I went back to my chair, opened up the package and there was what I had ordered—all in due time.

I thought of a special verse, "To every thing, there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2).

Everything has a time element to it that has been established by God, and when I surrender to God's time, I will plant seeds of happiness in my life.

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#237 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

We backed away from the cliff a little bit today; of course, it is the weekend, so lower numbers are standard on a Saturday. Nonetheless, with where we're heading, a smaller rate of growth is welcome on any terms. We're up to 8,141,600 cases today, 0.7% higher than yesterday. There were 54,500 new cases reported today. And how bad are things that we're celebrating getting a break with "only" 50,000+ new cases in a single day? We had 715 deaths reported today, a 0.3% increase from yesterday. We're now at 219,166 deaths so far in the US.

We know this was a bad week: Yesterday nine states set single-day new-case records; they are Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, and West Virginia. And today, Indiana and Ohio have done so. Much of this growth is being driven by less populous, more rural areas. Eighteen states, including the largely rural states of Alaska, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Iowa, and West Virginia, plus Guam set seven-day records, and in the more populous states like Wisconsin and Illinois, the worst numbers are coming from rural counties. The country's seven-day average has increased by almost 8000 new cases per day in the past week.

Hospitalizations are increasing across the US, and health care workers are warning they're being pushed to capacity. More than 36,000 patients are hospitalized with Covid-19 in the US at present. Forty-four states and the District of Columbia have higher caseloads than one month ago, so we have spread pretty much across the country. Eight hospitals and emergency departments in the Kansas City area had to temporarily stop accepting ambulances Wednesday night. Marc Larsen, an emergency physician in Kansas City, said facilities are "bursting at the seams, continually struggling with having adequate capacity for the surge that we are continually seeing and experiencing." Wisconsin, with seven of the 10 metropolitan areas in the US with the highest rates of recent cases, has opened that field hospital on the state fairgrounds, and 98% of inpatient beds in Montana's most populous county were full earlier in the week. In North Dakota, hospitals with a small number of intensive-care beds are feeling the strain. We've been hearing alarming reports about hospital capacity in the Sioux Empire region of South Dakota where we find the state's largest hospitals, destinations for patients with complex care needs from across the state.

Since this pandemic came to the US, the numbers—new cases, hospitalizations, deaths—have gone up and down; but one set of numbers has remained steady throughout: the disproportionate number of deaths in black and Latino people. In fact, one of the greatest risk factors for severe disease, hospitalization, and death for this virus is race; people with minority backgrounds are placed in the same vulnerable category as the elderly. We see a number of factors underlying this fact including, increased risk for exposure, living in multigenerational or multifamily homes, work at in-person jobs, limited access to health care, and discrimination. There is not only a moral dimension to this problem; there is also a public health dimension. As long as some of us are at increased risk, that risk is going to spill over into the larger community. We cannot afford not to care about this.

Pfizer has published an open letter explaining they would not be prepared to apply for an emergency use authorization (EUA) for their vaccine candidate until late in November at the soonest. The letter says the company projects it will have sufficient data to determine whether the candidate is effective this month, but there will not be sufficient safety follow-up data for several weeks after that. This has to do with the FDA's guidance we've discussed on a two-month safety follow-up on at least half of the participants. Chief executive Albert Bourla wrote, "A key point that I'd like to make clear is that effectiveness would satisfy only one of the three requirements and, alone, would not be enough for us to apply for approval for public use. Safety is, and will remain, our number one priority." They may, however, push out an announcement of data on whether the vaccine candidate works when that becomes available, so we might get a notion whether we have something there in the next couple of weeks. This trial was designed to give earlier and more frequent looks at the data than the other candidates currently in trials, so they are expected to have efficacy data relatively quickly. Remember that the company, the investigators, and the participants are all "blinded," that is, none of them know which participants have received the vaccine candidate and

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which have received a placebo (an inactive injection); only the independent Data Safety Monitoring Board has access to the data and the coding which shows which participants received vaccine. Once they notify the company they have conclusive evidence on efficacy, the company plans to release that information within a few days.

Moderna says it won't have the safety data it needs until a couple of days before Thanksgiving, so I would expect their application will be timed about the same as Pfizer's, presuming both candidates show evidence of effectiveness. The other two late-stage trials underway in the US, one by AstraZeneca and one by Johnson & Johnson, are paused for safety reasons and are not expected to produce readouts until late in the year.

With winter come colds and influenza with their respiratory symptoms; so if you develop respiratory symptoms this winter, how are you going to know what's going on—whether you have a cold, the flu, or Covid-19? Good question. And the answer matters because, if you have Covid-19, even if you don't get very sick, you are a source of infection to others, some of whom might not be as lucky as you are.

In an ideal world, many doctors would advise you to get tested whenever you develop respiratory symptoms; but it's pretty clear this is not that ideal world, given the fact that we still don't have sufficient testing capacity to keep up with new cases even before we get to cold and flu season. When you consider that the average adult gets two or three respiratory infections each year and children can get as many as five, it's a sure bet we aren't going to have enough tests to go around for that. Early in infection, one virus can be pretty tough to differentiate from the others. All three can begin with a cough, sore throat, congestion, and runny nose; both influenza and Covid-19 can also present with body aches, headaches, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and fever. Now if you lose your sense of taste or smell, that's pretty indicative of Covid-19, but absent that, there's a whole lot of overlap which could make it difficult to distinguish one virus from the other.

So what do you do when the sniffles inevitably come to visit this winter? First assess your situation: If you've been in contact with a known case, if you're in an area with a high infection rate, if you've been out in public a lot, or if you live with or have frequent contact with a person at high risk for severe disease, then it makes sense to inquire about testing. It's easier to get tested in some places than others due to differences in the guidelines being followed and the local availability of tests. Those with higher risk factors should find an easier time getting tested, but even that's not a sure thing these days.

Arnold S. Monto, epidemiologist and professor at the University of Michigan's School of Public Health, says, "I think everything needs to be done on a case-by-case basis. There are no absolutes, but if you are not very sick and believe you have not had contact with somebody who might have covid, then I would not necessarily go get a test or anything like that if you have mild respiratory symptoms." He adds, however, "if you are having an illness with cough and respiratory difficulty, you better get tested."

In any case this winter, if you have respiratory symptoms and think you have a cold, stay home as much as possible, wear a mask, and wash your hands a lot. Because you may never get sicker than that, yet could have Covid-19, you should treat yourself as a case and take all precautions against spreading it. And get a flu vaccine; anything we can do to reduce the likelihood you develop that particular respiratory infection reduces the available possibilities when you do get sick.

We haven't talked about the so-called long haulers in a while. These are the people who for weeks or even months after recovery from Covid-19 continue to experience symptoms which can be quite disabling. Some people who've had relatively mild cases become long-haulers, and some who've been critically ill do. They exhibit an array of ailments: fatigue, body aches, shortness of breath, heart-related problems, neurologic difficulties, altered senses of taste and smell, and psychological issues. There is evidence of heart and brain lesions in some people. No one knows for sure how common this is, but recent estimates are that as many as 10% of patients suffer these prolonged symptoms. The CDC has reported that 35% of people with mild disease had not returned to their pre-disease state of health two to three weeks later. This adds up to a lot of people suffering.

No one's really gotten their hands around what's happening in these folks, but no one thinks their prob-

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lems are imaginary. We don't know how long these problems can persist; we simply don't have enough months' or years' experience with this virus. But in some places multidisciplinary teams are trying to address these cases, pulling together pulmonologists, cardiologists, respiratory therapists, physical therapists, social workers, and others as needed to try to sort out what's going wrong for these patients and to figure out how to help them. Often the usual testing—lung function, for example—returns normal results when clearly there is something wrong. There is a great deal of work to be done in solving this mystery, but in the meanwhile, efforts proceed to restore long-haulers to something approaching their pre-Covid-19 lives.

We all know this pandemic has been rough on restaurants. In some places they've been ordered closed for some period of time; in others, they've been limited in capacity. And everywhere, customers who are concerned about transmission of this virus are staying home instead of eating out even in the absence of formal restrictions. As a result, many of those who faced short-term closures during shutdowns ended up gone entirely.

Socks Love Barbecue in Forsyth County, Georgia, got lucky; even though the catering work that was the anchor of their business bottomed out as the pandemic began and gatherings of all kinds were cancelled, they'd recently received some national press, so enough customers were coming by to keep them from going under. Owner Steve Hartsock said they're breaking even, which is quite a accomplishment in these difficult times. A business across town, however, was really hurting: The Retana family's eleven-year-old business, Lake Burritos, had to lay off their entire staff and was facing permanent closure, a long fall from the plans for opening a new location that had been underway before the pandemic.

Hartsock was an appreciative customer at Lake Burritos, and so when he heard about the impending closure on social media, it occurred to him to try to drum up some business for them so they could keep the doors open. He did a short video about taking the responsibility to give local businesses a chance to succeed by patronizing them, mentioned this one was struggling, pledged his entire next day's profits to them, and posted it to social media. The Retanas first heard of the video from friends and couldn't believe what happened next. The following day when they went to open, a peek outside revealed people lined up waiting to order burritos. Hartsock reported about that day, "When I got here, there was a line out the door. And I heard the same thing happened at Lake Burritos."

Since then, business has been strong enough both places to hold things together. Paris Retana said, "It was incredible. . . . We were able to bring our team back. It seems like Lake is alive again. This changed our lives." They've pulled back from the brink; a stint for the two restaurants on Kelly Clarkson's talk show was an additional boost. And they tried a new temporary collaboration; with Clarkson, Paris made a brisket burrito using slow-smoked beef from Socks. Reports are it was darned good.

Asked what he takes from this experience, Paris Retana had this to say: "Everyone is willing to be good to each other. We just have to ask for help, accept the help, and realize there is good everywhere." His sister, Alecia, adds, "Just waiting to happen. Just waiting to happen out there."

Hartsock's final word was, "I wanted to reach out to the community and teach them that, look, it's—almost all of the time—free to help people." So why wouldn't the rest of us look for those opportunities too? Stay healthy. We'll talk again.

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COVID CASES OVER THE WEEKS WORLDWIDE

3 Weeks Ago

2 Weeks Ago

Last Week

This Week

Global Cases

32,870,631

Global Cases

34,791,855

Global Cases

37,246,627

Global Cases

39,721,801

7,079,689 US

7,379,614 US

7,719,254 US

8,107,404 US

5,992,532 India

6,473,544 India

7,053,806 India

7,494,551 India

4,717,991 Brazil

4,880,523 Brazil

5,082,637 Brazil

5,224,362 Brazil

1,146,273 Russia

1,198,663 Russia

1,291,687 Russia

1,390,824 Russia

806,038 Colombia

848,147 Colombia

902,747 Colombia

979,119 Argentina

794,584 Peru

821,564 Peru

883,882 Argentina

952,371 Colombia

726,431 Mexico

790,818 Argentina

861,112 Spain

936,560 Spain

716,481 Spain

789,932 Spain

846,088 Peru

876,342 France

702,484 Argentina

757,953 Mexico

814,328 Mexico

862,417 Peru

669,498 South Africa

679,716 South Africa

732,434 France

847,108 Mexico

Global Deaths

994,534

Global Deaths

1,031,528

Global Deaths

1,073,377

Global Deaths

1,110,467

204,499 deaths
US

209,335 deaths
US

214,379 deaths
US

219,311 deaths
US

141,406 deaths
Brazil

145,388 deaths
Brazil

150,198 deaths
Brazil

153,675 deaths
Brazil

94,503 deaths
India

100,842 deaths
India

108,334 deaths
India

114,031 deaths
India

76,243 deaths
Mexico

78,880 deaths
Mexico

83,642 deaths
Mexico

86,059 deaths
Mexico

42,060 deaths
United Kingdom

42,407 deaths
United Kingdom

42,850 deaths
United Kingdom

43,669 deaths
United Kingdom

35,818 deaths
Italy

35,968 deaths
Italy

36,140 deaths
Italy

36,474 deaths
Italy

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Oct. 7	Oct. 8	Oct. 9	Oct. 10	Oct. 11	Oct. 12	Oct. 13
Minnesota	105,740	106,651	107,922	109,312	110,828	112,268	113,439
Nebraska	48,757	49,396	50,059	50,059	51,144	52,382	52,839
Montana	15,347	16,063	16,677	17,399	18,117	18,702	19,125
Colorado	74,191	74,922	75,785	76,619	77,642	78,461	79,037
Wyoming	5,751	5,866	6,031	6,226	6,338	6,476	6,628
North Dakota	24,364	24,857	25,384	26,040	26,628	27,265	27,737
South Dakota	24,876	25,433	26,441	27,215	27,947	28,564	28,925
United States	7,501,847	7,551,257	7,607,890	7,667,640	7,719,254	7,763,457	7,804,643
US Deaths	210,918	211,844	212,789	213,816	214,379	214,776	215,089
Minnesota	+941	+911	+1271	+1,390	+1,516	+1,440	+1,171
Nebraska	+950	+639	+663	----	+1,085	+1,238	+457
Montana	+500	+716	+614	+722	+818	+585	+423
Colorado	+654	+731	+863	+834	+1,023	+819	+576
Wyoming	+91	+115	+165	+195	+112	+138	+152
North Dakota	+502	+493	+527	+656	+588	+637	+472
South Dakota	+278	+557	+528	+774	+732	+617	+359
United States	+48,018	+49,410	+56,633	+59,750	51,614	+44,203	41,186
US Deaths	+791	+926	+945	+1,027	+563	+397	+313
	Oct. 14	Oct. 15	Oct. 16	Oct. 17	Oct. 18		
Minnesota	114,574	115,763	117,106	119,145	121,090		
Nebraska	53,543	54,467	55,428	56,714	57,334		
Montana	19,611	20,210	20,933	21,595	22,233		
Colorado	80,085	80,777	81,918	83,230	84,369		
Wyoming	6,740	6,914	7,089	7,337	7,479		
North Dakota	28,245	28,947	29,653	30,414	31,261		
South Dakota	29,339	30,215	31,012	31,805			
United States	7,859,365	7,917,223	7,980,899	8,052,978	8,107,404		
US Deaths	215,914	216,904	217,717	218,618	219,311		
Minnesota	+1,135	+1,189	+1,343	+2,039	+1,945		
Nebraska	+704	+924	+961	1,286	+620		
Montana	+486	+599	+723	+662	+638		
Colorado	+1,048	+692	+1,141	1,312	+1,139		
Wyoming	+112	+174	+175	+248	+142		
North Dakota	+508	+702	+706	+761	+847		
South Dakota	+414	+865	+797	+793			
United States	+54,722	+57,858	+63,676	+72,079	+54,426		
US Deaths	+825	+990	+813	+901	+693		

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October 17th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Day County and Kingsbury County each recorded their first deaths from COVID-19. Douglas had one death, Minnehaha had two and Lincoln had three. Four were female and four were male. There were five in the 80+ age group, two in the 70s and one in the 50s. The cases in Bon Homme County doubled in 24 hours.

South Dakota recorded 806 positive cases and 342 recovered. The positivity rate in South Dakota was 13.7 percent for the Oct. 17th figures.

Just saw on CNN that they have South Dakota at a 37 percent positivity rate. According to figures from the SD Dept. of Health, the positivity rate for the past seven days in South Dakota is 14.7 percent. That is based on 4,664 new cases and 31,681 tests administered.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +47 (1,732) Positivity Rate: 15.3%

Total Tests: +308 (15,700)

Recovered: +24 (1,378)

Active Cases: +24 (350)

Ever Hospitalized: +0 (88)

Deaths: +0 (4)

Percent Recovered: 79.6

South Dakota:

Positive: +806 (32,611 total) Positivity Rate: 13.7%

Total Tests: 5,883 (359,987 total)

Hospitalized: +33 (2,077 total). 296 currently hospitalized -4)

Deaths: +8 (315 total)

Recovered: +342 (24,528 total)

Active Cases: +456 (7,768)

Percent Recovered: 75.2%

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 12% Covid, 53% Non-Covid, 34% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 21% Covid, 41% Non-Covid, 39% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 6% Covid, 18% Non-Covid, 76% 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: +8 positive, +2 recovered (62 active cases)

Beadle (12): +14 positive, +15 recovered (188 active cases)

Bennett (4): +2 positive, +2 recovered (36 active cases)

Bon Homme (1): +97 positive, +8 recovered (183 active cases)

Brookings (2): +46 positive, +17 recovered (290 active cases)

Brown (4): +47 positive, +23 recovered (350 active cases)

Brule (2): +4 positive, +4 recovered (53 active cases)

Buffalo (3): +4 positive, +4 recovered (21 active cases)

Butte (3): +4 positive, +4 recovered (81 active cases)

Campbell: +3 positive, +0 recovered (29 active cases)

Charles Mix: +14 positive, +9 recovered (92 active cases)

Clark: +1 positive, +1 recovered (23 active cases)

Clay (8): +10 positive, +3 recovered (106 active cases)

Codington (10): +12 positive, +2 recovered (238 active cases)

Corson (1): +4 positive, +3 recovered (27 active cases)

Custer (3): +6 positive, +5 recovered (62 active case)

Davison (4): +35 positive, +9 recovered (267 active cases)

Day (1): +5 positive, +1 recovered (30 active cases)

Deuel: +2 positive, +1 recovered (38 active cases)

Dewey: +2 positive, +2 recovered (114 active cases)

Douglas (4): +1 positive, +1 recovered (51 active cases)

Edmunds (1): +6 positive, +0 recovered (18 active cases)

Fall River (6): +5 positive, +6 recovered (48 active cases)

Faulk (1): +3 positive, +2 recovered (50 active cases)

Grant (2): +7 positive, +3 recovered (74 active cases)

Gregory (8): +2 positive, +0 recovered (30 active cases)

Haakon (1): +3 positive, +0 recovered (27 active case)

Hamlin: +6 positive, +3 recovered (40 active cases)

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Hand (1): +3 positive, +2 recovered (20 active cases)
 Hanson (1): +1 positive, +1 recovered (20 active cases)
 Harding: +1 positive, +1 recovered (14 active cases)
 Hughes (5): +10 positive, +15 recovered (127 active cases)
 Hutchinson (2): +4 positive, +2 recovered (52 active cases)
 Hyde: +0 positive, +0 recovered (9 active cases)
 Jackson (1): +0 positive, +2 recovered (28 active cases)
 Jerauld (6): +0 positive, +0 recovered (19 active cases)
 Jones: +2 positive, +0 recovered (8 active cases)
 Kingsbury (1): +9 positive, +1 recovered (51 active cases)
 Lake (8): +5 positive, +2 recovered (67 active cases)
 Lawrence (5): +11 positive, +7 recovered (152 active cases)
 Lincoln (14): +48 positive, +34 recovered (572 active cases)
 Lyman (4): +1 positive, +2 recovered (18 active cases)
 Marshall: +1 positive, +1 recovered (12 active cases)
 McCook (1): +6 positive, +4 recovered (56 active

cases)
 McPherson: +1 positive, +2 recovery (14 active case)
 Meade (8): +7 positive, +5 recovered (158 active cases)
 Mellette: +1 positive, +0 recovered (11 active cases)
 Miner: +9 positive, +3 recovered (53 active cases)
 Minnehaha (94): +180 positive, +52 recovered (1714 active cases)
 Moody (1): +6 positive, +4 recovered (52 active cases)
 Oglala Lakota (5): +26 positive, +4 recovered (222 active cases)
 Pennington (43): +36 positive, +35 recovered (789 active cases)
 Perkins: +1 positive, +0 recovered (17 active cases)
 Potter: +1 positive, +1 recovered (23 active cases)
 Roberts (2): +4 positive, +2 recovered (41 active cases)
 Sanborn: +2 positive, +2 recovered (22 active cases)
 Spink (1): +7 positive, +1 recovered (58 active cases)
 Stanley: +3 positive, +2 recovery (20 active cases)
 Sully: +4 positive, +1 recovered (12 active cases)
 Todd (5): +11 positive, +10 recovered (104 active cases)
 Tripp (1): +4 positive, +1 recovered (45 active cases)
 Turner (8): +20 positive, +6 recovered (145 active cases)
 Union (10): +13 positive, +3 recovered (166 active cases)
 Walworth (1): +3 positive, +1 recovered (89 active cases)
 Yankton (5): +13 positive, +3 recovered (147 active cases)
 Ziebach (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (16 active case)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	1014	0
10-19 years	3635	0
20-29 years	6961	2
30-39 years	5459	7
40-49 years	4467	11
50-59 years	4545	24
60-69 years	3461	46
70-79 years	1764	59
80+ years	1305	166

