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CONTINGENCY EDITION

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Free to Deployed Areas

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Recruiting in the time of coronavirus

Despite deep cuts into numbers, officials say changes likely to stay

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

Staff Sgt. Riley Krebsbach still makes the same recruiting pitch to sell young Americans on the U.S. Army despite the current coronavirus outbreak, but his delivery is drastically different.

Face-to-face meetings with potential recruits have been replaced by long hours on a computer and smartphone — searching for and chatting with prospects in a safe digital environment. Instead of working from his Moreno Valley recruiting station in southern California, visiting local high schools and canvassing community events to explain the benefits that come with Army service, Krebsbach now posts messages on social media and interviews prospects via video conferencing services from his home.

Because of social distancing, recruiters faced a sudden shift to telework and digital prospecting, which Krebsbach said was challenging. But it has led them to rethink the art of recruiting and find innovative ways to connect. The outbreak could have lasting impact on the way the military fills its ranks.

SEE RECRUITING ON PAGE 4

Staff Sgt. Elysia Wilson, a production recruiter with the 168th Wing, helps enlist a new recruit using a video conference call April 16 at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska. This virtual enlistment allowed a new Alaska Air National Guard recruit to complete their oath of enlistment while complying with COVID-19 safety regulations.

SHANNON CHACE
U.S. Air National Guard

Claims for jobless aid in US climb to 36 million

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Nearly 36 million laid-off workers applied for U.S. unemployment benefits last week as the viral outbreak led more companies to slash jobs even though most states have begun to let some businesses re-open under certain restrictions.

Roughly 36 million people have now filed for jobless aid in the two months since the coronavirus first forced millions of businesses to close their doors and shrink their workforces, the Labor Department said Thursday.

Still, the number of first-time applications has now declined for six straight weeks, suggesting that a dwindling number of companies are reducing their payrolls.

By historical standards, the latest tally shows that the number of weekly jobless claims remains enormous, reflecting an economy that is sinking into a severe downturn. Last week's pace of new applications for aid was still four times the record high that prevailed before the coronavirus struck hard in March.

Jobless workers in some states are still reporting difficulty applying for or receiving benefits. These include freelance, gig and self-employed workers, who became newly eligible for jobless aid this year.

The states that are now easing lockdowns are doing so in varied ways. Ohio has permitted warehouses, most offices, factories, and construction companies to reopen, but restaurants and bars remain closed for indoor sit-down service.

SEE JOBLESS ON PAGE 10

■ Online: Get the latest on the virus outbreak
stripes.com/coronavirus

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Pandemic crisis forecast to hit insurers for \$200B

Associated Press

LONDON — The pandemic will cost the insurance industry over \$200 billion, according to Lloyds of London, who estimated that its own payouts are now on a par with the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks or the combined impact of hurricanes Harvey, Maria and Irma in 2017.

Lloyds, which as an insurance market pays out to insurers affected by disasters, said it expects to pay between \$3 billion and \$4.3 billion to insurance companies to

help them cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Losses could widen if lockdowns continue into the next quarter, which would push the overall cost to the insurance industry to \$203 billion. Unlike the storms, for example, the pandemic's impact is global, systemic and long term.

"Lloyd's believes that once the scale and complexity of the social and economic impact of COVID-19 is fully understood, the overall cost to the global insurance non-life industry is likely to be far in

excess of those historical events," the London-based insurance market said.

The study undertaken by Lloyds assumed social distancing and lockdown measures through 2020, as well as the forecasts for the drop in gross domestic product globally.

"What makes COVID-19 unique is not just the devastating continuing human and social impact, but also the economic shock," Lloyd's Chief Executive John Neal said.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		
Euro costs (May 15)	.....	\$1.05
Dollar buys (May 15)	.....	€0.9028
British pound (May 15)	.....	\$1.19
Japanese yen (May 15)	.....	108.00
South Korean won (May 15)	.....	1,197.00

Commercial rates		
Bahrain (Dinar)	.....	0.3775
British pound	.....	\$1.2192
Canada (Dollar)	.....	1.4120
China (Yuan)	.....	7.1002
Denmark (Krone)	.....	6.9121
Egypt (Pound)	.....	15.7300
Euro	.....	\$1.0790/0.9268
Hong Kong (Dollar)	.....	7.7500
Hungary (Forint)	.....	328.68
Israel (Shekel)	.....	3.5492
Japan (Yen)	.....	106.91
Kuwait (Dinar)	.....	0.3094
Norway (Krone)	.....	10.2551
Philippines (Peso)	.....	50.59
Poland (Zloty)	.....	4.24
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	.....	3.7572
Singapore (Dollar)	.....	1.4261
South Korea (Won)	.....	1,233.32

Switzerland (Franc)	.....	0.9739
Thailand (Baht)	.....	52.13
Turkey (Lira)	.....	6.9648

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	.....	3.25
Discount rate	.....	0.25
Federal funds market rate	.....	0.05
3-month bill	.....	0.13
30-year bond	.....	1.35

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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MIDEAST

Burials, shock after Afghan hospital attack

By SHARIF HASSAN
AND SUSANNAH GEORGE
The Washington Post

KABUL, Afghanistan — Hajar Sarwari was in labor with her second child at a western Kabul maternity ward on Tuesday morning when gunmen shot her twice in the abdomen, killing her and her unborn child.