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	17115	143
Male	15496	172

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report
 COVID-19 Daily Report, October 17:

- 8.7% rolling 14-day positivity
- 10.5% daily positivity
- 760 new positives
- 7,241 susceptible test encounters
- 148 currently hospitalized (+0)
- 5,370 active cases (+123)

Total Deaths: +29 (399)

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity
Aurora	156	94	683	0	Substantial	18.32%
Beadle	1047	847	3723	12	Substantial	12.32%
Bennett	123	83	894	4	Substantial	15.69%
Bon Homme	297	113	1379	1	Substantial	23.91%
Brookings	1155	863	5728	2	Substantial	18.72%
Brown	1732	1378	8201	4	Substantial	20.10%
Brule	199	144	1344	2	Substantial	25.66%
Buffalo	196	172	813	3	Substantial	39.73%
Butte	214	131	1968	3	Substantial	15.38%
Campbell	65	36	162	0	Substantial	26.92%
Charles Mix	307	215	2835	0	Substantial	8.99%
Clark	66	43	639	0	Moderate	3.55%
Clay	693	579	3038	8	Substantial	14.93%
Codington	1218	970	6030	10	Substantial	15.73%
Corson	132	104	762	1	Moderate	35.90%
Custer	258	193	1578	3	Substantial	20.49%
Davison	689	418	4184	4	Substantial	18.04%
Day	124	93	1154	1	Substantial	11.00%
Deuel	144	106	738	0	Substantial	15.63%
Dewey	259	145	3310	0	Substantial	11.29%
Douglas	146	91	669	4	Substantial	10.26%
Edmunds	123	104	679	1	Moderate	2.34%
Fall River	158	104	1685	6	Substantial	15.84%
Faulk	148	97	512	1	Substantial	22.22%
Grant	251	175	1406	2	Substantial	14.66%
Gregory	173	135	748	8	Substantial	15.15%
Haakon	62	34	407	1	Substantial	5.66%
Hamlin	153	113	1154	0	Substantial	6.44%
Hand	87	66	536	1	Substantial	16.85%
Hanson	64	43	409	1	Moderate	8.47%
Harding	19	5	104	0	Minimal	33.33%
Hughes	712	580	3552	5	Substantial	13.71%
Hutchinson	180	126	1472	2	Substantial	5.56%

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Hyde	32	23	287	0	Moderate	15.38%
Jackson	72	43	711	1	Substantial	21.88%
Jerauld	153	128	369	6	Substantial	11.11%
Jones	26	18	117	0	Minimal	5.56%
Kingsbury	132	80	970	1	Substantial	12.66%
Lake	289	214	1707	8	Substantial	16.09%
Lawrence	641	484	5088	5	Substantial	14.49%
Lincoln	2141	1555	12301	14	Substantial	16.76%
Lyman	208	186	1375	4	Substantial	11.73%
Marshall	55	43	732	0	Moderate	5.36%
McCook	177	120	1045	1	Substantial	6.86%
McPherson	54	40	370	0	Moderate	4.05%
Meade	780	614	4634	8	Substantial	13.29%
Mellette	48	39	548	0	Moderate	11.11%
Miner	103	50	393	0	Substantial	18.26%
Minnehaha	8892	7084	48542	94	Substantial	13.69%
Moody	165	112	1034	1	Substantial	23.40%
Oglala Lakota	544	317	5249	5	Substantial	10.97%
Pennington	3504	2672	22741	43	Substantial	13.63%
Perkins	60	43	430	0	Moderate	15.22%
Potter	83	60	579	0	Substantial	6.83%
Roberts	270	227	3141	2	Substantial	13.17%
Sanborn	68	46	404	0	Substantial	10.53%
Spink	213	154	1612	1	Substantial	11.27%
Stanley	68	48	496	0	Moderate	13.51%
Sully	31	19	154	0	Moderate	26.92%
Todd	303	194	3275	5	Substantial	19.15%
Tripp	227	181	1083	1	Substantial	11.88%
Turner	361	208	1714	8	Substantial	27.56%
Union	643	467	3787	10	Substantial	18.14%
Walworth	237	147	1230	1	Substantial	15.09%
Yankton	603	451	5601	5	Substantial	7.02%
Ziebach	78	61	560	1	Moderate	5.56%
Unassigned	0	0	1818	0		

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South Dakota

New Total Cases Today

806

New Confirmed Cases

770

New Probable Cases

36

Currently Hospitalized

295

Active Cases

7,768

Recovered Cases

24,528

Total Cases

32,611

Total Confirmed Cases

31,711

Total Probable Cases

900

Ever Hospitalized

2,077

Total Persons Tested

229,204

Total Tests

359,987

Deaths

315

% Progress (September
Goal: 44,233 Tests)

216%

% Progress (October Goal:
44,233 Tests)

158%

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Brown County

New Total Cases Today 47	New Confirmed Cases 46	New Probable Cases 1
Currently Hospitalized 17	Active Cases 350	Recovered Cases 1,378
Total Cases 1,732	Total Confirmed Cases 1,725	Total Probable Cases 7
Ever Hospitalized 88	Total Persons Tested 9,933	Total Tests 15,700
Deaths 4	% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests) 216%	% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests) 158%

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Day County

New Total Cases Today 5	New Confirmed Cases 4	New Probable Cases 1
Currently Hospitalized 1	Active Cases 30	Recovered Cases 93
Total Cases 124	Total Confirmed Cases 123	Total Probable Cases 1
Ever Hospitalized 15	Total Persons Tested 1,278	Total Tests 2,246
Deaths 1	% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests) 216%	% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests) 158%



Realtors seeing rush of relocations to South Dakota amid pandemic

Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

Realtors in South Dakota have seen a steady influx of people seeking more affordable housing and more personal freedoms by moving to South Dakota amid the pandemic, even as the state has seen a sharp rise in the number of active COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths.

Many new home buyers have been lured to the state, real estate agents say, by traditional benefits of South Dakota living such as the lack of a state income tax, relatively low property taxes and home prices, safe neighborhoods, a small-town vibe and access to wide open spaces. A new, pandemic-driven trend of employers allowing or requiring employees to work remotely from their homes has also boosted the ability of homeowners to relocate to South Dakota without changing jobs.

But agents say the rise in relocations has also been fueled by the refusal of state and local government officials in South Dakota to impose mask mandates and business closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. A state government effort to recruit people and businesses to relocate to South Dakota from Minnesota has also contributed to the strength of the state housing market, realtors say.



Larry Luetke

"There's an agent that wrote up three offers where, basically, the client has never seen the property because they know the market is so hot ... there's just a lot of people looking at our state right now."

-- Larry Luetke, president of the Realtor Association of the Sioux Empire

The two biggest housing markets in South Dakota — in Sioux Falls and Rapid City — have seen a rise in interest by potential home buyers from all across the U.S, local agents say. The average prices paid for homes have risen in both markets; houses are spending fewer days on the market; and there are as many as 30% fewer homes for sale due to increased demand.

Some eager out-of-state buyers are making offers on homes sight-unseen.

"I heard the other day that there's an agent that wrote up three offers where, basically, the client has never seen the property because they know the market is so hot," said Larry Luetke, president of the Realtor Association of the Sioux Empire, based in Sioux Falls. "There's just a lot of people looking at our state right now."

The association tracks home sales in the Sioux Falls region and said home sales are strong.

The average time on the market for homes has fallen to 75 days recently from a more typical 90 days before a sale, Luetke said. Average sales prices are also up, having risen more than 7% since September 2019, from \$210,000 to \$225,000. Meanwhile, the number of homes on the market has fallen by more than 36% in the Sioux Falls area, from 1,980 in September of 2019 to 1,259 in 2020.

Home sales are also up in Rapid City and the Black Hills, said Steve Anderson, president of the Black Hills Association of Realtors. Realtors in the region have sold about 100 more homes during the first nine

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Sarah Gross

months of 2020 than they had during the same period in 2019, he said. The average sale price in the region is up more than \$18,000, from about \$252,000 in 2019 to more than \$270,000 in 2020.

The Black Hills region has long attracted people outside of South Dakota as a retirement or lifestyle destination, so there has always been movement to the area. The pandemic, though, appears to have pushed more people to take early retirement or look for a less-crowded place to live.

"We are absolutely seeing a little bit more action coming from the West Coast and even from down further south," Anderson said. "I think this pandemic has maybe made people just kind of sit back and realize there is a simpler life."

The South Dakota Association of Realtors normally collects monthly housing market statistics for the whole state but is between third-party data collectors and does not have reliable current statistics.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, a Republican, has said she is not surprised more people are interested in moving to South Dakota. In an Oct. 12 interview with Moorhead, Minnesota radio station WZFG, Noem said her decision not to mandate mask-wearing or shuttering of businesses during the pandemic has attracted both new companies and new

residents to the state.

The Noem administration has also launched a multi-million dollar ad campaign to lure businesses from Minnesota into South Dakota based partially on Noem's handling of the pandemic. The campaign also notes South Dakota does not have a state income tax, has low property taxes and has a business-friendly regulatory climate.

"And there's a governor in South Dakota that isn't going to shut your business down or take your rights away," Noem said.

The surge in home buying comes as South Dakota's COVID-19 infections are peaking. As of Oct. 14, there were more than 6,000 active cases of COVID-19 in South Dakota, 303 people were hospitalized due to the disease and 288 people had died.

While critics point to Noem's laissez-faire approach to the pandemic as one of the driving forces behind South Dakota's rising numbers of COVID-19 infections and deaths, her policies have also played a big role in the strength of the real estate market, Luetke said.

Many of his new clients say South Dakota's refusal to mandate masks or shut down businesses were among the top reasons they chose to move to the state, Luetke said.

"They're, basically, moving here right now because of our governor," Luetke said.

Sarah Gross, of Keller Williams Realty in Sioux Falls, said she is working with four clients who are leaving larger, urban areas for South Dakota. One of Gross' new clients is in her 20s and left a job and a downtown apartment in Portland, Oregon, to relocate to Sioux Falls. Another couple is trying to sell their home outside Minneapolis and is looking to build a new home near Sioux Falls, Gross said.

"They are pulling whatever cash together however they can get it together. They're cashing out retirements, and they are just buying something in cash. It may not be the size and style of house that they would normally want, but they're just desperate," Gross said. "They just want to get here. They want to get away and they want to restart their lives."

Work-from-home trend benefiting S.D.

Another factor driving the increase in South Dakota home sales is the number of companies allowing or requiring employees to work from home. Several of Luetke's new out-of-state clients are former South Dakotans who moved away for work but have come back during the pandemic, some seeing a financial benefit along the way.

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"They're actually moving back, and they're living with their parents but working from home," Luetke said. "They're still making the same money they were making in California, but they're living in Sioux Falls."

Nationally, the pandemic has spurred interest in moving out of big cities, said Lawrence Yun, chief economist for the National Association of Realtors. The association's regular surveys of realtors have shown a burst of home buying in outer suburbs, small towns, and historic vacation destinations. Buyers, Yun said, are looking for larger homes with more space that are more affordable than similar homes closer to cities.

"States like South Dakota, I think, will be the beneficiary of this because of the abundance of land and plentiful affordable homes," Yun said.

Companies large and small across the U.S. sent office workers home to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Technology companies such as Twitter and Facebook found that many workers could be just as productive when working from home. In Twitter's case, the company has announced to employees that they no longer have to live in the San Francisco Bay area, Yun said.

Businesses such as Target and Ford Motors have extended the work-from-home requirements for their white-collar employees into the summer of 2021. In the future, some workers may only need to be in their office two days a week; others may not need to spend any time in the office at all, Yun said.

"This trend will keep going all the way through 2021. And with broadband access that is available in most parts of the U.S., and hopefully, they will make it even more accessible in rural areas, so more people can work from home," he said.



This 2,800 square-foot, five-bedroom, two-bathroom home in Pierre was listed in October 2020 for sale at \$315,000. The South Dakota housing market has remained strong during the pandemic. Photo: Nick

Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

Virginia family seeks a new life

Nathaniel Putney's move from Virginia to South Dakota with his new wife, Jeanette, was heavily influenced by the Rushmore State's approach to the pandemic, gun rights and personal freedoms. After seeing crime rise in his Virginia Beach neighborhood for years and watching new gun regulations get passed, the last straw for Putney was his home state's response to COVID-19.

"I didn't really want to leave. I kind of figured maybe it would get better, but it never did," Putney said. "I might have physically left

SIoux FALLS HOUSING MARKET SEEING A BUMP

Here are some facts about the current housing market in Sioux Falls:

- For the 12-month period spanning September 2019 to September 2020, the number of pending home sales rose 19.8%
- The average sale price rose 7.1% from \$210,000 in 2019 to \$225,000 in 2020
- Housing inventory fell 36.4%, from 1,980 in 2019 to 1,256 in 2020
- The \$450,000 to \$500,000 price range saw the highest jump in sales with a 69.6% increase
- 98.9% of homes sold in September were sold at their original list price

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Virginia, but Virginia left me long before.”

Before March 2020, Putney made good money as a technician installing new computer and software systems in airport control towers. He thought his job would be considered essential, but when Virginia’s economy shut down due to COVID-19, Putney found himself out of work, a situation he blames on Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam.

“With the snap of his fingers, the man basically took away my livelihood,” Putney said.

After losing his job, Putney started searching the internet for states with strong support for gun ownership, respect for personal freedom and which had not put many restrictions on businesses or individuals during the pandemic. Putney looked at states such as Nebraska, Montana and Utah before landing on South Dakota.

Moving to South Dakota was not easy. Neither Putney nor his wife was employed when they decided to move. They were making do on unemployment benefits and savings, which Putney learned do not count as income when applying for a lease on an apartment. Putney said he could not convince landlords to accept a few



Jeanette and Nathaniel Putney pose outside their new Madison, South Dakota home in late September. The couple said they moved from Virginia Beach, Virginia to South Dakota in search of lower taxes and more personal freedoms. Photo: Courtesy Nathaniel Putney



In late September, Nathaniel and Jeanette Putney purchased this home in Madison, South Dakota for roughly \$145,000 in cash. The couple’s dog, Poet, sits on the front porch. Photo: Courtesy Nathaniel Putney

Putney

months of rent in advance to let him move in. His original plan to rent for a few months while looking for a job and settling in South Dakota was not going to work.

Eventually, Putney met Gross and agent Mark Sorenson and determined that he could buy a house rather than rent. But without a job and a regular paycheck, securing a mortgage was out of the question. Instead, Putney and his wife took every bit of cash they could scrape together from savings and retirement accounts, and in early September bought a house in Madison, S.D., for roughly \$145,000 in cash.

“We had to give up a lot, but in doing so, frankly, God provided,” Putney said. “It was almost like God prepared this house for us to come out here. That’s what it felt like.”

Putney and his wife moved into their new home on Sept. 25. The move came just in time for Putney to start a new job as a technician at Mid States Audio & Visual, a job Gross helped him find. The pay is a little lower than what he was making in Virginia, but between not making mortgage or rent payments, a lower cost of living and not paying a state income tax, Putney said he may make a higher net income.

“South Dakota is just the land of milk and honey, and I love it,” Putney said.

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Groton Area MS/HS October Students of the Month

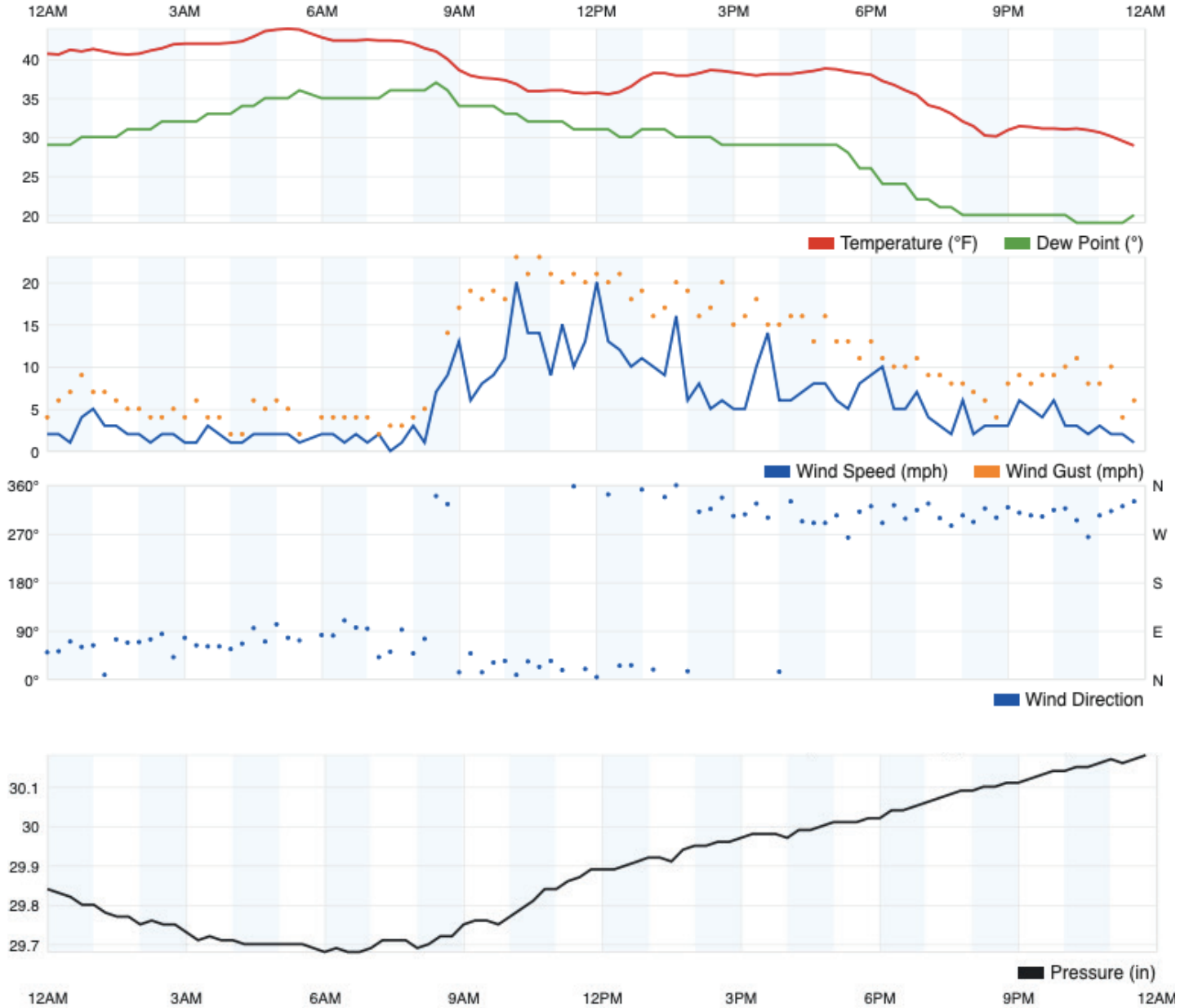
Starting in back left: Brody Lord (6th), Carly Gilbert (7th), Elizabeth Flihs (8th), Kyleigh Englund (9th)
Front left: Alexis Hanten (12th), Andrew Marzahn (10th), Madeline Flihs (11th)

(Courtesy Photo)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Monday

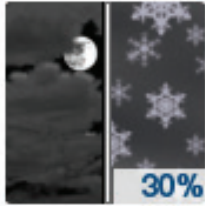
Monday
Night

Tuesday



Becoming
Sunny

High: 40 °F



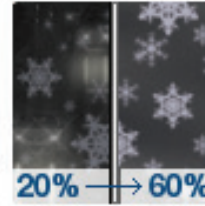
Partly Cloudy
then Chance
Snow

Low: 22 °F



Chance Snow
then Chance
Rain/Snow

High: 38 °F



Slight Chance
Rain/Snow
then Snow
Likely

Low: 29 °F



Rain/Snow
Likely then
Rain Likely

High: 43 °F

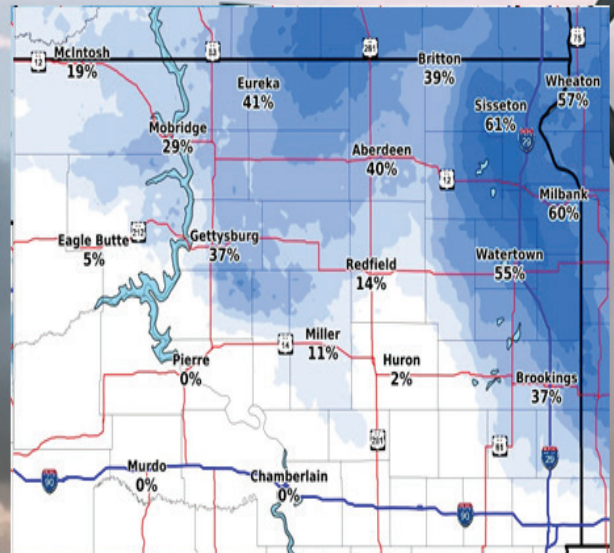
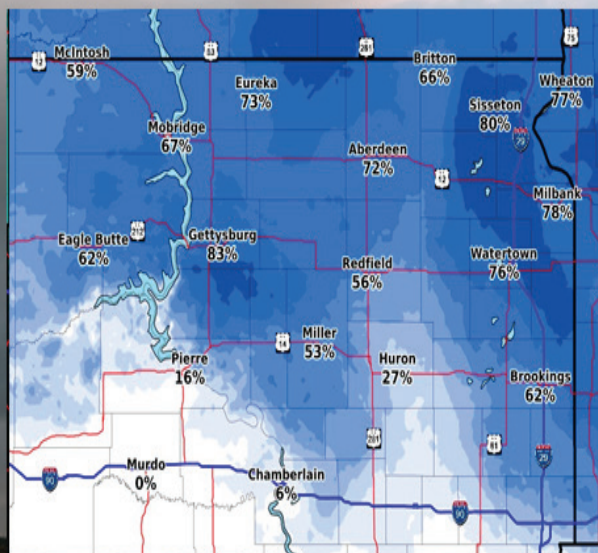
Snow Possible Tonight Through Tuesday

Today: Mostly dry and cold, lighter winds out of the northwest. Snow possible around midnight

Monday: Morning snow possible then dry until another round of snow around midnight.

Percent chance of 1" or more snow

Percent chance of 2" or more snow



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

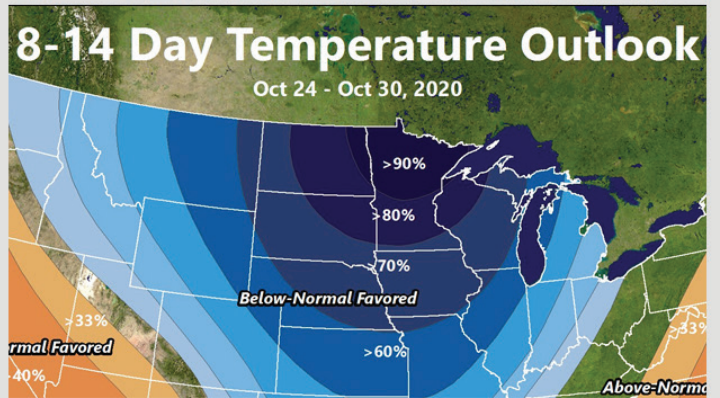
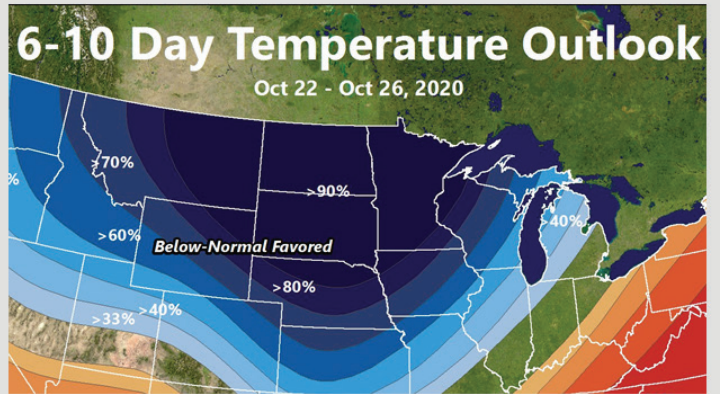
Updated: 10/18/2020 4:29 AM Central

While today will be cold and dry with highs only reaching around 40, we see multiple chances for snow in the region starting late tonight into Monday, and then again Tuesday morning. The images below show the probability of 1" of snow versus 2" this evening through Tuesday afternoon.

Cold Finish to October

Below average temperatures are likely to continue not only through the week ahead, but through the rest of the month.

Above average precipitation, in the form of snow at times, is favored during much of this time as well.



The latest Climate Prediction Center outlooks favor below average temperatures through the remainder of October.

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Today in Weather History

October 18, 2012: An area of low pressure rapidly intensified once it moved east of the northern plains. This strengthening resulted in very strong northwest winds across the region. Some of the higher reported wind gusts include 77 mph at the Fort Pierre and Grand River RAWS sites, 74 mph at the Pierre airport, and 70 mph at Murdo, Presho, and Hayes public observation sites.

1916: A tropical depression organized to a tropical storm on October 11 in the western Caribbean. It moved westward, reaching hurricane strength on the 13th before hitting the Yucatán Peninsula on the 15th as a 110 mph hurricane. It weakened over land, and it emerged over the southern Gulf of Mexico as a tropical storm. It quickly re-strengthened to a Category 3 hurricane, hitting Pensacola on October 18. The maximum wind velocity at Mobile was 115 mph from the east at 8:25 am. Pensacola had winds of 120 mph at 10:13 am when the wind instrument tower was blown down.

2007: A destructive fall tornado hit Nappanee, Indiana causing extensive damage along its 20-mile path across northeast Marshall, Northwest Kosciusko and southwest Elkhart Counties. High-end EF3 intensity winds near 165 mph were estimated based on the most severe damage over southeast Nappanee. Over 100 structures sustained significant damage or were destroyed in town alone. Despite the widespread damage and time of day, only minor injuries were reported. 1906 - A hurricane struck South Florida drowning 124 persons stranded in the Florida Keys. (David Ludlum)

1910 - Northeasterly winds as high as 70 mph (from a hurricane moving northward up the Florida peninsula) carried water out of Tampa Bay and the Hillsboro River. The water level lowered to nine feet below mean low water. Forty ships were grounded. (The Weather Channel)

1930 - A big early season lake effect snowburst on the lee shores of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario produced 47 inches at Gouverneur NY and 48 inches just south of Buffalo. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms in northeastern Texas produced golf ball size hail at Atlanta, along with wind gusts to 86 mph, and four inches of rain. Damage from the storm was estimated at more than a million dollars. Sunny and mild weather continued across much of the rest of the nation. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Eight cities in the southwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Red Bluff CA with a reading of 96 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Unseasonably cold air began to invade the central and eastern U.S. Light snow fell across northern Maine, and snow was also reported in the Great Lakes Region, including the Chicago area. Bismarck ND was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 9 degrees above zero. Five cities in Florida reported record high readings for the date, as temperatures warmed above 80 degrees. Miami FL reported a record high of 90 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

2005 - With the formation of Hurricane Wilma, the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season tied the record for the most named storms for any season (21 storms in 1933), and also tied the record for the most hurricanes in a single season (12 in 1969). Wilma peaked at category-5 intensity on the 19th, with a minimum central pressure falling to 882 millibars (26.05 inches of mercury), the lowest pressure ever recorded in the Atlantic Basin. Wilma also became the most rapidly-intensifying storm on record, with a maximum-sustained surface wind speed increase of 105 mph in a 24-hour period.

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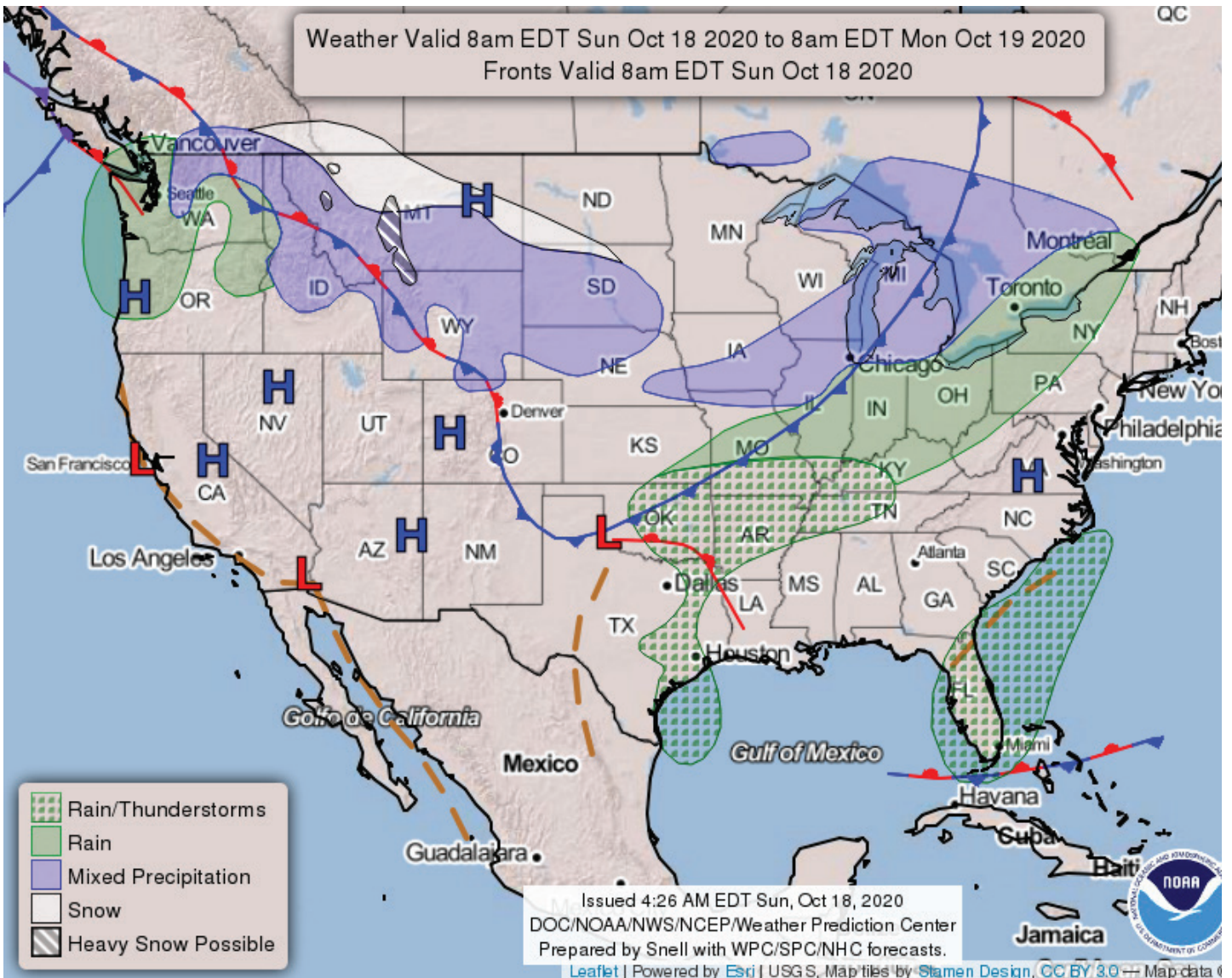
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 44 °F at 5:13 AM
Low Temp: 28 °F at 11:58 PM
Wind: 23 mph at 10:15 AM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 90° in 1910
Record Low: 12° in 1930
Average High: 57°F
Average Low: 32°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 1.23
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 19.71
Precip Year to Date: 15.28
Sunset Tonight: 6:42 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:56 a.m.



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HOW TO BE HAPPY ALWAYS

Long time comedian Jimmy Durante was rushing from one performance to another. He had only a few minutes to spare, but a friend asked him to "take a moment" and say a few words to a group of veterans in a hospital.

Walking into the hospital ward, he went through a brief routine of his favorite jokes. The crowd applauded loudly and cheered for more. He told a few more jokes, and the applause and cheers became louder and longer. The soldiers were thoroughly enjoying every word he spoke, and every joke he shared. Instead of a greeting and "taking a few moments," he ended up staying for thirty minutes. Finally, he had to leave.

As he was exiting the ward, his manager asked, "What happened? You said you only had a few moments, and you stayed for half an hour."

"I really needed to leave," said Durante. "But I want to show you the two men in the front row. See those two men? Look carefully at them."

When his manager looked at the two men, he noticed that one had lost his right arm, and the other had lost his left arm in combat. But, working together, they were able to clap: one's right hand reached out to the other's left hand, and together, they were able to register their delight for the entertainer taking time to be with them.

Happiness does not spring from an empty heart. It comes from sharing the gifts God gives us with others!

Prayer: Help us, Father, to be as generous to others as You have been to each of us. May we always share the gifts You have given us with others in need. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: There is joy for those who deal justly with others and always do what is right. Psalm 106:3

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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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

01-04-07-11-35

(one, four, seven, eleven, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$274,000

Lotto America

11-12-19-35-43, Star Ball: 2, ASB: 2

(eleven, twelve, nineteen, thirty-five, forty-three; Star Ball: two; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.8 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$86 million

Powerball

06-10-31-37-44, Powerball: 23, Power Play: 2

(six, ten, thirty-one, thirty-seven, forty-four; Powerball: twenty-three; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$82 million

Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Alcester-Hudson def. Menno, 25-23, 25-23, 25-10

Brookings def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 26-28, 27-25, 25-22, 25-22

Dupree def. McLaughlin, 25-7, 25-11, 28-26

Huron def. Rapid City Central, 26-24, 25-13, 25-18

Langford def. Deuel, 25-20, 25-17, 25-23

Miller def. Beresford, 26-24, 25-15, 25-21

Miller def. Milbank, 25-22, 25-16, 25-16

Pierre def. Spearfish, 25-18, 25-13, 25-16

Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Aberdeen Central, 25-19, 22-25, 25-23, 25-22

Tripp-Delmont/Armour def. Freeman Academy/Marion, 25-8, 25-3, 25-20

Warner def. North Central Co-Op, 25-15, 25-13, 25-9

Webster def. Wilmot, 25-23, 25-13, 25-12

White River def. Faith, 25-21, 25-20, 25-17

Dakota XII Conference Dual Day=

Championship=

Sioux Falls Christian def. Madison, 25-18, 25-21, 25-22

Fifth Place=

Tri-Valley def. West Central, 25-21, 25-17, 25-21

Third Place=

Dakota Valley def. Tea Area, 25-12, 25-18, 25-12

DVC Tournament=

Bronze Pool=

Lake Preston def. DeSmet, 25-18, 25-23

Oldham-Ramona/Rutland def. DeSmet, 25-11, 25-22

Oldham-Ramona/Rutland def. Lake Preston, 25-21, 25-23

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Gold Pool=

Colman-Egan def. Deubrook, 28-26, 25-18

Colman-Egan def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-21, 25-12

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Deubrook, 25-22, 17-25, 25-12

Silver Pool=

Castlewood def. Estelline/Hendricks, 25-23, 17-25, 25-22

Castlewood def. Ipswich, 25-17, 25-13

Estelline/Hendricks def. Ipswich, 25-21, 25-23

Northwestern Invite=

Hill City def. Ethan, 25-11, 25-19

Hill City def. Rapid City Christian, 25-16, 19-25, 27-25

Northwestern def. Ethan, 25-13, 25-12

Northwestern def. Hill City, 25-16, 25-17

Northwestern def. Rapid City Christian, 25-14, 25-22

Rapid City Christian def. Ethan, 25-10, 25-18

Panhandle Conference Tournament=

Hemingford, Neb. def. Edgemont, 25-14, 25-16

Fifth Place=

Edgemont def. Morrill, Neb., 25-23, 25-16

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

Rural Midwest hospitals struggling to handle virus surge

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WESSINGTON SPRINGS, S.D. (AP) — Rural Jerauld County in South Dakota didn't see a single case of the coronavirus for more than two months stretching from June to August. But over the last two weeks, its rate of new cases per person soared to one of the highest in the nation.

"All of a sudden it hit, and as it does, it just exploded," said Dr. Tom Dean, one of just three doctors who work in the county.

As the brunt of the virus has blown into the Upper Midwest and northern Plains, the severity of outbreaks in rural communities has come into focus. Doctors and health officials in small towns worry that infections may overwhelm communities with limited medical resources. And many say they are still running up against attitudes on wearing masks that have hardened along political lines and a false notion that rural areas are immune to widespread infections.

Dean took to writing a column in the local weekly newspaper, the True Dakotan, to offer his guidance. In recent weeks, he's watched as one in roughly every 37 people in his county has tested positive for the virus.

It ripped through the nursing home in Wessington Springs where both his parents lived, killing his father. The community's six deaths may appear minimal compared with thousands who have died in cities, but they have propelled the county of about 2,000 people to a death rate roughly four times higher than the nationwide rate.

Rural counties across Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana sit among the top in the nation for new cases per capita over the last two weeks, according to Johns Hopkins University researchers. Overall, the nation topped 8 million confirmed coronavirus cases in the university's count on Friday; the true number of infections is believed to be much higher because many people have not been tested.

In counties with just a few thousand people, the number of cases per capita can soar with even a small outbreak — and the toll hits close to home in tight-knit towns.

"One or two people with infections can really cause a large impact when you have one grocery store or gas station," said Misty Rudebusch, the medical director at a network of rural health clinics in South

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Dakota called Horizon Health Care. "There is such a ripple effect."

Wessington Springs is a hub for the generations of farmers and ranchers that work the surrounding land. Residents send their children to the same schoolhouse they attended and have preserved cultural offerings like a Shakespeare garden and opera house.

They trust Dean, who for 42 years has tended to everything from broken bones to high blood pressure. When a patient needs a higher level of care, the family physician usually depends on a transfer to a hospital 130 miles (209 kilometers) away.

As cases surge, hospitals in rural communities are having trouble finding beds. A recent request to transfer a "not desperately ill, but pretty" sick COVID-19 patient was denied for several days, until the patient's condition had worsened, Dean said.

"We're proud of what we got, but it's been a struggle," he said of the 16-bed hospital.

The outbreak that killed Dean's dad forced Wessington Springs' only nursing home to put out a statewide request for nurses.

Thin resources and high death rates have plagued other small communities. Blair Tomscheck, interim director of the health department in Toole County, Montana, worried that the region's small hospitals would need to start caring for serious COVID-19 patients after cases spiked to the nation's highest per capita. One out of every 28 people in the county has tested positive in the last two weeks, according to Johns Hopkins researchers.

"It's very, very challenging when your resources are poor — living in a small, rural county," she said.

Infections can also spread quickly in places like Toole County, where most everyone shops at the same grocery store, attends the same school or worships at a handful of churches.

"The Sunday family dinners are killing us," Tomscheck said.

Even as outbreaks threaten to spiral out of control, doctors and health officials said they are struggling to convince people of the seriousness of a virus that took months to arrive in force.

"It's kind of like getting a blizzard warning and then the blizzard doesn't hit that week, so then the next time, people say they are not going to worry about it," said Kathleen Taylor, a 67-year-old author who lives in Redfield, South Dakota.