Sarwari's family buried her atop a hill under overcast skies on the outskirts of the Afghan capital Wednesday morning, one day after three gunmen killed 24 people in a Doctors Without Borders maternity ward. The baby remained in her womb.

"There's no humanity left in this country," said Sarwari's husband, Mohammad Hussain Yaqoobi, his speech slow and halting. He stood near his wife's grave, marked by a simple black headstone and a small mound of upturned earth. "The attackers had no conscience. How can they justify shooting dead innocent newborns and their mothers?"

The burial was one of many across Kabul on Wednesday morning. Hospital officials said the mothers of 10 newborns were among Tuesday's dead, as were those of two infants, pregnant women, nurses and a security guard. Sixteen were wounded.

More funerals were held about 100 miles to the east, in Nangarhar province. A suicide bombing there on Tuesday killed 32 and wounded 133. The attacker struck hours after the hospital rampage began and targeted a funeral gathering for a prominent local security official. The Islamic State claimed responsibility.

The brutality of the attack on the maternity ward paired with the funeral bombing shocked Kabul and the country. The Taliban denied responsibility, but the militants have increased attacks on Afghan forces in



KIANA HAYERI/For The Washington Post

After Hajar and her unborn baby's burial, women gathered inside one room to console her mother, mother-in-law and sister and pay their respect to the family.

other parts of the country for weeks, inflicting heavy casualties. Afghan security officials linked that uptick in attacks to the Tuesday's attacks on civilians.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani responded by directing his forces to resume offensive operations against the Taliban. The move marks a major setback to peace efforts in Afghanistan. The Taliban called Ghani's statement a "declaration of war."

Maintaining a defensive footing was intended as a goodwill gesture as Afghan government officials and Taliban leaders wrestled over how to begin direct peace talks. But the talks, mandated by the U.S.-Taliban peace deal signed in February, were repeatedly delayed for months over a controversial prisoner exchange and escalating violence.

The U.S. military command in Kabul said Wednesday that there had been no change in the posture of American troops in Afghanistan since Ghani's announcement.

"The established military-military communications channel [between the United States and the Taliban] continues to function as a conduit through which both sides can address concerns," according to a spokesman for U.S. forces who spoke on the condition of anonymity in line with departmental regulations.

In Kabul, families affected by the maternity ward attack tried to move forward Wednesday. At a hospital in western Kabul, newborns who had been rescued from Tuesday's shooting were reunited with relatives.

Outside one of the rooms, Khan Ali held

his child, with his wife by his side. She had given birth minutes before the attack, and both she and the baby girl escaped unharmed.

"God has given a second life for my wife and daughter," he said.

In a statement released Wednesday, Doctors Without Borders said it had "indications" that one of its employees was killed and that its health workers were following up with survivors.

"Every effort is being made by our medical team to follow up on the newborns in the maternity hospital to ensure the best possible care to our patients and to those injured, to provide psychological care to affected staff, and to provide every necessary support to those bereaved," the statement read.

At Sarwari's family home, relatives gathered to comfort the grieving and express their condolences.

"Have you ever heard that newborn babies were shot dead? This is the first I hear. It hasn't happened in any country around the world," said Mohammad Rahim Yousifi, a distant relative.

Sarwari's mother wept uncontrollably, supported by a group of women in long black robes. "Stop. You're already sick, don't cry anymore," one of the women begged.

Outside, Sarwari's 6-year-old daughter, Razia, played and giggled in the front garden.

No one had told her what had happened to her mother.

Rahila Yaqoobi, her aunt, said the young girl had been eager to go to the hospital with her mother. "I told her, 'Don't go, wait here. Mommy will bring a baby for you,'" she recalled and then began to cry.

"I don't know how to tell her that her mommy is dead," she said.

US military offers condolences over deadly Iran accident

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The U.S. military offered condolences Thursday to Iran over a friendly fire incident in the Islamic Republic that killed 19 of its troops, identifying the weapon used in the incident as an anti-ship cruise missile.

Iranian authorities on Monday said that a missile struck the Iranian navy vessel Konarak near the port of Jask, some 790

miles southeast of Tehran in the Gulf of Oman. Authorities said the Konarak was too close to a target and was accidentally hit Sunday in an incident that also wounded 15 troops.