In swaths of the country decorated by flags supporting President Donald Trump, people took their cues on wearing masks from his often-cavalier attitude towards the virus. Dean draws a direct connection between Trump's approach and the lack of precautions in his town of 956 people.

"There's the foolish idea that mask-wearing or refusal is some kind of a political statement," Dean said. "It has seriously interfered with our ability to get it under control."

Even amid the surge, Republican governors in the region have been reluctant to act. North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum said recently, "We are caught in the middle of a COVID storm" as he raised advisory risk levels in counties across the state. But he has refused to issue a mask mandate.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, who has carved out a reputation among conservatives by foregoing lockdowns, blamed the surge in cases on testing increases, even though the state has had the highest positivity rate in the nation over the last two weeks, according to the COVID Tracking Project. Positivity rates are an indication of how widespread infections are.

In Wisconsin, conservative groups have sued over Democratic Gov. Tony Evers' mask mandate.

Whether the requirement survives doesn't matter to Jody Bierhals, a resident of Gillett who doubts the efficacy of wearing a mask. Her home county of Oconto, which stretches from the northern border of Green Bay into forests and farmland, has the state's second-highest growth in coronavirus cases per person.

Bierhals, a single mother with three kids, is more worried about the drop in business at her small salon. The region depends on tourists, but many have stayed away during the pandemic.

"Do I want to keep the water on, or do I want to be able to put food on the table?" she asked. "It's a difficult situation."

Bierhals said she thought the virus couldn't be stopped and it would be best to let it run its course. But local attitudes like that have left the county's health officer, Debra Konitzer, desperate.

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Konitzer warned that the uncontrolled spread of infections has overwhelmed the county's health systems. "I'm just waiting to see if our community can change our behavior," she said. "Otherwise, I don't see the end in sight."

—
This story has been corrected to fix the spelling of Konitzer in one instance.

South Dakota cases continue surge, 8 new deaths reported

South Dakota's surge of coronavirus infections continued rising Saturday, with health officials reporting 806 new cases and eight new deaths.

The state continues to see the nation's second-highest number of new infections per capita over the last two weeks, behind only North Dakota.

The COVID Tracking project reported that the state has had 939 new cases per 100,000 people over the past two weeks. The rolling average number of daily new cases has increased by 54% in the last two weeks, according to Johns Hopkins researchers.

South Dakota's death toll increased to 315 on Saturday. The new deaths were all people over 50.

That death count is the 46th highest in the country overall and the 34th highest per capita at 34.8 deaths per 100,000 people.

The state also reported that 295 people were hospitalized with COVID-19, four fewer than Friday.

COVID-19 patients occupy 12% of the state's hospital beds, with an overall total availability rate of 34%, according to state Health Department figures.

Thirty-eight percent of ICU beds are still available in South Dakota, health official reported.

Supervisor named for Black Hills National Forest

CUSTER, S.D. (AP) — A supervisor has been selected for the Black Hills National Forest.

Officials announced Friday that Jeff Tomac has been selected to serve as the 23rd supervisor of the forest.

Tomac currently serves as the acting grassland supervisor for the Dakota Prairie Grasslands in Bismarck, North Dakota. He has worked for the U.S. Forest Service for 28 years.

Tomac begins his new job next month. The current supervisor, Mark Van Every, is retiring.

The Black Hills National Forest covers 1.2 million acres in western South Dakota and northeastern Wyoming. Offices are located in Sundance and Newcastle, Wyoming and Custer, Rapid City and Spearfish, South Dakota.

The Rapid City Journal reports that early in his career, Tomac served as a rangeland specialist on the Hell Canyon Ranger District on the Black Hills National Forest. He has worked in four regions and eight different forests.

Romania's Jewish State Theater explores work on Holocaust

By VADIM GHIRDA and EDITH BALAZS Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — The latest premiere at the Jewish State Theater in the Romanian capital, Bucharest, explores the horrors of the Holocaust via a survivor's memories of the Auschwitz and Plaszow concentration camps.

Friday's debut of "The Beautiful Days of My Youth" by Romanian Jewish Holocaust survivor Ana Novac follows the National Holocaust Remembrance Day commemorations on Oct. 9, the day when deportations of Romania's Jews and Roma began in 1941.

Some 280,000 Jews and 11,000 Roma were deported and killed under Romania's pro-Nazi regime during World War II. During the communist era, hundreds of thousands of Romanian Jews emigrated to Israel. The current Jewish population is around 6,000, down from 800,000 before the war.

The play premiered online and in front of spectators who took up less than a third of the seats because of measures meant to slow the coronavirus pandemic in the eastern European nation.

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Maia Morgenstern, head of the Jewish State Theater and a Romanian Jewish actress best known for playing Mary in Mel Gibson's 2004 movie "The Passion of the Christ," described the play's staging to The Associated Press as an "all-female project." The director is a woman, Liana Ceterchi.

"Each one of us is a facet of Ana Novac's soul and memory," Morgenstern said.

The play's author, born Zimra Harsanyi, hails from Romania's northern Transylvania region. She was deported at age 14. The diary she kept inside a Nazi concentration camp was first published in Hungary in 1966 and later translated into several languages, but it only hit bookshelves in her home country in 2004.

Many liken Novac's work to that of Anne Frank, author of the "The Diary of a Young Girl," which documented her life in hiding in Nazi-occupied Netherlands before she was deported to concentration camps.

"We are bearers of scars from wounds that are not directly ours, but still we carry these scars," Morgenstern said. She stressed the importance of evoking events through theatrical performance "in order to understand the ghosts of a painful past, the memories of terrible events that have split the world into executioners and victims."

Actresses wear the striped outfits of concentration camps against a backdrop of images depicting camp entrances, gas chambers and empty sleeping quarters. Photographs and names of Holocaust victims scroll in a video over the stage and performers. Human bones and a skull are held by performers during monologues.

The pandemic has had a severe impact on Romania's artistic community, triggering the closure of theaters during the lockdown. Later, theaters were allowed to hold performances only outdoors, then indoors with a limited number of spectators.

"These are existential and also moral questions. What to do to protect life, not to be a threat but at the same time continue our existence and activity and maintain our status as artists?" Morgenstern said.

This story corrects the spelling of Ana Novac's last name in the summary and in the story. With AP Photos.

Balazs reported from Budapest, Hungary.

France demonstrations pay tribute to beheaded teacher

PARIS (AP) — Demonstrators in France on Sunday took part in gatherings in support of freedom of speech and in tribute to a history teacher who was beheaded near Paris after discussing caricatures of Islam's Prophet Muhammad with his class.

Samuel Paty was beheaded on Friday by a 18-year-old Moscow-born Chechen refugee who was shot dead by police.

Political leaders, associations and unions demonstrated Sunday on the Place de la Republique in Paris holding placards reading "I am Samuel," that echoed the "I am Charlie" rallying cry after the 2015 attack on the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, which published caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad.

Demonstrators also gathered in major cities including Lyon, Toulouse, Strasbourg, Nantes, Marseille, Lille and Bordeaux.

French authorities, meanwhile, say they have detained an 11th person following the killing.

Anti-terrorism prosecutor Jean-Francois Ricard said an investigation for murder with a suspected terrorist motive was opened. At least four of those detained are family members of the attacker, who had been granted 10-year residency in France as a refugee in March, was armed with a knife and an airsoft gun, which fires plastic pellets.

His half-sister joined the Islamic State group in Syria in 2014, Ricard said. He didn't give her name, and it wasn't clear where she is now.

The prosecutor said a text claiming responsibility and a photograph of the victim were found on the suspect's phone. He also confirmed that a Twitter account under the name Abdoulakh A belonged to the suspect. It posted a photo of the decapitated head minutes after the attack along with the message "I have executed one of the dogs from hell who dared to put Muhammad down."

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The beheading has upset moderate French Muslims. A group of imams in the Lyon region are holding a special meeting Sunday to discuss together what the group called "the appalling assassination of our compatriot by a terrorist who in the name of an uncertain faith committed the irreparable."

The attack has provoked global condemnation. U.S. President Donald Trump addressed the killing Saturday night from a political rally in Janesville, Wisconsin.

"On behalf of the United States, I'd like to extend my really sincere condolences to a friend of mine, President (Emmanuel) Macron of France, where they just yesterday had a vicious, vicious Islamic terrorist attack — beheading an innocent teacher near Paris," he said. "France is having a hard time and Macron's a great guy."

Bolivia's vote a high-stakes presidential redo amid pandemic

By CARLOS VALDEZ Associated Press

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP) — Bolivians vote Sunday in a high-stakes presidential election redo that could determine the country's democratic future and bring a return of socialism at a time when it is struggling with a raging pandemic and protests over last year's annulled ballot.

Bolivia, once one of the most politically volatile countries in Latin America, experienced a rare period of stability under former President Evo Morales, the country's first Indigenous president who resigned and fled the country late last year after his claimed election win was annulled amid allegations of fraud. Protests over the vote and later his ouster set off a period of unrest that caused at least 36 deaths. Morales called his ouster a coup.

Sunday's vote is an attempt to reset Bolivia's democracy.

"Bolivia's new executive and legislative leaders will face daunting challenges in a polarized country, ravaged by COVID-19, and hampered by endemically weak institutions," said the Washington Office on Latin America, a Washington-based human rights advocacy organization.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres has urged Bolivians to respect the electoral process, and in particular the final result.

Ballots and other materials were delivered to polling stations Saturday by police and military units without incident, officials said. Police and soldiers took to the streets hours later seeking to ensure calm.

The country's Supreme Electoral Court announced late Saturday that it had decided unanimously against reporting running preliminary vote totals as ballots are counted. It said it wanted to avoid the uncertainty that fed unrest when there was a long halt in reporting preliminary results during last year's election.

Council President Salvador Romero promised a safe and transparent official count, which could take five days.

To win in the first round, a candidate needs more than 50% of the vote, or 40% with a lead of at least 10 percentage points over the second-place candidate. A runoff vote, if necessary, would be held Nov. 28.

Bolivia's entire 136-member Legislative Assembly also will be voted in.

The election was postponed twice because of the coronavirus pandemic. On a per capita basis, few countries have been hit harder than impoverished, landlocked Bolivia: Nearly 8,400 of its 11.6 million people have died of COVID-19.

The election will occur with physical distancing required between masked voters — at least officially, if not in practice.

The leading contenders are former Economy Minister Luis Arce, who led an extended boom under Morales, and former President Carlos Mesa, a centrist historian and journalist who was second to Morales in the disputed returns released after last year's vote. Trailing in all the polls has been Luis Fernando Camacho, a conservative businessman who helped lead last year's uprising, as well as a Korean-born evangelist.

Overshadowing the vote is the absence of Morales, who led Bolivia from 2006 until 2019 and was a key figure in the bloc of leftist leaders who held power across much of South America. Morales, now exiled in Argentina, was barred from running for the presidency or even the Senate by electoral authorities following his ouster.

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He chose Arce as his stand-in for the Movement Toward Socialism party, and a win by the party would be seen as a victory for Latin America's left.

A boyhood llama herder who became prominent leading a coca grower's union, Morales had been immensely popular while overseeing an export-led economic surge that reduced poverty during most of his term. But support was eroding due to his reluctance to leave power, increasing authoritarian impulses and a series of corruption scandals.

He shrugged aside a public vote that had set term limits, and competed in the October 2019 presidential vote, which he claimed to have narrowly won outright. But a lengthy pause in reporting results fed suspicions of fraud and nationwide protests broke out.

When police and military leaders suggested he leave, Morales resigned and fled the country.

Conservative Sen. Jeanne Añez proclaimed herself president and was accepted by the courts. Her administration, despite lacking a majority in congress, set about trying to prosecute Morales and key aides while undoing his policies, helping prompt more unrest and polarization.

She dropped out at as a candidate for Sunday's presidential election while trailing badly in polls.

Most polls have shown Arce with a lead, though likely not enough to avoid a runoff.

There is a strong chance the next president will struggle with a divided congress — and perhaps worse, an opposition that refuses to recognize defeat.

Is Facebook really ready for the 2020 election?

By BARBARA ORTUTAY and DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

Ever since Russian agents and other opportunists abused its platform in an attempt to manipulate the 2016 U.S. presidential election, Facebook has insisted — repeatedly — that it's learned its lesson and is no longer a conduit for misinformation, voter suppression and election disruption.

But it has been a long and halting journey for the social network. Critical outsiders, as well as some of Facebook's own employees, say the company's efforts to revise its rules and tighten its safeguards remain wholly insufficient to the task, despite it having spent billions on the project. As for why, they point to the company's persistent unwillingness to act decisively over much of that time.

"Am I concerned about the election? I'm terrified," said Roger McNamee, a Silicon Valley venture capitalist and an early Facebook investor turned vocal critic. "At the company's current scale, it's a clear and present danger to democracy and national security."

The company's rhetoric has certainly gotten an update. CEO Mark Zuckerberg now casually references possible outcomes that were unimaginable in 2016 — among them, possible civil unrest and potentially a disputed election that Facebook could easily make even worse — as challenges the platform now faces.

"This election is not going to be business as usual," Zuckerberg wrote in a September Facebook post in which he outlined Facebook's efforts to encourage voting and remove misinformation from its service. "We all have a responsibility to protect our democracy."

Yet for years Facebook executives have seemed to be caught off guard whenever their platform — created to connect the world — was used for malicious purposes. Zuckerberg has offered multiple apologies over the years, as if no one could have predicted that people would use Facebook to live-stream murders and suicides, incite ethnic cleansings, promote fake cancer cures or attempt to steal elections.

While other platforms like Twitter and YouTube have also struggled to address misinformation and hateful content, Facebook stands apart for its reach and scale and, compared to many other platforms, its slower response to the challenges identified in 2016.

In the immediate aftermath of President Donald Trump's election, Zuckerberg offered a remarkably tone-deaf quip regarding the notion that "fake news" spread on Facebook could have influenced the 2016 election, calling it "a pretty crazy idea." A week later, he walked back the comment.

Since then, Facebook has issued a stream of mea culpas for its slowness to act against threats to the 2016 election and promised to do better. "I don't think they have become better at listening," said David Kirkpatrick, author of a book on Facebook's rise. "What's changed is more people have been telling them

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they need to do something.”

The company has hired outside fact-checkers, added restrictions — then more restrictions — on political advertisements and taken down thousands of accounts, pages and groups it found to be engaging in “coordinated inauthentic behavior.” That’s Facebook’s term for fake accounts and groups that maliciously target political discourse in countries ranging from Albania to Zimbabwe.

It’s also started added warning labels to posts that contain misinformation about voting and has, at times, taken steps to limit the circulation of misleading posts. In recent weeks the platform also banned posts that deny the Holocaust and joined Twitter in limiting the spread of an unverified political story about Hunter Biden, son of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, published by the conservative New York Post.

All this unquestionably puts Facebook in a better position than it was in four years ago. But that doesn’t mean it’s fully prepared. Despite tightened rules banning them, violent militias are still using the platform to organize. Recently, this included a foiled plot to kidnap the governor of Michigan.

In the four years since the last election, Facebook’s earnings and user growth have soared. This year, analysts expect the company to rake in profits of \$23.2 billion on revenue of \$80 billion, according to FactSet. It currently boasts 2.7 billion users worldwide, up from 1.8 billion at this time in 2016.

Facebook faces a number of government investigations into its size and market power, including an antitrust probe by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission. An earlier FTC investigation socked Facebook with a large \$5 billion fine, but didn’t require any additional changes.

“Their No. 1 priority is growth, not reducing harm,” Kirkpatrick said. “And that is unlikely to change.”

Part of the problem: Zuckerberg maintains an iron grip on the company, yet doesn’t take criticism of him or his creation seriously, charges social media expert Jennifer Grygiel, a Syracuse University communications professor. But the public knows what’s going on, she said. “They see COVID misinformation. They see how Donald Trump exploits it. They can’t unsee it.”

Facebook insists it takes the challenge of misinformation seriously — especially when it comes to the election.

“Elections have changed since 2016, and so has Facebook,” the company said in a statement laying out its policies on the election and voting. “We have more people and better technology to protect our platforms, and we’ve improved our content policies and enforcement.”

Grygiel says such comments are par for the course. “This company uses PR in place of an ethical business model,” she said.

Kirkpatrick notes that board members and executives who have pushed back against the CEO — a group that includes the founders of Instagram and WhatsApp — have left the company.

“He is so certain that Facebook’s overall impact on the world is positive” and that critics don’t give him enough credit for that, Kirkpatrick said of Zuckerberg. As a result, the Facebook CEO isn’t inclined to take constructive feedback. “He doesn’t have to do anything he doesn’t want to. He has no oversight,” Kirkpatrick said.

The federal government has so far left Facebook to its own devices, a lack of accountability that has only empowered the company, according to U.S. Rep. Pramila Jayapal, a Washington Democrat who grilled Zuckerberg during a July Capitol Hill hearing.

Warning labels are of limited value if the algorithms underlying the platform are designed to push polarizing material at users, she said. “I think Facebook has done some things that indicate it understands its role. But it has been, in my opinion, far too little, too late.”

Armenia, Azerbaijan report violations of new cease-fire

By AVET DEMOURIAN Associated Press

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP) — Despite a second attempt at a cease-fire, Armenia and Azerbaijan traded accusations Sunday of violating the new truce in their destructive conflict over the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The latest truce, which was announced Saturday and took force at midnight, was the second attempt

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to establish a cease-fire since heavy fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces broke out in Nagorno-Karabakh on Sept. 27. The fighting and shelling has killed hundreds of people — both combatants and civilians — and marks the biggest escalation of a decades-old conflict over the region in more than a quarter-century.

The recent fighting, involving heavy artillery, rockets and drones, has continued despite repeated calls for cessation of hostilities coming from around the globe. The escalation of fighting raises the specter of a wider conflict that could draw in Russia and Turkey and threaten Caspian Sea energy exports.

Armenian military officials on Sunday reported artillery shelling and missile strikes by Azerbaijani forces in the conflict zone overnight. In the morning, "the enemy launched an attack in the southern direction," and there were "casualties and wounded on both sides," Armenian Defense Ministry spokeswoman Shushan Stepanian said.

Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry, in turn, maintained that Armenian forces used mortars and artillery in the conflict zone overnight despite the cease-fire and in the morning attempted attacks in several directions. The ministry accused Armenia of using large-caliber weapons to attack the positions of the Azerbaijani army in two regions north of Nagorno-Karabakh along the border between the two countries, a claim Armenian military officials denied.

The Azerbaijani military also said it downed an Armenian Su-25 warplane "attempting to inflict airstrikes on the positions of the Azerbaijan army in the Jabrayil direction," but Stepanian dismissed the statement as untrue.

Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a war there ended in 1994.

According to Nagorno-Karabakh officials, 673 of their servicemen have been killed in the renewed fighting. Azerbaijan hasn't disclosed its military losses, but says 60 civilians have died so far and 270 have been wounded.

Turkey has publicly backed oil-rich Azerbaijan in the conflict and vowed to help it reclaim its territory.

Russia, which has a security pact with Armenia but has cultivated warm ties with Azerbaijan, hosted top diplomats from both countries last week for more than 10 hours of talks that ended with the initial cease-fire agreement. But the deal frayed immediately after the truce took effect last Saturday, with both sides blaming each other for breaching it.

The new cease-fire agreement was announced a week later on Saturday, following Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's calls with his counterparts from Armenia and Azerbaijan, in which he strongly urged them to abide by the Moscow deal.

But several hours after the truce took force at midnight, both sides started accusing each other of breaching the agreement.

Later on Sunday, Armenia and Azerbaijan reiterated their commitments to the cease-fire in statements issued by their foreign ministries, and laid the blame for the breaches on each other.

Azerbaijan "reserves its right to take counter measures to protect its civilians and positions," the country's Foreign Ministry said.

Yerevan "will continue to undertake all necessary measures to impose peace on Azerbaijan and establish a cease-fire regime which will entail precise and effective mechanisms for maintaining and verifying it," Armenian Foreign Ministry said.

Associated Press writers Daria Litvinova in Moscow and Aida Sultanova in London contributed.

French virus curfew produces eerie quiet on streets of Paris

PARIS (AP) — The streets of Paris and eight other French cities were deserted on Saturday night on the first day of the government-imposed 9 p.m. curfew that is scheduled to last for at least four weeks.

The measure was announced by French President Emmanuel Macron to curb the resurgent coronavirus

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as new infections peaked to over 30,000 a day. Macron said the curfews were needed to stop local hospitals from becoming overrun.

In France, nearly 20 million people are covered by the curfew and eerily deserted scenes were observed in Marseille, Lyon, Lille and Toulouse as well. The curfew runs until 6 a.m. daily. The country is deploying 12,000 extra police officers to enforce the new rules.

Many bar and restaurant owners have bristled at the order. An earlier months-long lockdown to combat the spread of coronavirus in the spring devastated the sector.

"I have the right to question the government's approach. I think it's a catastrophic measure for the industry," said Xavier Denamur, who owns Les Philosophes and several other bistros in Paris's chic Le Marais district.

Denamur said the curfew should not start before 11 p.m.

"At least that would not destroy us," he said. "There's no evidence that this difference of a couple of hours will have any effect on the virus circulating."

France has seen over 33,300 confirmed deaths in the pandemic, the fourth-highest death toll in Europe.

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Asia Today: Melbourne eases lockdown as cases decline

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Australia's second-largest city, Melbourne, has loosened lockdown restrictions as new and active COVID-19 continue to decline.

From midnight Sunday, Melbourne residents will no longer face limits on the time they can spend away from their homes for education or recreation. Previous restrictions allowing Melburnians to travel only 5 kilometers (3 miles) from home will increase at midnight to 25 kilometers (15 miles).

Outdoor gatherings of up to 10 people from two households will be allowed and golf and tennis can resume.

Victoria state reported only two new cases of COVID-19 on Sunday and no deaths. The rolling 14-day average of cases dropped to eight, the lowest in four months.

There were only 137 active cases across Victoria state on Sunday with 12 people receiving hospital treatment, none in intensive care.

Regulations will be further loosened on Nov. 2 with the partial reopening of shops, bars and restaurants.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

— Thailand has closed all border crossings between its northern province of Tak and Myanmar after five people in the Thai border town of Mae Sot tested positive for the coronavirus. The five, none of whom exhibited symptoms, are the first locally transmitted cases confirmed in Thailand since early September, when a prison inmate tested positive. All five are members of a family of Myanmar nationals residing in Thailand. Two were initially confirmed to be affected and added to Saturday's total of Thai cases, while three were officially added Sunday. Along with cases found among people quarantined after arriving from abroad, seven additions on Sunday brought Thailand's total number of cases to 3,686, including 59 deaths.

— India has added 61,871 new confirmed cases in the past 24 hours, raising its total to about 7.5 million. The Health Ministry on Sunday also registered 1,033 new fatalities, taking the death toll to 114,031. The country is continuing a downward trend in new cases, but virus-related fatalities jumped after recording the lowest daily figure of 680 in nearly three months on Friday. Some experts say India's numbers may not be reliable because of poor reporting and inadequate health infrastructure. India is also relying heavily on antigen tests, which are faster but less accurate than traditional RT-PCR tests. Health officials have warned about the potential for the virus to spread during the religious festival season beginning later this month. New Delhi is also bracing for high air pollution levels, making the coronavirus fight more complicated in upcoming months. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked officials to prepare cold storage chains and distribution network for vaccine delivery along the lines of conducting elections, involving

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all levels of government and citizen groups. According to Indian officials, three vaccines are in advanced stages of development.

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Afghans say preventing next war as vital as ending this one

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) —

At a Kabul museum honoring Afghanistan's war victims, talking to visitors reveals just how many layers and generations of pain and grief have piled up during four decades of unrelenting conflict.

Fakhria Hayat recalled an attack that changed her family forever. It was 1995, and the Afghan capital was under siege, pounded by rockets fired by rival mujahedeen groups. Her world exploded: A rocket slammed into her yard, killing her brother and leaving her sister forever in a wheelchair.

Danish Habibi was just a child in 2000 when the Taliban overran his village in Afghanistan's serene Bamiyan Valley. His memories of those days are re-occurring nightmares. Men were forcibly separated from wives and children. Dozens were killed. Habibi's father disappeared only to return a beaten, broken man, never able to work again. Habibi wonders how he will be able to accept peace with the Taliban.

Reyhana Hashimi told of how her 15-year-old sister, Atifa, was killed by Afghan security forces. It was 2018. Atifa had left home to take her exams, only to get entangled in a demonstration protesting the arrest of a Hazara leader. Afghan forces opened fire on protesters.

"They shot my sister right in the heart," Reyhana said. "No one from the government even came to apologize. They tried to say she was a protester. She wasn't. She just wanted to write her exams."

Today, those accumulated, unresolved grievances cast a long shadow on the intra-Afghan negotiations underway in the Gulf nation of Qatar.

Washington signed a deal with the Taliban in February to pave the way for the Doha talks and American forces' eventual withdrawal. The Americans championed the deal as Afghanistan's best chance at a lasting peace.

Afghans are not so sure. They say preventing the next war is as vital as ending the current one.

Afghanistan has been at war for more than 40 years. First was the Soviet invasion in 1979 and nine years of fighting. The Soviet withdrawal opened a bitter civil war in which mujahedeen factions tore the country apart battling for power and killing more than 50,000 people until the Taliban took over in 1996. The militants' repressive rule lasted until the U.S.-led invasion in 2001. Ever since, the country has been bloodied by insurgency.

"We must understand that there has been suffering on all sides, all Afghans have suffered at different times," Hamid Karzai, the first democratically elected president after the Taliban's collapse, said in an interview in Kabul.

"Everyone has done (their) part, unfortunately, in bringing suffering to our people and to our country," said Karzai, who left office in 2014 after serving two terms. "No one can (point) a finger toward someone to say you've done it."

But individual Afghans can. They know who caused tragedies to their families.

Hayat, one of those visiting the Kabul Center for Memory and Dialogue on a recent day, said the rockets that killed her younger brother and maimed her sister 25 years ago were fired by the men of warlord Abdul Rasul Syyaf.

Syyaf was notorious for his ties to al-Qaida in the 1990s and was the inspiration for the Philippine terrorist group, Abu Syyaf. He is also a powerful politician in post-Taliban Afghanistan, often seen at meetings with Karzai's successor, President Ashraf Ghani.

Mujahedeen warlords like Syyaf have remained powerful since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion and head heavily armed factions. They include men like Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who was on the U.S. terrorist list

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until he signed a 2017 peace pact with Ghani's government, and Uzbek warlord Marshal Rashid Dostum, who has been implicated in a litany of human rights crimes.

In the immediate aftermath of the Taliban's 2001 defeat, revenge attacks multiplied, and ethnic Pashtuns, who made up the backbone of the Taliban, were initially harassed and persecuted when they went back to their villages.

As a result, many eventually returned to the mountains or fled to safe havens in neighboring Pakistan. That allowed the Taliban to regroup. Today, the insurgent group is at its strongest since 2001, controlling or holding sway over nearly half of the country.

Even if an intra-Afghan deal is reached, many Afghans fear that the country's many factions, including the Taliban, will fight for power if U.S. and NATO troops leave.

Under Washington's deal with the Taliban, U.S. troops are to withdraw by April, 2021, providing the Taliban honor their promise to fight terrorist groups, most notably the Islamic State affiliate. Trump recently surprised his military by upping the withdrawal date to the end of the year.

"Unfortunately, each time we've had a change, someone has tried to take power. It doesn't work. It hasn't worked," said Karzai. "So let's learn our lessons and move forward."

"The day after peace, we must recognize that all Afghans belong to this country. . . that this Afghanistan belongs to each individual of this country, and that we must live as citizens of this country," said Karzai. "Only then can we live in a country that looks toward a better future."

So far, there's little sign of that happening. Thousands of Taliban prisoners recently released as part of the peace process have already faced revenge attacks, assassinations and abductions, as well as harassment from local officials.

One released prisoner, Muslim Afghan, said he rarely leaves his home in Kabul for fear of retaliation. He doesn't remember Taliban rule — he was only in the second grade when they were overthrown. But his elders had been senior Taliban members and because of them, the rest of the family was harassed. He said he never joined the Taliban but was arrested in 2014 because of his family connections.

Danish Habibi, who still has nightmares about a Taliban attack, doesn't know how he can forgive.

"If you are from a family with a victim how will you trust that peace will come," he said. He wants victims to sit at the negotiating table — victims of the Taliban, of the mujahedeen, of every side. "They should all have to speak to the victims."

For Abdullah Abdullah, who heads Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation, the body tasked with striking a peace deal with the Taliban, negotiating has been an emotional struggle to control his anger at the casualties of the last 19 years.

"I've seen too many people suffering, too many casualties on a daily basis, innocent people dying... you cannot hide your emotions," he said. "But then there is the need of the country. Do we want this to continue forever? There will be endless suffering unless we find a way."

Associated Press Writer Tameem Akhgar in Kabul contributed to this report

Russia shuns tough restrictions even as infections soar

By DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — It's Friday night in Moscow, and popular bars and restaurants in the city center are packed. No one except the staff is wearing a mask or bothers to keep their distance. There is little indication at all that Russia is being swept by a resurgence of coronavirus infections.

"I believe that everyone will have the disease eventually," says Dr. Alexandra Yerofeyeva, an internal medicine specialist at an insurance company, while sipping a cocktail at The Bix bar in Moscow. She adds cheerfully: "Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

The outbreak in Russia this month is breaking the records set in the spring, when a lockdown to slow the spread of the virus was put in place. But, as governments across Europe move to reimpose restrictions to counter rising cases, authorities in Russia are resisting shutting down businesses again. Some

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regions have closed nightclubs or limited the hours of bars and restaurants, but few measures have been implemented in Moscow, which is once again the epicenter of the surge.

On Friday, Russian authorities reported over 15,000 new infections, the highest daily spike so far in the pandemic. Moscow — with less than 10% of the population — accounts for up to 30% of new infections each day. The health minister says 90% of hospital beds for coronavirus patients have been filled. Three times this week, Russia's daily death toll exceeded the spring record of 232.

Even these soaring virus tolls are likely undercounts; experts have cautioned that official figures around the world understate the true toll, but critics have taken particular issue with Russia's death tolls, alleging authorities might be playing down the scale of the outbreak.

Right now, situation is "difficult" but "no restrictive measures for the economy are required," Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova told President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday.

The spring lockdown hurt the country's already weakened economy and compounded Russians' frustration with plummeting incomes and worsening living conditions, driving Putin's approval rating to a historic low of 59% in April, according to the Levada Center, Russia's top independent pollster. Analysts say his government doesn't want to return to those darks days.

"They know that people have just come to the end of their tolerance of the lockdown measures that would be hugely unpopular if they got imposed again," said Judy Twigg, a professor of political science at Virginia Commonwealth University, specializing in global health.

In fact, Putin's government appears to be moving in the opposite direction. Russian officials announced this week that air traffic would resume with three more countries. All international air traffic was stopped in the spring.

The announcement reminded people "about the necessity to take care of their health as much as possible" — a reflection of Russian authorities' new effort to shift much of the responsibility for how the outbreak unfolds onto the people.

Moscow has taken the necessary measures, "but without the people responding to these measures, helping themselves and the people around them, nothing will work," warned Sergei Sobyenin, the mayor of the Russian capital of 12.7 million.

During the summer, authorities lifted most virus-related restrictions, and life in Russia started getting back to normal. Perhaps too quickly, some critics said, noting that the government was eager to ensure that people voted on constitutional amendments extending Putin's rule.

Even as health officials still report several thousand new infections every day, restaurants and cinemas reopened, vacationers flocked to Black Sea resorts, and 17,000 took part in the Moscow Half Marathon in August. Russia's Sports Minister Oleg Matytsin said the race "marked this victory" over the pandemic.

That same month, Putin announced regulatory approval of the first vaccine against coronavirus — although many scientists have cast doubt on the shot — and it is now being tested in a larger study. Authorities are offering it to doctors and teachers, but it's not widely available.

With Putin's approval ratings on the rise again, the government appears reluctant to do anything that might further weaken the economy and anger the public.

The authorities understand that "the economic virus is worse than the biological one," Boris Titov, Russia's business ombudsman, told entrepreneurs this week. Nearly 70% of the country's businesses "will not survive the second wave" and the accompanying restrictions, he said.

But doctors and experts are sounding the alarm that Russia's health system is being stretched. Just like in the spring, media report hourslong waits for ambulances and long lines for CT scans. People who have virus symptoms — who are supposed to call a visiting doctor service — report waiting days for anyone to arrive.

"When it comes to the regions (beyond Moscow), we see that they are already choking," said Vasily Vlassov, public health expert with the Higher School of Economics in Moscow.

Moscow hospitals, so far, appear to be coping.

"The hospital is full, but there are free beds for now, and we haven't yet used all of the reserve beds,"

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said Dr. Alexander Vanyukov of the Moscow Hospital No. 52.

Life outside hospitals remains largely normal. Moscow officials have recommended the elderly and those with chronic illnesses stay home. They ordered employers to make 30% of their staff work from home, extended the fall school vacation by a week and moved middle and high school students to online classes.

As at the national level, officials have focused on personal responsibility, at one point sending inspectors to theaters to look for retirees who are not self-isolating.

Officials said they considered shutting bars and nightclubs, but on Thursday Moscow's mayor proposed "an experiment" instead: Employees and customers at establishments open between midnight and 6 a.m. must register for contact tracing purposes.

Margo Lankina, manager of The Bix bar, says operating during the pandemic isn't easy. Her staff must wear gloves and masks and their health is monitored. The venue is regularly cleaned.

"But on the other hand, it's good that they allow us to work," Lankina says.

"Our guests? Well, the distance is not being observed, that's true, what can I say?" Lankina admits. "But somehow we keep on living."

Associated Press writer Kostya Manenkov contributed.

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

Arozarena, Rays top Astros 4-2 in Game 7, reach World Series

By BERNIE WILSON AP Sports Writer

SAN DIEGO (AP) — By now, every baseball fan has heard of remarkable rookie Randy Arozarena. They're fast becoming familiar with his World Series-bound Tampa Bay teammates, too.

"You sit here and look at this group of guys, and I always say we don't have a lot of household names, but at the same time, people are making a name for themselves right now," outfielder Kevin Kiermaier said.

They kept doing that in Game 7 of the AL Championship Series on Saturday night.

Arozarena homered again, 36-year-old Charlie Morton was brilliant against his former team and the Rays silenced the Houston Astros 4-2 to reach the World Series for just the second time.

The Rays will face either the Los Angeles Dodgers or Atlanta Braves in the World Series in Arlington, Texas, starting Tuesday night. Game 7 of the NLCS is Sunday night.

Right fielder Manuel Margot squeezed Aledmys Diaz's flyball in his glove for the final out and fireworks burst overhead as the Rays began to celebrate the AL pennant in an NL ballpark, a byproduct of the pandemic-shortened season.

"If you don't know the name by now, they better learn them, because we've we got some boys who can play," said Kiermaier, the Rays' longest-tenured player.

That would start with Arozarena, who set a rookie record with his seventh home run — a two-run shot in the first — and was chosen ALCS MVP.

"Randy Arozarena, I don't have any words to describe what he's done, what he's meant to us this post-season," manager Kevin Cash said. "For him to have a bat in his hand with an opportunity for a big home run, really, I think it settled a lot of people in the dugout. It certainly did me."

Arozarena, a relative unknown before the postseason, has brought power and some serious dance moves to the Rays.

"I wouldn't say I was chasing MVP, but I was just trying to do everything for the team, anything to allow us to win," the 25-year-old left fielder said through a translator.

Arozarena did Cristiano Ronaldo's famous goal celebration after his homer and again after receiving the MVP. Eight nights earlier, he threw down a breakdancing move to win a dance-off with Brett Phillips while the Rays celebrated their AL Division Series win against the New York Yankees.

Tampa Bay's only other World Series appearance was in 2008, when it lost to the Philadelphia Phillies

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in five games.

The innovative Rays led the AL with a 40-20 record in the pandemic-shortened season. Known for their pitching and defense, they also introduced the concept of the starter and sometimes deploy a four-man outfield.

Tampa Bay snapped a three-game losing streak and prevented the Astros from matching the 2004 Boston Red Sox, the only major league team to rally from a 3-0 deficit to win a seven-game series.

"The last three days were pretty agonizing," Cash said.

The Rays also kept the Astros from becoming the first team to win a pennant with a losing regular-season record (29-31).

The loss ended Houston's first season since its sign-stealing scandal was revealed. The Astros were viewed by many fans as villains for their role in the cheating scandal en route to the 2017 title against the Dodgers, a scam that eventually cost manager AJ Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow their jobs.

Under new manager Dusty Baker, the Astros were trying to reach the World Series for the third time in four seasons. They lost Game 7 to Washington last year.

"It's frustrating, but these guys fought. They fought to the very end," Baker said. "A lot of people didn't have us even making the playoffs. ... This team is a bunch of fighters with a tremendous amount of perseverance and fortitude. One thing is for sure. We'll be back in this position next year."

Mike Zunino homered and drove in two runs for the Rays, who avoided the ignominy of joining the 2004 New York Yankees, who took a 3-0 lead in the ALCS and lost four straight to the Red Sox. Boston went on to win its first World Series in 86 seasons.

Arozarena set a rookie record with his seventh homer of the postseason. His 21 hits are one shy Derek Jeter's 1996 rookie postseason record.

Nicknamed "The Cuban Rocket," Arozarena connected off Lance McCullers Jr. to right-center field at Petco Park with one out in the first.

Margot, who played with the San Diego Padres from late in the 2016 season until being traded to Tampa Bay in the offseason, was aboard after getting hit with a pitch.

Arozarena defected from Cuba to Mexico in 2015, signed with the St. Louis Cardinals in 2016 and made his big league debut last year. Traded to Tampa Bay in the offseason, he tested positive for COVID-19 before summer camp and didn't make his 2020 debut until Aug. 30.

Until he started showing his October power, Arozarena was best known for a gaffe he committed while with the St. Louis Cardinals last postseason. After the Cardinals beat Atlanta in the NL Division Series, he posted manager Mike Schildt's profane clubhouse rant to social media, not realizing it would get a negative reaction.

Morton held the Astros to two hits in 5 2/3 scoreless innings while striking out six and walking one.

Morton retired 14 straight batters until walking Martin Maldonado with one out in the sixth. George Springer forced Maldonado and took third on José Altuve's two-out infield single, and Cash pulled Morton after just 66 pitches. Nick Anderson came on and retired Michael Brantley.

"Cash made the right move again — shocker," kidded ace Tyler Glasnow, now lined up to start the World Series opener.

Morton is the first major leaguer to earn the victory in four winner-take-all games, including Game 7 of the 2017 World Series and Game 7 of the 2017 ALCS against the Yankees when he was with Houston. He signed with Tampa Bay as a free agent before the 2019 season and won the wild card game at Oakland last year. The Rays were then eliminated by the Astros in the ALDS.

The Astros broke through against the Rays' bullpen in the eighth. Carlos Correa hit a two-run single off Pete Fairbanks before the reliever struck out Alex Bregman on a 100 mph fastball.

Fairbanks worked around a one-out single in the ninth to close it for a save.

McCullers Jr. lasted only 3 2/3 innings. He allowed three runs and four hits, struck out seven and walked one.

Morton and McCullers became the first pair to pitch in the same winner-take-all postseason game as

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teammates and later start against each other in a winner-take-all game. In the decisive Game 7 of the 2017 World Series, McCullers started and went 2 1/3 scoreless innings while Morton pitched the final four innings for the victory.