In a statement, Capt. Bill Urban, a spokesman for the U.S. Central Command, said the force offered "our sincere condolences to the Iranian people for the tragic loss of life." However, Urban also criticized

the training for taking place so close to the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20% of all oil passes.

"While we are troubled that this mishap occurred in such close proximity to a high-trafficked international shipping lane and at a time when most of the region's focus is on the fight against COVID-19, the unnecessary loss of life is regrettable," he said.

Tensions had been expected to rise after Iran's government overcame the initial chaos that engulfed its response to the coronavirus pandemic. In April, the U.S. accused Iran of conducting "dangerous and harassing" maneuvers near American warships in the northern Persian Gulf. Iran also had been suspected of briefly seizing a Hong Kong-flagged oil tanker just before that.

Taliban truck bomb leaves at least 5 civilians dead in latest attack

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A Taliban truck bomb killed at least five civilians when it exploded near a military court in eastern Afghanistan on Thursday, continuing a series of bloody attacks that have put Afghan forces back on the offensive.

Five security officials and 15 civilians were also wounded by the blast in Garder, the capital of Paktia province, the Afghan Defense Ministry said in a statement.

"The area was crowded with civilians," Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Aryan said in a phone interview.

The Taliban intended to attack the court building, but guards identified the explosives-laden vehicle before it reached the entrance and the blast detonated early, the defense ministry said.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the bombing, which spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement was a direct response to President Ashraf Ghani ordering Afghan troops Tuesday to resume offensive operations against the insurgents.

Ghani gave the order hours after an attack on a Kabul hospital killed 24, including at least two newborns. The Taliban denied involvement in the hospital shootings and in another attack that day that killed at least 32 at a funeral in Nangarhar province, which was later claimed by Islamic State. ISIS hasn't claimed the hospital attack, but it was in an area home to a large Shiite Hazara minority, who have frequently been the target of the militants' suicide bombings and raids.

Although Ghani's televised speech focused on the Taliban, his country's troops have continued to fight ISIS, which both

the Taliban and Afghan forces consider a foe.

As of Thursday afternoon, the Afghan military had yet to resume offensive attacks against the Taliban, said Rohullah Ahmadzai, a defense ministry spokesman. "You cannot go into action as soon as the president orders it," Ahmadzai said. "But we'll finish the planning and start physical operations very soon."

The U.S. expected the signing of the Feb. 29 peace deal with the Taliban in Qatar to bring a reduction in violence and formal talks that would bring about a comprehensive cease-fire.

Instead, the Taliban have ramped up their operations, officials from the U.S.-led NATO Resolute Support mission in the country told the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, in a recent report to Congress. But the group had

refrained from attacking provincial centers, likely to avoid jeopardizing the agreement, the command said.

The Taliban has avoided attacking foreign forces, though coalition troops have supported their Afghan allies in defensive measures and continue to serve as advisers.

The resumption of Afghan offensive operations does not signal an end to the peace process, both Ghani and U.S. officials have said. The U.S. military continues to carry out an initial drawdown of troops from around 13,000 to 8,600 as called for in the deal. If the Taliban meet the expectations of the Feb. 29 agreement, foreign forces would complete their withdrawal by the middle of next year.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Recruiting: Military sees benefits in moving to digital enlistments

FROM FRONT PAGE

“The transition has been sort of an acquired skill set,” said Krebsbach, 31, who spent seven years in the infantry before shifting two years ago to a temporary recruiting assignment that he hopes to make permanent. “Getting used to working from home — moving us into social media and virtual prospecting. It’s not something we were very big on before, but we jumped right into it.”

“I’m already sure it will be a big part of recruiting for our future,” he said.

On March 18, the Army made an unprecedented decision in U.S. military recruiting history. The largest service shut down public access to its 140 recruiting stations. Krebsbach and others were ordered to telework when possible and target potential recruits online and by phone.

The other services quickly followed.

By March 25, when the Marine Corps announced it would shift prospecting efforts entirely to the virtual sphere, the Pentagon’s recruiting force of more than 20,100 service members had ditched recruiting stations and offices.

The military cannot simply stop recruiting, even in the face of the world’s worst health crisis in decades. It must bring young, healthy men and women into the services — more than 150,000 every year — to fill its ranks as others leave for civilian life.

Falling behind on recruiting has serious ripple effects.

For example, when the Army failed to meet its annual recruiting goal in 2018 for the first time since 2005, it was unable to meet its end-strength goal. That slowed the Army’s ability to prepare for potential conflicts with near-peer adversaries like China and Russia. Top service officials found that the Army’s recruiting processes lagged decades behind in technology. Recruiters, Army leaders said, failed to target prized 17-to-24-year-olds where they were most likely to be found — sharing on social media and playing online video games.

The cost of corona

Despite the digital efforts, recruiting has suffered. All four services reported drops in the metrics that track progress on the recruiting front. In some cases, services fell short by thousands of new contacts with potential recruits. Others projected they would sign far fewer recruits to enlistment contracts amid the pandemic.