Zunino hit a solo shot into the second deck in left off McCullers with one out in the second and added a sacrifice fly in the sixth. On Friday night, he snapped his bat over his knee in frustration after striking out on three pitches.

HOMER RECORD

Arozarena is only one homer away from matching the major league record of eight homers in any single postseason. Barry Bonds set the mark for San Francisco in 2002, and it was tied by Houston's Carlos Beltran in 2004 and Texas' Nelson Cruz in 2011. Arozarena is only the ninth player ever to homer seven times in a single postseason, all of them occurring since 1995 in the wild card era.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Rays: Three-time Gold Glove Award-winning CF Kiermaier was back in the lineup. He missed three starts after being hit with a pitch on the left hand in Game 3.

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

New Zealand's Ardern credits virus response for election win

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (AP) — A day after winning a second term in a landside victory, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Sunday she sees the election result as an endorsement of her government's efforts to stamp out the coronavirus and reboot the economy.

Speaking at a cafe near her Auckland home, Ardern said she expects to form a new government within three weeks and to prioritize work on the virus response.

"We're cracking on very quickly with the work we need to do as a new team," Ardern said.

Her comments came as health officials reported one new case of community transmission after New Zealand went three weeks without any new infection. Officials said the man works on foreign ships at the ports, and they believe they caught his case early enough to contain the threat of further spread.

In the election, Ardern's liberal Labour Party got 49% of the vote, crushing the conservative National Party, which got 27%. Ardern said the margin of the victory exceeded their expectations.

The result will give Labour an outright majority in Parliament, the first time any party has achieved that since New Zealand implemented a proportional voting system 24 years ago. Typically parties have formed alliances to govern but this time Labour can go it alone.

Asked what she would say to those Americans who may draw inspiration from her win ahead of the U.S. elections, Ardern said she hoped people globally could move past the partisan divisions that elections often accentuate.

"That can be damaging for democracy, regardless of the side of the House that you sit on," she said.

Ardern's popularity soared earlier this year after she led a successful effort to halt the spread of the virus by implementing a strict lockdown in late March. New Zealand has had fewer than 2,000 cases of the virus including 25 deaths.

Ardern, 40, won the top job at the 2017 election. The following year, she became only the second world leader to give birth while in office. In 2019, she was praised for her empathetic response to a massacre at two Christchurch mosques in which a gunman killed 51 Muslim worshippers.

Ardern said she'd been congratulated on her win by a number of world leaders, including those from Britain, Denmark, Canada and Spain. Asked if she planned to run again at the next election, Ardern laughed.

"I've just run in 2020. I haven't yet taken a weekend," she said. "I'm enjoying this moment."

Seager homers again, Dodgers force NLCS Game 7 with 3-1 win

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By STEPHEN HAWKINS AP Baseball Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Corey Seager's sweet swing. Walker Buehler's calm. Kenley Jansen's resurgence.

The Los Angeles Dodgers got what they needed — again.

"We did what we had to do to force a Game 7," Justin Turner said.

They sure did.

Seager homered again, Buehler pitched six scoreless innings and the Dodgers beat the Atlanta Braves 3-1 on Saturday to send the NL Championship Series to a winner-take-all finale.

Los Angeles avoided elimination for the second time in less than 24 hours, staying alive in its pursuit of a third pennant in four years. It hasn't won a championship since 1988.

"I'm still sort of recovering from this one, but already thinking about Game 7," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "That's what you live for."

Turner also homered for Los Angeles, and Jansen threw a six-pitch ninth for his 18th career postseason save.

The NL West and East champions play again Sunday night, with the potential for two rookie starters in a Game 7 for the first time in big league history. The winner gets the Tampa Bay Rays in the World Series.

Roberts was keeping his options open for his starting pitcher while the Braves plan to go with rookie right-hander Ian Anderson, who has thrown 15 2/3 scoreless innings in his three postseason starts. Tony Gonsolin and three-time NL Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw are among the possibilities for Los Angeles.

"Shoot, we'll go out there and let 'er fly. A Game 7 is another baseball game," Atlanta manager Brian Snitker said. "You have to treat it as such."

The Braves were hoping to celebrate Snitker's 65th birthday Saturday with the franchise's first World Series berth since 1999. But Max Fried took his first loss all year, working into the seventh inning after surrendering three runs during a rocky first.

Buehler, using Stan's Rodeo Ointment to deal with bothersome blisters, threw 65 of his 89 pitches for strikes. He allowed seven hits while striking out six without a walk.

After Atlanta loaded the bases with three singles in a row to start the top of second — the last hit by his Vanderbilt roommate Dansby Swanson — the right-hander really brought the heat, with 10 consecutive fastballs to get out of the jam.

Austin Riley struck out on a 98.7 mph pitch before Nick Markakis took a called third strike on 99.7 mph. Cristian Pache, the 21-year-old rookie who had an RBI in each of his first four NLCS starts, was retired on an inning-ending groundout.

"His mound presence is just unbelievable," Turner said.

Buehler said he has never felt that calm in a game, especially a situation like that. He credited catcher Austin Barnes — and past experiences.

"I've failed in those moments. I've been through it and I've been good after it, but that failure doesn't really scare me anymore," Buehler said. "The more times you go through things like that, your heartbeat kind of changes and can slow down."

It was a much different result than Buehler's postseason debut two years ago in Game 3 of the NL Division Series, when the Braves also loaded the bases against him in the second inning. After a walk drove in a run, Ronald Acuña Jr. hit a grand slam on the next pitch.

Fried, who struck out five and walked four in 6 2/3 innings, allowed only two homers in his 11 starts while going 7-0 during the regular season. But the Dodgers went deep twice in three pitches in the first.

Seager pulled a towering shot to right on a 73-mph curveball, and Turner connected on a 93-mph sinker that went 418 feet to straightaway center. Max Muncy walked and scored after back-to-back singles by Will Smith and Cody Bellinger that made it 3-0.

"I came out in a game like this and kind of put us behind the eight-ball real quick," Fried said. "To me, that's unacceptable."

Seager, who homered twice in Game 5 on Friday night, has NLCS records with five homers and 11 RBIs,

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and still a game to play. His six homers overall are already a Dodgers postseason record.

Mookie Betts, the 2018 AL MVP and first-year Dodger, made a leaping catch against the right field wall to end the fifth. While it wouldn't have been a homer, it robbed Marcell Ozuna of extra bases, and the Braves a likely run.

Betts let out an emphatic shout while pumping both fists, then celebrated with Bellinger while Buehler held his right arm high in the air.

With Buehler out of the game, Nick Markakis greeted Blake Treinen with triple to right leading off the seventh and came home on a one-out double by Ronald Acuña Jr.

But the Dodgers' bullpen closed it out from there, with Jansen finishing the victory in an encouraging performance heading into Game 7.

It was Jansen's first save chance in five appearances since closing out the Dodgers' first playoff win this season in the wild-card round. He struck out the side on 12 pitches in Friday night's 7-3 win.

"Two huge outings, not only for us, but him personally, you can just see the confidence he has on the mound attacking guys," Turner said. "That's the Kenley Jansen I and all of us in there all know and love."

STRANGE PLAY

Ozzie Albies hit a slow chopper down the first-base line in the Braves sixth that was fielded by Muncy, who then made the tag before the ball popped out. Albies thought he was out and never touched first base. Muncy tossed the ball to Buehler, who tagged the runner already heading back to the Atlanta dugout.

GAME 7s

The Dodgers are playing in a Game 7 for the third time in four years. They won 5-1 at Milwaukee in the deciding game of the 2018 NLCS, after losing 5-1 at home to the Houston Astros in Game 7 of the 2017 World Series. Atlanta hasn't played in a Game 7 since its 15-0 win over St. Louis in the 1996 NLCS.

SHORT HOPS

The 14 homers by Los Angeles are tied for the most in an NLCS, and two behind the 2008 Tampa Bay Rays for the most in any LCS. ... Only once before have the Dodgers won three consecutive potential elimination games to take a series. That was in the best-of-five NL Division Series in 1981. They won the World Series that year.

UP NEXT

Braves: Anderson needed 85 pitches to get through four innings in Game 2, when he allowed only one hit with five strikeouts. But he walked five batters in a game Atlanta held on to win 8-7.

Dodgers: Gonsolin's postseason debut starting Game 2 came after Kershaw was scratched because of back spasms. Gonsolin struck out seven but allowed five runs in 4 1/3 innings. Kershaw pitched Game 4 on Thursday.

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

Pandemic, politics lead to closure of storied Hong Kong bar

By ZEN SOO and ALICE FUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Nearly 15 years ago, Grace Ma decided to name her bar Club 71, in commemoration of a July 1, 2003 rally where hundreds of thousands of Hong Kongers protested a proposed national security law for the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

"I took the name Club 71, because somehow it is more hopeful, with half a million Hong Kong people having a demonstration, a rally, to stand for themselves, not to ignore what's going on in Hong Kong," said Ma.

For years, the storied bar has served as a watering hole for the city's pro-democracy activists and intellectuals, who could freely engage in discussions over a round of beer or two.

Then the coronavirus pandemic hit and, in a blow to the city's Western-style freedoms, the central government in Beijing in June imposed sweeping national security legislation targeting political expression in response to massive anti-government protests last year. For Ma, the troubles meant it was time to shutter

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the business for good.

Months of government-mandated bar closures as part of coronavirus restrictions had pushed Club 71's finances deeper into the red, and operating the bar no longer made financial sense, she said. The bar will close at the end of October.

"We have closed for three months, out of the past six months," said Ma, who is in her 60s. "For our business, it's impossible."

Social distancing restrictions have also halved the capacity of the city's bars and restaurants, making it more difficult for them to turn a profit.

"Restaurants are allowed to have four at one table ... but bars only two per table," she said, pointing out that bars have been subject to much stricter restrictions, compared to eateries.

In the last days of the bar, customers have shown up in force, gathering outside in the park and occasionally milling in and out as they order pints of beer. The colorful interior walls are plastered with posters advertising art exhibitions and performances, as well as pro-democracy artwork.

"This is a place in Hong Kong where people can drop by and exchange ideas, as long as everyone respects each other, they can say whatever they want," said Ma.

News of the bar's imminent closure was disappointing for some of its regulars, who cherished the unique atmosphere and the mix of people.

"There are very few bars of this kind in Hong Kong. We call it the quiet bar, which allows people to chat with each other," said Keung Fung, 41, another loyal patron and a former Hong Kong student union representative.

"It is very unfortunate (that the bar is closing)," he said. "I'll need to look for another bar with similar atmosphere."

Some of Club 71's customers also include former lawmaker and pro-democracy activist Leung Kwok-hung, known as "Long Hair" in Hong Kong. Leung had been a regular in Club 71's predecessor, Club 64.

Ma had also run Club 64, before a skyrocketing rent forced her to move to its current location in Hong Kong's Sheung Wan neighborhood. It was then that she renamed the bar to Club 71.

"It is a hub for everyone to connect and communicate with each other, sometimes sit around and discuss what to do. So you can say it's a meeting point," said Leung, who had visited the bar for a beer.

Other famous bargoers over the years included Hong Kong singer Denise Ho, who is known for her pro-democracy stance, as well as acclaimed filmmaker Christopher Doyle.

Although Ma is saddened at having to close Club 71, in some ways it is also a relief, she said.

"Financially, I really couldn't hang on," she said. "It's time to move on, I want to do something else."

Associated Press journalist Phoebe Lai contributed to this report.

Conservatives staging free speech rally attacked by critics

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A free speech demonstration staged by conservative activists quickly fell apart in downtown San Francisco on Saturday after several hundred counterprotesters surged the area, outnumbering and attacking those gathered, including knocking one in the mouth.

A photographer working for The Associated Press witnessed a Trump supporter being taken away in an ambulance and an injured San Francisco police officer on the ground by San Francisco's United Nations Plaza.

Team Save America organized the rally to protest Twitter, which it said squelches conservative speech. Members of the group wore red "Make America Great Again" Trump campaign hats and carried pro-police "Thin Blue Line" flags and U.S. flags.

Philip Anderson, the organizer of the event, posted photos to social media of his bloody mouth with a front tooth missing and another hanging loosely. He said anti-fascist protesters attacked him "for no reason."

Anderson took the stage at about 1 p.m. and was greeted by chants and plastic water bottles and glass bottles thrown over police barricades.

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The event was canceled, although both sides lingered in the area into the afternoon.

The San Francisco Police Department said three officers suffered non life-threatening injuries when they were assaulted with pepper spray and caustic chemicals. One officer was taken to a local hospital for treatment, the department said.

No arrests were made, the department said.

Anderson called the counterprotesters hypocrites and said they are the reason why he's voting for President Donald Trump.

"I love America, I love this country and I love free speech," he said.

Trump leans into fear tactics in bid to win Midwest states

By JILL COLVIN and BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

JANESVILLE, Wisconsin (AP) — President Donald Trump leaned into fear tactics Saturday as he accused the left of trying to "destroy the American way of life" in a late reelection pitch to voters in Michigan and Wisconsin — two Midwestern states that were instrumental to his 2016 victory but may now be slipping from his grasp.

In back-to-back rallies, Trump accused the left of wanting to "erase American history" and "purge American values." He claimed, with no basis, that Democratic rival Joe Biden would put communities at risk.

Trump offered the dark message as he faces headwinds not only in national polling, which shows Biden leading, but also in key battleground surveys. His comments come after his campaign, with far less cash than Biden's, largely retreated from TV advertising in the Midwest, shifting much of its money to Sun Belt states such as Florida, North Carolina, Arizona and Georgia, as well as Pennsylvania.

As he tries to energize his base and keep on-the-fence voters from turning against him, Trump sought to paint Democrats as "anti-American radicals" and said moderates had "a moral duty" to join the Republican Party.

"The Democrat Party you once knew doesn't exist," he said.

It was the same on issue after issue, as he claimed in hyperbolic terms that Biden's election would spur "the single biggest depression in the history of our country" and "turn Michigan into a refugee camp."

Addressing the coronavirus crisis, Trump warned that Biden would "shut down the country, delay the vaccine and prolong the pandemic." Public health experts say the nation would be in far better shape had Trump's administration taken more aggressive action early on.

And while he repeatedly predicted victory, Trump seemed to grapple throughout the day with the prospect that he could indeed lose in November.

In Michigan, he quipped that, in January, he "better damn well be president. In Wisconsin, he wondered how he would process a loss.

"Can you imagine if I lose? I will have lost to the worst candidate in the history of American politics," he said. "What do I do?"

Trump has continued to hold rallies despite the threat of the coronavirus, which hospitalized him for several days earlier this month.

Wisconsin broke the record for new positive virus cases on Friday — the third time that's happened in a week. The state also hit record highs for daily deaths and hospitalizations this past week.

But there was little evidence of concern among the thousands of supporters Trump drew in both states, where audience members stood closely together in the cold, mostly without masks.

Trump continued to call on Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to roll back restrictions that remain in place to try to halt the spread of the virus, prompting the crowd to break into a "Lock her up!" chant. (The same chant also broke out after he mentioned his 2016 Democratic rival Hillary Clinton and Minnesota Rep. Ilhan Omar.)

Whitmer, a Democrat, was the focus of a kidnapping plot by anti-government extremists who were angered by lockdown measures. Thirteen men have been charged in connection with the scheme, which included plans to storm the state Capitol and to hold some kind of trial for the governor.

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"You got to get your governor to open your state and get your schools open. The schools have to be open, right?" said Trump, who also took credit for federal law enforcement's role in foiling the plot.

Whitmer's digital director, Tori Saylor, urged Trump to stop.

"Every single time the President does this at a rally, the violent rhetoric towards her immediately escalates on social media," she tweeted. "It has to stop. It just has to."

Biden, meanwhile, had no public events planned for Saturday. But in a memo to supporters, campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon warned about becoming complacent.

"The reality is that this race is far closer than some of the punditry we're seeing on Twitter and on TV would suggest," she wrote in the memo, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press. "If we learned anything from 2016, it's that we cannot underestimate Donald Trump or his ability to claw his way back into contention in the final days of a campaign, through whatever smears or underhanded tactics he has at his disposal."

Trump has an aggressive campaign schedule in the coming days, with rallies planned Sunday in Nevada, Monday in Arizona and Tuesday in Pennsylvania.

But Trump's schedule suggests concern. On Friday, he campaigned in Georgia — a state no Republican presidential contender has lost since 1992 but where polling shows Trump and Biden in a tight contest. Trump also has had to court voters in Iowa, which he carried by almost 10 percentage points four years ago.

The latest campaign fundraising figures from the Trump team suggest he's likely the first incumbent president in the modern era to face a financial disadvantage. After building a massive cash edge, his campaign spent lavishly, while Biden kept expenses low and benefited from an outpouring of donations that saw him raise nearly \$1 billion over the past three months. That gives Biden a massive cash advantage with just over two weeks to go before the election.

Trump on Saturday claimed that he would be "the greatest fundraiser in the history of politics" if he tried, but didn't want to make calls and didn't need the money.

Slodysko reported from Washington.

Turkish Cypriots pick leader as stakes soar in Mediterranean

By MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS Associated Press

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Turkish Cypriots began voting Sunday in a leadership runoff between an incumbent who pledges a course less bound by Turkey's dictates and a challenger who favors even closer ties to Ankara. The stakes have soared as a battle over energy rights in the eastern Mediterranean has intensified.

Veteran incumbent Mustafa Akinci, 72, is a champion of Turkish Cypriots who oppose Turkey's complete domination of their affairs. His hard-line challenger Ersin Tatar, 60, advocates fully aligning Turkish Cypriot policies with those of Turkey, the region's patron.

The Mediterranean island nation of Cyprus was split in 1974 when Turkey invaded after a coup by supporters of union with Greece. Only Turkey recognizes a breakaway Turkish Cypriot state in the north that is economically and militarily dependent on Ankara. The island's internationally recognized government has its seat in the Greek Cypriot south and is part of the 27-nation European Union.

The tussle between Turkish Cypriots who seek to retain more say in how they're governed and those who want to walk in lockstep with Turkey has been a prominent feature in past leadership races but this contest seems more polarized than ever.

Akinci has alleged that Turkey has engaged in "unprecedented" interference throughout the campaign in favor of Tatar and that he and his family have received threats to drop out of the race.

"We know that things happened that shouldn't have happened," Akinci said after casting his ballot, adding that he wishes voters will look back on Sunday's election with "pride for Turkish Cypriot democracy and will."

Tatar edged out Akinci in the first round of voting by less than three percentage points but Akinci now

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has clinched support from the third-place candidate. Analyst Tumay Tugyan says the contest could go either way as Tatar courted a significant pool of voters from the approximately 200,000-strong electorate — especially in rural areas — who may not have voted in the first round.

Tatar urged voters to get out and beat the first round's record-low turnout.

"The important thing is to reflect our will and send out a message to the world," Tatar said after voting.

A first test for the winner will be a meeting with Greek Cypriots and Cyprus' 'guarantors' — Greece, Turkey and Britain — that U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is expected call soon. The aim will be to figure out if there's enough common ground to restart dormant peace talks.

Nearly five decades of U.N. facilitated attempts at achieving reunification based on a federal framework have failed.

Akinci believes that federation is the only way toward a peace accord. Tatar shares the Turkish government view that federation may not be the most viable option and alternatives such as a two-state deal should be pursued.

Tensions have soared this summer in waters off Greece and Cyprus over sea boundaries and energy exploration rights after Turkey redeployed a research vessel near the Greek island of Kastellorizo. The move cast doubts on fresh talks aimed at resolving the dispute.

Turkey insists it has every legal right to search for hydrocarbons in waters where Greece and Cyprus claim exclusive economic rights. The Greek and Cypriot governments accuse Turkey of violating international law. The dispute raised fears of a military conflict between Greece and Turkey, NATO members who are strong regional rivals.

Organizers exhort women to vote for change at US rallies

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

Thousands of mostly young women in masks rallied Saturday in the nation's capital and other U.S. cities, exhorting voters to oppose President Donald Trump and his fellow Republican candidates in the Nov. 3 elections.

The latest of rallies that began with a massive women's march the day after Trump's January 2017 inauguration was playing out during the coronavirus pandemic, and demonstrators were asked to wear face coverings and practice social distancing.

Rachel O'Leary Carmona, executive director of the Women's March, opened the event by asking people to keep their distance from one another, saying that the only superspreader event would be the recent one at the White House.

She talked about the power of women to end Trump's presidency.

"His presidency began with women marching and now it's going to end with woman voting. Period," she said.

"Vote for your daughter's future," read one message in the sea of signs carried by demonstrators. "Fight like a girl," said another.

Demonstrators rallied in dozens of other cities from New York to San Francisco to signal opposition to Trump and his policies, especially the push to fill the seat of late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg before Election Day.

A socially distanced march was held at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, outside the dormitory where Bader Ginsburg lived as an undergraduate student.

In New York, a demonstrator wearing a Donald Trump mask stood next to a statue of George Washington at Federal Hall during the the women's march outside the New York Stock Exchange.

"We Dissent," said a cardboard sign carried by a young woman wearing a red mask with small portraits of the liberal Supreme Court justice whose Sept. 18 death sparked the rush by Republicans to replace her with a conservative.

People wearing masks gathered peacefully under sunny skies on the City Hall steps in Portland, Oregon, to sing and listen to speakers. One speaker called for racial justice and an end to police brutality.

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In Washington, the demonstrators started with a rally at Freedom Plaza, then marched toward Capitol Hill, finishing in front of the Supreme Court, where they were met by a handful of anti-abortion activists.

In one of several speeches at the rally, Sonja Spoo, director of reproductive rights campaigns at Ultra-violet, said she has to chuckle when she hears reporters ask Trump whether he will accept a peaceful transfer of power if he loses his reelection bid.

"When we vote him out, come Nov. 3, there is no choice," said Spoo. "Donald Trump will not get to choose whether he stays in power."

"That is not his power, that is our power. ... We are the hell and high water," she said.

Next month's presidential contest was also the focus of a separate New York protest Saturday in which hundreds of demonstrators protested the killings of Black people by police officers.

Among those protesting was Tamika Palmer, the mother of Breonna Taylor, a Black medical worker killed by officers in March during a raid at her home in Louisville, Kentucky.

A grand jury decided last month not to charge any of the police officers involved with her death; instead, one officer was charged with shooting into a neighboring home.

"People need to get out and vote," Palmer told those at the event. "Protesting is good but if we don't take it to the polls we're really not going to make the change we want and need."

Lynn Berry and Jose Luis Magana in Washington, Robert Bumsted in New York and Martha Bellisle in Seattle contributed to this report.

Rural Midwest hospitals struggling to handle virus surge

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WESSINGTON SPRINGS, S.D. (AP) — Rural Jerauld County in South Dakota didn't see a single case of the coronavirus for more than two months stretching from June to August. But over the last two weeks, its rate of new cases per person soared to one of the highest in the nation.

"All of a sudden it hit, and as it does, it just exploded," said Dr. Tom Dean, one of just three doctors who work in the county.

As the brunt of the virus has blown into the Upper Midwest and northern Plains, the severity of outbreaks in rural communities has come into focus. Doctors and health officials in small towns worry that infections may overwhelm communities with limited medical resources. And many say they are still running up against attitudes on wearing masks that have hardened along political lines and a false notion that rural areas are immune to widespread infections.

Dean took to writing a column in the local weekly newspaper, the True Dakotan, to offer his guidance. In recent weeks, he's watched as one in roughly every 37 people in his county has tested positive for the virus.

It ripped through the nursing home in Wessington Springs where both his parents lived, killing his father. The community's six deaths may appear minimal compared with thousands who have died in cities, but they have propelled the county of about 2,000 people to a death rate roughly four times higher than the nationwide rate.

Rural counties across Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana sit among the top in the nation for new cases per capita over the last two weeks, according to Johns Hopkins University researchers. Overall, the nation topped 8 million confirmed coronavirus cases in the university's count on Friday; the true number of infections is believed to be much higher because many people have not been tested.

In counties with just a few thousand people, the number of cases per capita can soar with even a small outbreak — and the toll hits close to home in tight-knit towns.

"One or two people with infections can really cause a large impact when you have one grocery store or gas station," said Misty Rudebusch, the medical director at a network of rural health clinics in South Dakota called Horizon Health Care. "There is such a ripple effect."

Wessington Springs is a hub for the generations of farmers and ranchers that work the surrounding

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land. Residents send their children to the same schoolhouse they attended and have preserved cultural offerings like a Shakespeare garden and opera house.

They trust Dean, who for 42 years has tended to everything from broken bones to high blood pressure. When a patient needs a higher level of care, the family physician usually depends on a transfer to a hospital 130 miles (209 kilometers) away.

As cases surge, hospitals in rural communities are having trouble finding beds. A recent request to transfer a "not desperately ill, but pretty" sick COVID-19 patient was denied for several days, until the patient's condition had worsened, Dean said.

"We're proud of what we got, but it's been a struggle," he said of the 16-bed hospital.

The outbreak that killed Dean's dad forced Wessington Springs' only nursing home to put out a statewide request for nurses.

Thin resources and high death rates have plagued other small communities. Blair Tomscheck, interim director of the health department in Toole County, Montana, worried that the region's small hospitals would need to start caring for serious COVID-19 patients after cases spiked to the nation's highest per capita. One out of every 28 people in the county has tested positive in the last two weeks, according to Johns Hopkins researchers.

"It's very, very challenging when your resources are poor — living in a small, rural county," she said.

Infections can also spread quickly in places like Toole County, where most everyone shops at the same grocery store, attends the same school or worships at a handful of churches.

"The Sunday family dinners are killing us," Tomscheck said.

Even as outbreaks threaten to spiral out of control, doctors and health officials said they are struggling to convince people of the seriousness of a virus that took months to arrive in force.

"It's kind of like getting a blizzard warning and then the blizzard doesn't hit that week, so then the next time, people say they are not going to worry about it," said Kathleen Taylor, a 67-year-old author who lives in Redfield, South Dakota.

In swaths of the country decorated by flags supporting President Donald Trump, people took their cues on wearing masks from his often-cavalier attitude towards the virus. Dean draws a direct connection between Trump's approach and the lack of precautions in his town of 956 people.

"There's the foolish idea that mask-wearing or refusal is some kind of a political statement," Dean said.

"It has seriously interfered with our ability to get it under control."

Even amid the surge, Republican governors in the region have been reluctant to act. North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum said recently, "We are caught in the middle of a COVID storm" as he raised advisory risk levels in counties across the state. But he has refused to issue a mask mandate.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, who has carved out a reputation among conservatives by foregoing lockdowns, blamed the surge in cases on testing increases, even though the state has had the highest positivity rate in the nation over the last two weeks, according to the COVID Tracking Project. Positivity rates are an indication of how widespread infections are.

In Wisconsin, conservative groups have sued over Democratic Gov. Tony Evers' mask mandate.

Whether the requirement survives doesn't matter to Jody Bierhals, a resident of Gillett who doubts the efficacy of wearing a mask. Her home county of Oconto, which stretches from the northern border of Green Bay into forests and farmland, has the state's second-highest growth in coronavirus cases per person.

Bierhals, a single mother with three kids, is more worried about the drop in business at her small salon. The region depends on tourists, but many have stayed away during the pandemic.

"Do I want to keep the water on, or do I want to be able to put food on the table?" she asked. "It's a difficult situation."

Bierhals said she thought the virus couldn't be stopped and it would be best to let it run its course. But local attitudes like that have left the county's health officer, Debra Konitzer, desperate.

Konitzer warned that the uncontrolled spread of infections has overwhelmed the county's health systems.

"I'm just waiting to see if our community can change our behavior," she said. "Otherwise, I don't see the end in sight."

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This story has been corrected to fix the spelling of Konitzer in one instance.

Armenia, Azerbaijan announce new attempt at cease-fire

By AIDA SULTANOVA Associated Press

BAKU, Azerbaijan (AP) — Armenia and Azerbaijan on Saturday announced a new attempt to establish a cease-fire in their conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh starting from midnight, a move that comes a week after a Russia-brokered truce frayed immediately after it took force.

The new agreement was announced following Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's calls with his counterparts from the two nations, in which he strongly urged them to abide by the Moscow deal. There were no immediate claims of violations after the truce took effect at midnight.

Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a war there ended in 1994. The latest fighting that began on Sept. 27 has involved heavy artillery, rockets and drones, killing hundreds in the largest escalation of hostilities between the South Caucasus neighbors in more than a quarter-century.

Russia, which has a security pact with Armenia but has cultivated warm ties with Azerbaijan, hosted top diplomats from both countries for more than 10 hours of talks that ended with the initial cease-fire agreement. But the deal frayed immediately after the truce took effect last Saturday, with both sides blaming each other for breaching it.

The full-scale fighting continued to rage through the week.

In a new escalation, Azerbaijan on Saturday accused Armenia of striking its second-largest city with a ballistic missile that killed at least 13 civilians and wounded 50 others.

The Armenian Defense Ministry denied launching the strike, but the separatist authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh put out a statement listing alleged "legitimate" military facilities in the city of Ganja, although they stopped short of claiming responsibility for the attack.

Azerbaijani officials said the Soviet-made Scud missile destroyed or damaged about 20 residential buildings in Ganja overnight, and emergency workers spent hours searching in the rubble for victims and survivors.

Scud missiles date back to the 1960s and carry a big load of explosives but are known for their lack of precision.

In a televised address to the nation, Azerbaijan's president, Ilham Aliyev, denounced the missile strike as a war crime and warned the leadership of Armenia that it would face responsibility.

"Azerbaijan will give its response and it will do so exclusively on the battlefield," Aliyev said.

While authorities in Azerbaijan and Armenia have denied targeting civilians, residential areas have increasingly come under shelling amid the hostilities.

Stepanakert, the regional capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, came under intense shelling overnight, leaving three civilians wounded, according to separatist authorities.

Aliyev announced that Azerbaijani forces have taken the town of Fizuli and seven villages around it, gaining a "strategic edge." Fizuli is one of the seven Azerbaijani regions outside Nagorno-Karabakh that was seized by the Armenian forces during the war in the early 1990s.

Azerbaijani authorities said 60 civilians have been killed and 270 have been wounded since Sept. 27, but they haven't revealed military losses. Separatist authorities said over 600 Nagorno-Karabakh soldiers and 36 civilians have been killed.

Azerbaijan has insisted it has the right to reclaim its land by force after efforts by the so-called Minsk group of international mediators that comprises Russia, the United States and France failed to yield any progress after nearly three decades. Azerbaijan has actively pushed for its ally Turkey to take a prominent role in future peace talks.

Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar spoke on the phone with his Azerbaijani counterpart, congratulating Azerbaijan on "liberating Fizuli from the occupation" and downing Armenian jets.

The Azerbaijani military declared Saturday that they downed an Armenian Su-25 jet, a claim quickly dismissed by Armenia's Defense Ministry.

The Armenian military said they downed three Azerbaijani drones over the territory of Armenia on Saturday. Azerbaijan denied that.

Drones and rocket systems supplied by Turkey have given the Azerbaijani military an edge on the battlefield, helping them outgun the Armenian forces that rely mostly on outdated Soviet-era weapons.

Associated Press writers Avet Demourian in Yerevan, Armenia; Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow and Zeynep Bilginsoy in Istanbul, Turkey, contributed to this report.

Suspect in teacher's beheading in France was Chechen teen

By THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A suspect shot dead by police after the beheading of a history teacher near Paris was an 18-year-old Chechen refugee unknown to intelligence services who posted a grisly claim of responsibility on social media minutes after the attack, officials said Saturday.

France's anti-terrorism prosecutor's office said authorities investigating the killing of Samuel Paty in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine on Friday arrested nine suspects, including the teen's grandfather, parents and 17-year-old brother.

Paty had discussed caricatures of Islam's Prophet Muhammad with his class, leading to threats, police officials said. Islam prohibits images of the prophet, asserting that they lead to idolatry. The officials could not be named because they were not authorized to discuss ongoing investigations.

French anti-terrorism prosecutor Jean-Francois Ricard said an investigation for murder with a suspected terrorist motive had been opened.

Ricard told reporters that the Moscow-born suspect, who had been granted a 10-year residency in France as a refugee in March, was armed with a knife and an airsoft gun, which fires plastic pellets.

His half-sister joined the Islamic State group in Syria in 2014, Ricard said. He didn't give her name, and it is not clear where she is now.

The prosecutor said a text claiming responsibility and a photograph of the victim were found on the suspect's phone. He also confirmed that a Twitter account under the name Abdoulakh A belonged to the suspect. It posted a photo of the decapitated head minutes after the attack along with the message "I have executed one of the dogs from hell who dared to put Muhammad down."

Ricard said the suspect had been seen at the school asking students about the teacher, and the headmaster had received several threatening phone calls.

Mourners marched near the school in solidarity Saturday, holding signs that read "I am a teacher." "We'll pick ourselves up together, thanks to our spirit of solidarity," said Laurent Brosse, mayor of Conflans-Sainte-Honorine.

A police official said the suspect was shot dead about 600 meters (yards) from where Paty died. Police opened fire after he failed to respond to orders to put down his arms and acted in a threatening manner. The official could not be named because of the ongoing investigations.

French President Emmanuel Macron went to the school on Friday night to denounce what he called an "Islamist terrorist attack." He urged the nation to stand united against extremism.

"One of our compatriots was murdered today because he taught ... the freedom of expression, the freedom to believe or not believe," Macron said.

The presidential Elysee Palace announced that there will be a national ceremony at a future date in homage to Paty.

In a video posted recently on Twitter, a man describing himself as the father of a student asserted that Paty had shown an image of a naked man and told students it was "the prophet of the Muslims."

Before showing the images, the teacher asked Muslim children to raise their hands and leave the room because he planned to show something shocking, the man said. "What was the message he wanted to send these children? What is this hate?" the man asked. The AP has not been able to independently confirm these claims.

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Chechnya is a predominantly Muslim Russian republic in the North Caucasus. Two wars in the 1990s triggered a wave of emigration, with many Chechens heading for western Europe. France has offered asylum to many Chechens since the Russian military waged war against Islamist separatists in Chechnya in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Chechnya's strongman regional leader Ramzan Kadyrov, who has used massive federal subsidies to rebuild the province and squelched any resistance with his feared security forces, condemned the teacher's killing but also warned against insulting the feelings of Muslims.

"We condemn this act of terror and offer our condolences to the relatives of the man who was killed," Kadyrov said on his blog. "While speaking out categorically against any manifestation of terrorism, I also urge not to provoke believers, not to offend their religious feelings."

He went on to criticize French society for what he described as manifestations of "provocative" disrespect for Islamic values. "When France has a proper state institution of inter-ethnic and inter-faith relations, then the country will have a healthy society."

Kadyrov noted that the Chechen suspect only visited the region once when he was 2 years old.

This is the second time in three weeks that terror has struck France linked to caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. Last month, a young man from Pakistan was arrested after attacking two people with a meat cleaver outside the former Charlie Hebdo offices.

The weekly was the target of a deadly newsroom attack in 2015, and it republished caricatures of the prophet this month to underscore the right to freedom of information as a trial opened linked to that attack.

Friday's terror attack came as Macron's government works on a bill to address Islamic radicals, who authorities claim are creating a parallel society outside the values of the French Republic.

Elaine Ganley contributed to this report.

Artist hikes length of Vermont, painting along the way

By LISA RATHKE Associated Press

MANCHESTER, Vt. (AP) — After hiking over 200 miles (320 kilometers) on the country's oldest long-distance trail, Rob Mullen had just 3 miles (5 kilometers) to go in the rain to meet up with his wife and father for a break.

He kept dry with his foul weather gear as he walked down the trail with a backdrop of trees sprouting fall's orange and yellow leaves and carrying trekking poles and a big stuffed blue pack on his back that held his precious painting kit.

Mullen, a 64-year-old wildlife and wilderness artist, is hiking the 272-mile (440-kilometer) Long Trail that runs the length of Vermont and over its highest mountains from the Canadian border to the Massachusetts state line and painting sights along the way.

He was nearing the end of his monthlong journey and planned to finish as soon as Saturday afternoon with half a dozen paintings and several thousand photos from which to paint. He's also coming away with sense of hope about the country from the people he's met along the trail.

"I'll be painting from this trip for a long time," he said during his break off the trail in Manchester on a Tuesday.

Mullen, who has done a number of wilderness canoe trips in Alaska and Canada, had planned to paddle in the Northwest territories of Canada this year with three others. But then the coronavirus pandemic hit.

He decided to do the entire Long Trail as a painting trip and to raise money with his art for the Vermont Wildlife Coalition, of which he is a board member, and the Green Mountain Club, which maintains the Long Trail.

Mullen managed to fulfill his plan to hike a certain distance and then paint a painting on the first day. He got to a shelter around 4 p.m., banged out a painting of an erratic boulder, cooked dinner and went to bed, he said.

But the northern part of the trail with the bigger mountains is tough and he admits he hadn't trained

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properly, which slowed his pace.

"I mean I was really suffering," he said, adding that he stopped to meet up his wife to hand off some weight, including his 8-pound (3.6 kilogram) painting kit. But he wasn't about to give up. As he continued, he gained strength and took back the painting kit. At times, he said the scenery was breathtaking.

Unlike paddling, provides a view he can see for miles, showing peaks poking through the clouds at higher elevations, his wife Bonnie Rowell said. She meets up with him about every five days to resupply him with food.

Along the way, Mullen has seen black bears and in a special sighting, a gray fox. And he's met many hikers who are either hiking the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine or, like himself, Vermont's Long Trail, sharing shelters with them for the night or meeting up on the trail.

"You get these ephemeral friendships," he said, of the bonds he made with strangers along the way.

The hikers look out for one another, share gear and help to fix what's broken. When two hikers ran out of fuel on a recent night, another hiker loaned them a fuel canister, he said. And so-called trail angels leave water at road crossings and other spots for hikers.

His monthlong hike was also a reprieve from the polarizing political debate in the country, he said. He hasn't heard a political discussion in weeks.

"It certainly gives you a little hope that the apparent polarization that comes across when you're watching the news doesn't go that deeply into the populace maybe, at least not in many of them. So it was encouraging for me," he said.

'There's a lemur!' 5-year-old helps crack SF Zoo theft case

Associated Press undefined

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Police said Friday they arrested a man suspected of stealing a ring-tailed lemur from the San Francisco Zoo, where officials rewarded a 5-year-old boy who helped recapture the endangered primate with a lifetime membership.

The theft of Maki, an arthritic 21-year-old lemur, made the news Wednesday in San Francisco and beyond when zoo officials reported the animal missing and found evidence of forced entry at his enclosure.

Five-year-old James Trinh was unaware of the headlines when leaving his preschool Thursday in Daly City, about 5 miles from the zoo, and exclaimed, "There's a lemur! There's a lemur!" Cynthia Huang, director of the Hope Lutheran Day School, told the San Francisco Chronicle Friday.

Huang was skeptical at first. "I thought, Are you sure it's not a raccoon?" she said.

Maki scurried from the parking lot into the school's playground and took refuge in a miniature play house, as the school called police who quickly alerted animal control and zoo officials. The children, parents and teachers watched as caretakers arrived and coaxed the lemur into a transport cage, Huang said.

Also Thursday, police took 30-year-old Cory McGilloway into custody, San Francisco police Lt. Scott Ryan told reporters Friday.

McGilloway, whom investigators had identified as a suspect in the lemur's abduction, was arrested Thursday evening by San Rafael police on unrelated charges. He was expected to be transferred to San Francisco County Jail to be booked on charges of burglary, grand theft of an animal, looting and vandalism all related to the lemur theft, Ryan said.

Police did not provide other details, saying the investigation was still underway but credited a multi-agency effort and tips on a public tip line that led to the suspect's capture.