All of the services reported drastic declines in the number of recruits they sent into their initial training centers.

The shift to full virtual recruiting cost Maj. Gen. Frank Muth, the Army’s recruiting chief, and his team nearly two weeks of prospecting efforts.

He said he expects to face a shortfall by the end of May of about 3,100 recruits with signed contracts. His recruiters entered the pandemic with more than



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Staff assigned to Recruit Training Command process recruits as part of a preliminary health screening at Chicago O’Hare Airport in Chicago, Ill., on April 21.

2,000 signed contracts ahead of the short-term goals set by the Army.

“Even if we’re behind 3,500, 3,800, I still think with all of the innovation we are doing and the morale of the recruiters right now and how much they want to get after it — I think we’ll be able to make it,” Muth said.

While the Army does not yet have a specific recruiting goal for fiscal year 2020, Muth expects the number to fall just shy of the 68,000 that his organization exceeded last year. Service officials earlier this year floated an unofficial 69,000 recruit goal, but better-than-expected retention rates among current soldiers have likely lowered expectations.

The other military services reported similar shortfalls in March as the pandemic spread.

The Navy saw a 45% dip in qualified individuals expressing interest in March, compared to March 2019. The Navy’s recruiting chief, Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, attributed the sharp drop almost entirely to the impact of the coronavirus.

“March was probably the peak month for shock value — no one wants to go outside, no one wants to do anything. I think that will probably be the high mark,” Velez said from his office in Millington, Tenn. “I thoroughly believe as the country opens up we’re going to see our numbers normalizing. But 45% is a significant number and something we are really looking at closely to make sure it doesn’t become a trend.”

Velez anticipates his recruiters’ production surging in the summer months and his service meeting its original goal of 40,800 new recruits.

The Marine Corps lowered its goal for fiscal year 2020 by 2,000 amid the pandemic, aiming to ship 33,290 to basic training, said Gunnery Sgt. Justin Kronenberg, a spokesman for Marine Recruiting Command.

The service saw a drop of about 25% in contacts with qualified individuals in March over the same month last year.

Kronenberg described the pandemic’s impacts on his service’s recruiting efforts as “dramatic.”

“Our systematic recruiting process has always placed a premium on ‘kneecap to kneecap’ interaction between a recruiter and applicant, so it may be challenging to replicate this physical assessment of those wanting to become Marines solely through tech mediums.”

Air Force officials expressed similar reservations as they saw drops in recruiting metrics in March that continued into April. But despite those drops, the Air Force reported its recruiters so far in 2020 have outpaced their performance in 2019, produc-

ing 50,000 more qualified leads between January and April 2020 than in the first four months combined in 2019.

Based on that early success, service officials waived individual goals for its more than 1,800 recruiters. The overall goal remains — to ship 29,068 recruits to basic training, according to Chrissy Cuttita, a spokeswoman for Air Force Recruiting Service.

‘I knew we were ready’

Amid the outbreak, the services have streamlined once-clunky procedures to screen and process prospective recruits, developed innovative tactics to target those prospects, and proven that recruiting can be done without stations and offices.

“I think what we’ve realized is that for a lot of the basic stuff, we can do it working from home,” said Tech. Sgt. Joshua Stanley, an Air Force recruiter based in Dover, Del. “It shows we really can almost get you ready to go to a [Military Entrance Processing Station] before we ever see you in person. I don’t think we’d ever considered that before.”

Krebsbach said he looks forward to returning to high schools and large events, but he’ll con-

tinue to post daily workout videos and memes to Instagram and Facebook. He will keep targeting prospects through applications popular with younger people, like Snapchat, where he recently used a video feature to interview a potential recruit.

“I think it’s actually a little easier to ask questions over the digital plane than face-to-face in person for some people,” he said. “It can be intimidating sitting down in the office talking to someone in an Army uniform.”

Muth, who heads the U.S. Army Recruiting Command in Fort Knox, Ky., was confident his recruiters could handle the challenge of virtual prospecting. His decision to shutter stations from the general public was about protecting his own people, he said.

“We saw where this thing was going, so we came out of the stations,” he said. “We wanted to reduce the risk to our soldiers and their family members.”

Muth, a helicopter pilot by trade, led Army recruiting into a digital-first effort that he believes has positioned his enterprise well to weather the pandemic.

“I knew we were ready to do this,” Muth told Stars and Stripes. “Who would have thought that we would have had to exercise this at 100%?”

A new normal

Military leaders are already studying lessons learned from the sudden, drastic change to their recruiting model.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

FROM PAGE 4

It could result in the reorganization of recruiting teams, drastic shifts toward virtual prospecting and other major changes to the business.

Muth, who this week allowed a select few recruiting stations to reopen to the public in areas deemed at less risk for the virus, is developing plans to change daily operations for his Army recruiting force. The general does not want to see recruiters return to spending large portions of their time in stations.

Instead, he wants recruiters there only for specific purposes, using offices as hubs between outings within their communities or time spent virtually prospecting from home. He likened them to patrol bases, small military outposts where troops stop for water, food or supplies.

He called it a "new version of the old norm."

"I don't need to be in the recruiting station to be able to recruit," Muth said. "Does that mean that maybe they come into the patrol base every other day? And on those other days they are on their own — be it Starbucks or the high school or telecommuting from home."

The Army could close some of its smaller stations as its recruiters base themselves out of their vehicles, similar to the model used by many pharmaceutical representatives.

"I think it opens up a lot of pos-

sibilities for the future," Muth said.

Officials with other services could again follow the Army's example. The Navy has empowered its recruiters to do much of their business away from stations, said Velez, the service's recruiting chief.

"A recruiter right now has pretty much everything they need on a laptop," he said. "So, when they meet with the individuals, they can take biometrics, get signatures all right on the spot — so you don't need to meet in the [recruiting] building. You can meet someone in the Starbucks and do pretty much the entire process."

Recruiters said they were excited about some of the changes.

After the initial adjustment period in mid-March, Krebsbach said he pitched the Army to more people in the past month via social media than ever.

Master Sgt. Dana Bazile, an Air Force recruiting flight chief based in Pennsylvania, said she has seen innovation across the large group of recruiters she oversees.

"This is great opportunity to evaluate how we function on a day-to-day basis and eliminate wasted man hours," she said. "The ways that our recruiters are now using technology, social media — that will continue to increase greatly from what we were doing before. We're not going back, in that nature."

The bottom line, Velez said, the Navy — and the entire U.S. mili-



BROOKE C. WOODS/U.S. Marine Corps

New recruits with Echo Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, respond to orders during receiving at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, on May 4.

tary — is open for business and needs new, dedicated people to fill its ranks. Recruiting is a no-fail mission, he said.

Recruiters "understand how critical it is for us to get new sailors and recruits into the Navy,"

he said. "Because at the end of the day we have 90 plus ships at sea today — over one-third of our force is underway doing the nation's business, and... if we fail at doing our part, some kid is going to stay at sea longer because we

can't get the right sailors through the schoolhouse to relieve him so he can get to shore duty and take a knee."

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MILITARY

Tricare eliminates copays for telehealth

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The military's health insurance provider is covering telephone appointments and has eliminated copayments for telehealth services as of Wednesday.

The changes to Tricare will remain in effect through the national emergency, according to a new rule posted on the Federal Register by Jonathan Woodson, assistant secretary of defense for

health affairs.

"These changes will reduce the spread of COVID-19 among Tricare beneficiaries by incentivizing use of telehealth services," the rule states.

The decision came after Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., and Sen. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., urged the Defense Health Agency to cover the full scope of telehealth services under Tricare. The senators, both of whom are veterans, particularly wanted to

expand service members' access to mental health care.

In a letter to the Defense Health Agency on May 4, the senators acknowledged that Medicare and Medicaid had lifted restrictions on telehealth and encouraged Tricare to follow suit.

"This is the right call — I'm glad Tricare heeded our concerns and rightly decided to expand coverage for telehealth services for military families at this critical time," Shaheen said in a state-

ment Wednesday. "This will allow military families to more easily check in with a doctor without unnecessary out-of-pocket expenses, which is especially important now that health advice and counseling is at such high demand and so necessary."

Existing regulations prevent Tricare from covering telephone appointments in most cases. The new rule posted to the Federal Register created an exemption during the coronavirus pan-

demetic. The rule states that "it is imperative" to allow telephone appointments when medical providers deem it necessary.

With telehealth, Tricare typically requires medical providers to be licensed in the states where their patients live. During the pandemic, Tricare is relaxing its rules. Providers may be licensed in any U.S. state and allowed to treat patients across state lines.

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Yongsan gives all-clear after probe of package

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. military sealed off part of the Yongsan Garrison in Seoul for several hours on Thursday as it investigated a suspicious package at the post office, which turned out to be a hair grooming kit.

The package was cleared at about 1 p.m., and the post office will reopen on Friday, the garrison said.

The garrison had urged soldiers to stay in their barracks located in the area and other personnel to remain in offices. It also blocked an overpass that connects the area with another part of the sprawling base.

Traffic was allowed to resume as normal after the all-clear.

"Although this package did not

pose a threat since it was determined to be a hair grooming kit, the processes and procedures were standard to ensure the safety and security of the community," garrison spokeswoman Denver Beaulieu-Hains said.

Yongsan was the main U.S. military base in South Korea for decades after the 1950-53 Korean War. However, the population has dwindled to about 2,000 as it is in the process of closing as part of a long-delayed relocation plan.