San Francisco Zoo director Tanya Peterson said Maki was "an aging wild animal who needed special care" for ailments including arthritis. "He's still agitated, dehydrated and hungry," she said, adding that veterinarian teams were working to get him back to health. Due to his travels, she added, "He's socially distancing from his primate family" but would hopefully join the other lemurs soon.

Authorities had offered a \$2,100 reward for locating Maki, which the zoo will be giving to the church.

"I understand there is a young boy there who witnessed this and also called in the tip, and we are giving his family a free membership to the zoo," said Peterson, who thanked the boy and everyone who helped.

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"They literally saved a life."

US resorts adapt to new normal of skiing amid pandemic

By THOMAS PEIPERT Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Helmet, goggles, skis? Check. Hand sanitizer, face covering, reservation? Check.

Roughly seven months after the coronavirus cut the ski season short at the height of spring break, resorts across the United States and Canada are slowly picking up the pieces and figuring out how to safely reopen this winter. While many of the details are still being worked out, resort leaders are asking guests to curb their expectations and to embrace a new normal while skiing and snowboarding amid a pandemic.

That could mean wearing masks, standing 6 feet (1.8 meters) apart in lift lines (about the length of a typical ski), no dine-in service, riding lifts only with your group and no large gatherings for an apres drink.

"We're very optimistic about skiing this winter," said Dave Byrd, director of risk and regulatory affairs at the Colorado-based National Ski Areas Association. "The fact that we ski outside in ultraviolet sun and in the wind, and it's common for us to wear goggles, gloves and face coverings. All of those things bode very well for us as a sport."

Resorts, some of which are set to open at the beginning of November, are trying to avoid a repeat of last spring when many mountain communities were disproportionately hurt by the virus as travelers from all over the country and the world hit the slopes during one of the busiest times of the season.

Several counties in Colorado that are home to some of the country's largest and most popular ski resorts were particularly hard-hit, and state health officials warned that small community hospitals didn't have the resources to treat patients with the disease. In Utah, the county that calls Park City ski resort home reported a per-capita infection rate similar to New York City and parts of Italy — two major hot spots at the time.

This time around, industry leaders and health officials are hoping the knowledge that comes with several months of life during a pandemic will help guide their efforts to provide a safer experience.

Dr. Daniel Pastula, a neuroinfectious disease physician at UC Health University of Colorado Hospital, said the outdoor element of ski trips is generally safe during a pandemic, but the virus could spread if people congregate in places such as lift lines, lodges, restaurants and bathrooms.

"I think you can ski smartly and safely. Again, not completely eliminating the risk, but really reducing it," he said. Pastula listed now-common safety measures for skiers to follow, among them staying outdoors as much as possible, avoiding crowds and staying home when sick.

Meanwhile, Byrd said the NSAA is looking closely at how colleges, transportation systems and sports organizations are handling the virus.

"We do have the unusual luxury of watching what others do," he said. "All of that is going to play out over the next two to three months, which, nicely gives us some time. And we certainly got to preview how the southern hemisphere ski areas in Australia and New Zealand and South America, how they handled things."

Perisher Ski Resort near the far southeastern edge of Australia completed its ski season Oct. 5 with several restrictions in place after a delayed June 24 opening day.

Employees and guests were required to wear masks and stay at least 5 feet (1.5 meters) from each other while at the ski area, which is owned by Colorado-based Vail Resorts. Lifts were run at reduced capacity to allow for social distancing, and skiers and snowboarders were required to buy tickets in advance online. The number of guests allowed on the mountain also was capped based on the amount of terrain and the number of lifts that were open.

"We enjoyed sensational skiing and boarding all while smiling (under masks) ear to ear!" the resort posted on its website, while also acknowledging that "the odds were against us" because of the pandemic and intense brush fires that raged across the country the previous summer.

But other resorts in the southern hemisphere didn't escape unscathed.

Hotham Alpine Resort and Falls Creek northeast of Melbourne, Australia shut down their lifts on July 9 because of health restrictions and didn't reopen for the rest of the ski season. Meanwhile, a number of

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resorts in South America also had to scuttle their winter season because of the virus, including the popular Ski Portillo high in the Chilean Andes.

"Limitations, including weekend quarantines and travel restrictions, would prevent us from functioning normally," Portillo's owners posted on the resort's website in late August.

Many North American ski areas have already consulted with state and local health agencies and issued rules for the upcoming season.

Most will require social distancing, masks and online ticket sales, and will limit how many people are allowed in indoor spaces like base lodges and restaurants. But many are going a step further by requiring reservations, which has irked some skiers and snowboarders concerned about getting a spot on the mountain, especially during busy powder days.

Vail Resorts, which owns 34 resorts in the United States and Canada, has announced it will implement a reservation system that allows pass holders exclusive access at the beginning of the season, unlimited week-of reservations and a rolling selection of priority days.

Resorts will limit capacity based on past visitation rates, available terrain, traffic modeling of the upcoming season, and how individual resorts handle COVID-19 restrictions, CEO Rob Katz said.

He acknowledged that some guests might not be able to ski and snowboard any time they want but said, "the bottom line is, is that in a typical season for most days, capacity at our resorts is at a level that would not require us to have to impose any limits."

For many, the reservation system and other restrictions are not enough to keep them home after being cooped up under health orders for the greater part of a year.

During a Sept. 24 earnings call, Katz reported that sales of season passes were up 18% this season compared to the same time last season — a development Byrd attributed to "the cabin fever effect" heading into the winter.

"I think people are looking to the ski areas — 470 ski areas in the United States — as a way to have a safe outdoor recreational experience," he said.

Associated Press writer Lisa Rathke contributed to this report from Marshfield, Vermont.

Trump plays down virus as he steps up pitch for second term

By AAMER MADHANI and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gone are the days when President Donald Trump held forth daily at the White House podium flanked by members of his coronavirus task force. And the days when Vice President Mike Pence and other task force officials would head to Trump's office to brief him immediately after their meetings.

The White House won't say when Trump last met with the task force.

In the week since he emerged from coronavirus isolation, Trump has demonstrated new determination to minimize the threat of the virus that has killed more than 215,000 Americans and complicated his chances of winning another four years in the White House.

"The light at the end of the tunnel is near. We are rounding the turn," Trump told supporters Friday at an event in Fort Myers, Florida, one of many moments during a week of campaigning when the president tried to play down the virus threat. "Don't listen to the cynics and angry partisans and pessimists."

In word and action, he is pushing an optimistic outlook even as coronavirus infections are spiking in Europe and public health officials are raising alarm that the infection rate in the U.S. is climbing toward a new peak.

In the past week he has spread misinformation about the virus, undercut the nation's leading infectious disease expert and kept up his practice of shunning mask use. The effort to diminish the virus has gone into overdrive as Democrats try to frame the race for the White House as a referendum on Trump's handling of the worst U.S. public health crisis in over a century.

The U.S. economy is still roughly 11 million jobs short of recovering all 22 million jobs that were lost when the pandemic struck in early spring. The nation averaged more than 50,000 new coronavirus cases

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per day over the past week. National and battleground public opinion polls suggest that Trump faces stiff headwinds in his bid for a second term.

Olivia Troye, a former aide to the task force who has emerged as a harsh Trump critic, says that early in the crisis Trump was "asking the right questions" when doctors spoke to him about their concerns that the country could face a surge of cases in the fall and winter.

"That's why it so completely reckless of him, after having COVID himself, to turn around this week and double down on taking the mask off and parading around like it's not a necessary thing, calling himself immune," she said. "He's doubling down on misinformation that has been coming out of his mouth for the entire tenure of this pandemic."

At his NBC News town hall on Thursday night, Trump was asked whether he should have known better than to announce his nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court with a Rose Garden ceremony and indoor reception where few guests wore masks and social distancing was nonexistent.

He responded by incorrectly citing a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study to falsely suggest that mask wearing doesn't mitigate the spread of the virus. The study did not say that.

Trump also has been guarded in releasing information about his health and wouldn't say whether he had tested negative on the day of his first debate with Democrat Joe Biden, two days prior to his positive diagnosis, allowing only, "Possibly I did, possibly I didn't."

After first lady Melania Trump revealed this week that their son, Barron, had tested positive for the illness, Trump used his child's health scare and recovery to try to make the case that the virus is no big deal for young people.

"It happens. People have it, and it goes," Trump said at a rally in Iowa. "Get the kids back to school."

Earlier in the week, Trump undermined the nation's top infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, who has at times contradicted the president's commentary about the virus.

"He's a nice guy so I keep him around, right?" Trump mused at a rally in North Carolina, adding of the studiously non-partisan Fauci: "He's a Democrat. ... He's (New York Gov. Andrew) Cuomo's friend."

While campaigning, Trump and his team often go without masks, a return to the status quo for a president who earlier in the crisis suggested that some people wore masks just to signal their disapproval of him.

In one striking moment this week, senior adviser Hope Hicks returned to campaigning with Trump more than two weeks after she tested positive for the virus. Hicks, the president and other aides climbed aboard Maine One wearing no masks.

Trump defends his decision to go mask-less by saying that doctors tell him he isn't shedding virus anymore and he remains "immune" for at least four months.

Public health experts say that by refusing to wear masks, Trump and his advisers are missing an opportunity to model behavior that is essential to keep the rest of America safe.

Dan Eberhart, a prominent Republican donor and Trump supporter, said the president's rhetoric since leaving the hospital isn't easing jitters among conservative contributors.

Several GOP senators in tough races are having difficulty keeping up with an avalanche of Democratic campaign contributions that's being driven in part by liberal anger over the president's handling of the pandemic, Eberhart said.

"Keeping up the veneer that everything is fine may soothe the president's ego, but it isn't motivating donors," Eberhart added.

Trump's interest in engaging with Fauci and other top medical officials on the coronavirus task force waned long ago.

Fauci said in an interview with the Skullduggery podcast this past week that the task force was meeting seven days a week in the spring, but now typically holds one virtual meeting per week and a weekly call to update governors on the state of the virus.

Dr. Deborah Birx, the task force coordinator, continues to spend most of her time traveling, frequently by car, between hot spot states trying to help governors and public health officials handle their epidemics.

Neither Fauci nor Birx has appeared with Trump in public in months. As recently as Friday, Fauci con-

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tradicted Trump, saying he was “concerned” about the president frequently describing the country as “rounding the corner” on the virus, a notion at odds with the data.

Tensions on the task force continue between Trump’s science adviser, Dr. Scott Atlas, who is not an expert in public health or infectious diseases, and the other professional scientists. The latter view Atlas, who joined the White House in August, as promoting dangerous theories around “herd immunity” and resisting more aggressive calls for Americans to wear face masks. They see Atlas as reinforcing Trump’s worst instincts and lending the veneer of science to rhetoric they see as fundamentally dangerous.

Madhani reported from Chicago. Associated Press writers Kevin Freking in Washington and Darlene Superville in Fort Myers, Florida, contributed reporting to this report.

New virus restrictions in Europe; Merkel warns of hard days

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Chancellor Angela Merkel urged Germans to come together like they did in the spring to slow the spread of the coronavirus as the country posted another daily record of new cases Saturday.

“Difficult months are ahead of us,” she said in her weekly video podcast. “How winter will be, how our Christmas will be, that will all be decided in these coming days and weeks, and it will be decided by our behavior.”

Meanwhile, new restrictions went into effect in several other European nations in an effort to staunch the resurgence of the pandemic.

In Paris and eight other French cities, restaurants, bars, movie theaters and other establishments were being forced to close no later than 9 p.m. to try to reduce contact among people. The country was deploying 12,000 extra police officers to enforce the new rules.

Many restaurant owners have bristled at the order. An earlier months-long lockdown devastated the sector.

“I have the right to question the government’s approach, I think it’s a catastrophic measure for the industry,” said Xavier Denamur, who owns Les Philosophes and several other bistros in Paris’s chic Le Marais district, saying that if nothing else, the curfew should be 11 p.m.

“At least that would not destroy us,” he said. “There’s no evidence that this difference of a couple of hours will have any effect on the virus circulating.”

In Britain, a three-tier regional approach to battle the pandemic introduced by Prime Minister Boris Johnson went into effect, with each level bringing progressively tighter restrictions.

On Saturday, tier-2 cities like London and York were subject to a ban on socializing with people from other households indoors, while the county of Lancashire joined Liverpool in tier 3 with the tightest restrictions.

Among other things, that means pubs have been forced to close and socializing with others is banned even in many outdoor settings.

In Northern Ireland a lockdown lasting four weeks came into force Friday. All pubs and restaurants must close except for takeaway services, and schools will close for two weeks for an extended half-term holiday.

Data from Friday showed that a further 136 people died in the U.K. within 28 days of testing positive for coronavirus, bringing the total official toll to 43,429.

The World Health Organization has warned that intensive care units in a number of European cities could reach maximum capacity in the coming weeks if the number of infections doesn’t slow.

Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg joined the list of top politicians who have tested positive for the virus, and was quarantined though he showed no symptoms, his office told Austria’s APA news agency.

The Vatican, meanwhile, said someone who lives in the same hotel as Pope Francis tested positive for the virus, adding to the 11 cases of COVID-19 among the Swiss Guards who protect him.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the country’s head of state, was quarantined after a bodyguard was infected, his office said. A first test came out negative.

Germany, which was widely lauded for rapidly slowing the spread of the virus when the pandemic first

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broke out, has seen rapidly climbing numbers in recent days.

On Saturday, the country's disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute, reported 7,830 cases overnight, a new record.

Like most countries, Germany has been grappling with how to keep schools and businesses open while trying to prevent people from coming into close contact with one another.

Germany has registered a total of 356,387 coronavirus cases and a relatively low 9,767 deaths.

Merkel urged Germans to avoid unnecessary travel, cancel parties and remain at home whenever possible. "What brought us so well through the first half year of the pandemic?" she asked. "It was that we stood together and obeyed the rules out of consideration and common sense. This is the most effective remedy we currently have against the pandemic and it is more necessary now than ever."

In the neighboring Czech Republic, the number of new infections surpassed 10,000 for the first time, surging to 11,105 on Friday, the Health Ministry said. The country has now registered a total of 160,112 cases, including 1,283 deaths.

Despite new restrictive measures to slow the surge, Health Minister Roman Prymula said he still expects a rise in those testing positive for about two weeks.

Next door, Slovakia said it was acquiring 13 million rapid antigen tests — enough to test each member of the population twice — and would establish 6,000 testing sites.

Prime Minister Igor Matovic said testing will take place over the next two weekends, starting with the three or four hardest hit counties. It was not immediately clear whether tests would be mandatory.

Italy's northern Lombardy region, where the European outbreak began in late February, has taken new measures to contain rebounding infections, limiting bar service and alcohol sales, banning contact sports and closing bingo parlors.

The regional government late Friday called for high schools to adopt hybrid schedules, with students alternating in-person with online learning.

The measures were taken after Lombardy, Italy's most populous region, once again became the most affected, adding more than 2,000 infections a day. Hospitals are coming under strain and intensive care units are filling up.

The new measures allow only table service for bars from 6 p.m., ban takeout alcohol sales from that time and prohibit all consumption of booze in public spaces.

Italy's other hardest hit region, southern Campania, has taken similarly strict measures, including a shutdown of schools for two weeks. After parents protested, the regional governor backed off Friday and allowed daycare centers to remain open.

In the capital, Rome, residents grumbled as cases climbed, fearing a return to the strict country-wide measures that were imposed when the virus was spreading out of control.

"The situation is critical thanks to the morons, because I call them morons, who have not respected the rules," said resident Mario Massenzi. "And if we fall back into the same situation as in March, we are finished."

Thomas Adamson in Paris, Sylvia Hui in London, Nicole Winfield in Rome, Colleen Barry in Milan and Karel Janicek in Prague contributed to this report.

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Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Oct. 18, the 292nd day of 2020. There are 74 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 18, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 107 ~ 79 of 79

On Oct. 18, 1944, Soviet troops invaded Czechoslovakia during World War II.

On this date:

In 1867, the United States took formal possession of Alaska from Russia.

In 1892, the first long-distance telephone line between New York and Chicago was officially opened (it could only handle one call at a time).

In 1898, the American flag was raised in Puerto Rico shortly before Spain formally relinquished control of the island to the U-S.

In 1954, Texas Instruments unveiled the Regency TR-1, the first commercially produced transistor radio.

In 1962, James D. Watson, Francis Crick and Maurice Wilkins were honored with the Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology for determining the double-helix molecular structure of DNA.

In 1968, the U.S. Olympic Committee suspended Tommie Smith and John Carlos for giving a "Black power" salute as a protest during a victory ceremony in Mexico City.

In 1969, the federal government banned artificial sweeteners known as cyclamates (SY'-kluh-maytz) because of evidence they caused cancer in laboratory rats.

In 1972, Congress passed the Clean Water Act, overriding President Richard Nixon's veto.

In 1977, West German commandos stormed a hijacked Lufthansa jetliner on the ground in Mogadishu, Somalia, freeing all 86 hostages and killing three of the four hijackers.

In 2001, CBS News announced that an employee in anchorman Dan Rather's office had tested positive for skin anthrax. Four disciples of Osama bin Laden were sentenced in New York to life without parole for their roles in the deadly 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa.

In 2009, Jessica Watson, a 16-year-old Australian, steered her bright pink yacht out of Sydney Harbor to start her bid to become the youngest person to sail solo and unassisted around the world. (She succeeded, returning to Sydney Harbor in May 2010.)

In 2014, the Supreme Court said Texas could use its controversial new voter identification law for the November election, rejecting an emergency request from the Justice Department and civil rights groups to prohibit the state from requiring voters to produce certain forms of photo ID. (Three justices dissented.)

Ten years ago: Four men snared in an FBI sting were convicted of plotting to blow up New York City synagogues and shoot down military planes with the help of a paid informant who'd convinced them he was a terror operative. (Defendants James Cromitie, David Williams, Onta Williams and Laguerre Payen were each sentenced to 25 years in prison.)

Five years ago: Habtom Zerhom, an Eritrean migrant, died after he was shot by an Israeli security guard and then attacked by bystanders who'd mistaken him for a Palestinian assailant in a deadly bus station attack in the southern city of Beersheba. The Mets breezed past the Chicago Cubs 4-1 for a 2-0 lead in the NL Championship Series. Actor-comedian Eddie Murphy was honored with the Mark Twain Prize, the nation's top prize for humor, at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

One year ago: The world's first all-female spacewalking team, NASA astronauts Christina Koch and Jessica Meir, replaced a broken part of the International Space Station's power grid. A bomb killed more than 60 people during prayers at a mosque in the Afghan village of Jodari.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Dawn Wells is 82. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Mike Ditka is 81. Singer-musician Russ Giguere is 77. Actor Joe Morton is 73. Actor Pam Dawber is 70. Author Terry McMillan is 69. Writer-producer Chuck Lorre is 68. Gospel singer Vickie Winans is 67. Director-screenwriter David Twohy (TOO'-ee) is 65. International Tennis Hall of Famer Martina Navratilova is 64. Actor Jon Lindstrom is 63. International Hall of Fame boxer Thomas Hearns is 62. Actor Jean-Claude Van Damme is 60. Jazz musician Wynton Marsalis is 59. Actor Vincent Spano is 58. Rock musician Tim Cross is 54. Singer Nonchalant is 53. Former tennis player Michael Stich (sh-teek) is 52. Actor Joy Bryant is 46. Rock musician Peter Svensson (The Cardigans) is 46. Actor Wesley Jonathan is 42. Rhythm-and-blues singer-actor Ne-Yo is 41. Country singer Josh Gracin is 40. Country musician Jesse Littleton (Marshall Dyllon) is 39. Olympic gold medal skier Lindsey Vonn is 36. Jazz singer-musician Esperanza Spalding is 36. Actor-model Freida Pinto is 36. Actor Zac Efron is 33. Actor Joy Lauren is 31. TV personality Bristol Palin is 30. Actor Tyler Posey is 29. Actor Toby Regbo is 29.