Most service members and support staff have moved to Camp Humphreys and other hubs south of the capital.

Those remaining include military police, the garrison staff, members of the Combined Forces Command and other residual staff.

Space wing commander dies at Peterson Air Force Base

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Air Force Col. Thomas Falzarano, who commanded the service's 21st Space Wing, was found dead Tuesday at his home on Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado, service officials said Wednesday.

The Air Force has opened an investigation into Falzarano's death but initial indications show he likely died of natural causes, officials said in a statement. Falzarano, 47, was not believed to have contracted the coronavirus, the officials said.

Falzarano took command of the 21st Space Wing for the Air Force in July 2019, and had led it for the Space Force since December. The unit is responsible for warning of incoming missiles to the top generals and admirals overseeing military operations around the world, among other space control and defense missions.

Air Force officials on Wednesday described Falzarano as a talented space officer who was expected to become a general officer, likely in the Space Force.

Space Force Gen. Jay Raymond,

the chief of space operations, said Falzarano's death was "tragic" for the Air Force and Space Force. Before taking command of the 21st Space Wing, Falzarano spent a year working as Raymond's executive officer at the former Air Force Space Command, which has since morphed into the headquarters of the Space Force.

The 21st Space Wing's vice commander, Col. Sam Johnson, who took command of the unit Tuesday, described his late boss as "a fearless leader" who will be "sorely missed."

Falzarano was a 1994 graduate of the Air Force Academy, also in Colorado Springs. After commissioning, he initially flew F-16 fighter jets before attending the service's space and missile training program, becoming its top graduate in late 1996, according to his official biography. He'd spent most of the rest of his career in the space field, which would include stints at the Pentagon and a yearlong tour in Iraq from 2007 to 2008, serving as a strategic engagement adviser to Iraqi forces in Baghdad.

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PHOTOS BY ALISON J. HUMMEL/U.S. Navy

The guided-missile destroyer USS John Paul Jones conducted live-fire training in the Pacific Ocean on Tuesday as part of an exercise designed to fully integrate units of the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group.

Destroyer USS John Paul Jones conducts live-fire drill in Pacific

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The Arleigh Burke class guided-missile destroyer USS John Paul Jones conducted live-fire training in the Pacific Ocean on Tuesday as part of an intensive exercise designed to fully integrate units of the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group.

The USS Nimitz departed from Naval Base Kitsap in Bremerton, Wash., on April 27.

The ongoing exercise tests "a strike group's ability as a whole to carry out sustained combat operations from the sea," according to a U.S. Navy statement.

The USS John Paul Jones, which is homeported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, is joined in the strike group training by guided-missile cruiser USS Princeton; guided-missile destroyers USS Sterett and USS Ralph Johnson; Destroyer Squadron 9; and Carrier Air Wing 17.

"Ships, squadrons and staff will be tested across every core warfare area within their mission sets through a variety of simulated and live events, including air warfare, strait transits, and responses to surface and subsurface contacts and electronic attacks," the Navy said.

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MILITARY

GAO: DOD failed to meet goal of fighting assault

By JOHN M. DONNELLY
CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — Back in 2011, the Government Accountability Office urged the Pentagon to start formally monitoring how military leaders were doing in combating sexual harassment and assault, and the auditors also proposed establishing a Defense Department system for tracking progress in the overall effort.

At the time, a top Pentagon official agreed fully in writing with the auditors' recommendations and said both tasks would be done that year.

But, more than eight years later, neither job has been accomplished, GAO reported this week.

Armed Services Committee members in both chambers, when apprised of the unmet goal, said it exemplifies an inadequate Pentagon focus on a continuing scourge.

"For the DoD to come to Capitol Hill and provide sworn testimony in congressional hearings that they have zero tolerance for sexual harassment and assault, all the while knowing that they have failed to take even these common-sense steps to prevent this kind of toxic rot for nearly a decade after GAO outlined the actions, is infuriating and unacceptable," Rep. Jackie Speier, a California Democrat who chairs the Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel, said in a statement to CQ Roll Call.

"Had these policies been adopted in 2011, who knows how much further we would be in the fight to eliminate not just harassment but other forms of sexual violence in our armed forces."

Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., who is a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, also said the Pentagon has taken too long to set up the oversight mechanisms.

"These delays are a poor reflection of the Department's commitment to root out sexual harassment, and DOD leadership must do better," Shaheen told CQ Roll Call in a statement. "I urge the Department of Defense to move expeditiously and implement these policies and oversight framework to ensure the health and safety of all service members."

The GAO compiled 81 of the auditors' top-priority recommendations for the Defense Department that have yet to be implemented.

Several recommendations concerned sexual assault and harassment.

"Our work has found weaknesses in DOD's approach to

instituting effective policies and programs on sexual harassment," the Tuesday report said. "In 2011, we found that DOD did not have assurance that individuals in positions of leadership were being held accountable for promoting, supporting, and enforcing the department's sexual harassment prevention policies and programs."

The 2011 report urged the department to develop a strategy for holding leaders accountable and, secondly, to create an oversight plan that would establish goals, means, metrics and funding levels for improving the situation.

Jo Ann Rooney, then the principal deputy Defense undersecretary for personnel and readiness, said in a Sept. 13, 2011, letter included in the report that the department concurred with both recommendations and would implement them in that fiscal year.

"Leadership accountability is essential to the success of Service and DoD efforts to prevent sexual harassment," Rooney wrote in reference to the proposal to create a way to gauge leaders' actions.

As for the oversight framework, Rooney wrote that she "recognizes the need" for the department to help guide prevention efforts.

But GAO reported this week that, as of January 2020, the Pentagon was still coordinating implementation of the recommendations.

The Pentagon had not provided a response this week to a query about the matter.

Brenda Farrell, GAO's director of defense capabilities and management, said in a statement for CQ Roll Call on Tuesday that the recommendations in question are important.

"First, for individuals in positions of leadership, support for DOD's sexual harassment policies and programs must be unequivocal — those who do not take the issue of sexual harassment seriously or who do not address incidents when they occur can undermine the department's efforts," Farrell said.

"Second," she said, "the absence of an oversight framework — including performance goals, objectives, milestones, and metrics — limits the ability of decision makers, including Congress and DOD, to assess the effectiveness of the department's policies and programs for addressing incidents of sexual harassment."

In recent years, the prevalence of unwanted sexual contact between Defense Department personnel, both military and civilian, has increasingly been the subject of public and congressio-



ANDREW HARRER, GETTY IMAGES/TNS

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., seen here in November, and other members of the Armed Services Committee urge the DOD to move forward on policies it promised to complete to monitor how military leaders are combating sexual harassment and assault.

nal attention.

Lawmakers in both parties have tried to stem sexual offenses within the military for more than a decade, inserting dozens of provisions into the annual Pentagon policy bill aimed at changing military culture and the handling of these crimes.

Military leaders have spoken out more and more about the importance of tackling the problem. To deal with it, the Defense Department has launched a bevy of surveys and reports and has created new organizations and over-

sight mechanisms.

Still, the progress is mixed at best, experts said.

An October 2019 report on the Pentagon's top management challenges from the department's inspector general office included sexual offenses on the list and noted that a substantial portion of them are not prosecuted fully. The report also noted that a climate that condones sexual offenses is likely to be plagued by other problems. And it said people who are victims of sexual crimes often suffer from post-traumatic stress

disorder for years afterward.

The number of reported sexual assault and harassment cases in the military rose in each of the last three years for which data is available — from 6,172 in fiscal 2016 to 7,825 in fiscal 2019, the report said.

"For too long, sexual harassment in the military has been a systemic problem," Shaheen said. And the GAO's Farrell said the Defense Department "has not demonstrated the commitment necessary to effectively address" the problem.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Unusual itinerary

Air Force crew from Ramstein leapfrogs around Italy flying medical supplies

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — The itinerary was a first for a C-130 cargo plane crew from Ramstein: fly to Milan, continue to Rome, back to Milan, then back home to Germany, all in the same day.

The large Italian civilian airports, now desolate and eerily quiet due to the coronavirus pandemic, aren't typical destinations for the 37th Airlift Squadron at Ramstein. But the route will soon be familiar, as the squadron begins a mission to help Italy through the crisis.

Wednesday's flight around Italy was the first of a planned series organized by U.S. Air Forces in Europe to distribute thousands of pounds of medical supplies to hospitals across the country, officials said.

The effort is part of a \$100 million relief plan for Italy announced last month by the White House, USAFE officials said. It calls for the Pentagon to transport medical equipment and other humanitarian aid in coordination with the State Department and the Italian government.

NATO's Rapid Air Mobility initiative, activated in March for coronavirus relief efforts, also contributed to Wednesday's mission.

Two similar flights from Ramstein to Italy are planned in the coming week, officials said. They will likely continue as long as Italy needs them.

On Wednesday, the C-130J Super Hercules landed at Milan with an empty cargo hold at a nearby airport.

Milan is close to the epicenter of Italy's coronavirus outbreak in Lombardy. The normally busy Milan Malpensa Airport looked like an aircraft boneyard, with fleets of idle passenger jets parked everywhere.

"It's a ghost town," said Maj. Thomas Morgan, who piloted the flight with 1st Lt. Kane McManus. When the C-130 landed, it was one of only two aircraft taxiing at the sprawling international airport.

The crew picked up six pallets of KN95 masks, surgical gowns and COVID-19 test kits destined for hospitals in Italy's south, greeting their Italian counterparts with waves or elbow bumps instead of handshakes.

The plane flew on to Rome, where it picked up a smaller shipment of N95 masks and others with protective face shields, destined for hospitals in the north, which meant a return to Milan.

"It feels great ... to be able to be part of something bigger than ourselves and help out an ally, especially one as old as Italy," Morgan said.

With fewer opportunities to fly during the pandemic, McManus said they were eager to "get this one ... and be able to help out when we can."

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PHOTOS BY JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

Senior Airman David Tan, 86th Operations Support Squadron aircraft loadmaster, watches as an Italian cargo loader places a pallet for loading into a C-130J Super Hercules in Milan, Italy, on Wednesday.



Above: A cargo label can be seen on medical supplies to be distributed by the U.S. Air Force. Left: Maj. Thomas Morgan, a 37th Airlift Squadron pilot at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, talks to Italian air force personnel about supplies.

Flyover planned to salute Hawaii's health care workers

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — Air Force and Air National Guard aircraft were to conduct a flyover of Hawaii's major hospitals Thursday in a salute to frontline health care workers coping with the coronavirus.

Aircraft from the Hawaii Air National Guard and Air Force at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam were to fly above most of the state's large hospitals and major metro areas beginning around 11:30 a.m., the Air Force said in a news release Wednesday.

The F-17 Globemaster III, KC-135 Stratotanker and F-22 Raptor

fighter jets were to fly at a altitude of about 3,000 feet.

The planes were scheduled to first fly as a group over seven hospitals on the island of Oahu, after which the F-22s would head off to regularly scheduled training. The C-17 would fly on alone to Kauai, while the KC-135 would head east toward Molokai, Lanai, Hawaii island and Maui.

Flyovers have become commonplace across the U.S. mainland in the era of COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

The Navy's Blue Angels and Air Force's Thunderbirds demonstration squadrons have flown over numerous cities on the main-

land in recent weeks as a gesture to medical personnel, emergency responders and others dealing daily with the pandemic.

Some have criticized the flyovers as taxpayer funds ill-spent at a time of 15% unemployment and burgeoning federal deficits in the wake of emergency funding for workers, businesses and hospitals.

The Air Force stressed in its news release Wednesday that the aircraft flying over Hawaii were conducting routine training flights.

"These aircraft were already scheduled for these training flights, so the flyover is at no ad-

ditional cost to the taxpayer," the Air Force said.

The flight path was set in coordination with officials with the Federal Aviation Administration and Hawaii, the Air Force said.

"This event will recognize the hard work that everyone in Hawaii has already accomplished to keep Hawaii's [coronavirus] cases among the lowest in the United States, while also acknowledging the need for continued vigilance, and our obligation to those in our community who will require continued assistance," said Brig. Gen. Dann S. Carlson, commander of the Hawaii Air National Guard's

154th Wing. "These flyovers are meant to provide hope and reaffirm confidence in our state and nation while emphasizing the Air Force's enduring commitment and support to the people of the State of Hawaii."

Hawaii has had 638 coronavirus cases and 17 deaths as of Wednesday, according to the Hawaii Department of Health.

The Air Force advised people to watch the flyovers from their homes, refraining from travel, in order to adhere to social distancing guidelines in place by order of the governor.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Japan easing emergency, but not in big cities

Associated Press

BANGKOK — Experts on Japan's coronavirus task force on Thursday approved a government plan to lift a state of emergency in most areas ahead of schedule except for Tokyo and several other high-risk areas.

Economy Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura said after the task force met that the experts approved lifting the emergency in 39 of the country's 47 prefectures. Emergency measures would remain for eight others, including Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and Hokkaido, where risks still remain high.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had declared the state of emergency on April 7 for Tokyo and six other urban prefectures and later expanded it to the whole country through May 31. With signs of the infections slowing, Abe is seeking to relax the measure while balancing disease prevention and the economy.

Japan now has more than 16,000 confirmed cases, with about 680 deaths. The number of new cases has significantly decreased nationwide.

Abe will explain details at a Thursday conference later Thursday. Experts are also expected



EUGENE HOSHIKO/AP

A man wearing a face mask stands at a building window in Tokyo on Thursday. Experts on Japan's coronavirus task force on Thursday approved a government plan to lift a state of emergency in most areas ahead of schedule except for Tokyo and several other high-risk areas.

to provide the basis for easing the measure, as well as its possible tightening if there is a resurgence.

Etchime prefecture in western Japan, where an outbreak in a hospital has infected about 20 nurses, patients and their fami-

lies, will have the state of emergency lifted on the condition containment measures are taken and the infections are closely in-

vestigated, Nishimura said.

Experts and officials have urged people to adopt "new lifestyles" and continue practicing physical distancing measures such as remote-working and avoid out-of-town trips even after the state of emergency is lifted.

In China, some residential compounds in Wuhan have begun testing inhabitants for the coronavirus as a program to test everyone in the Chinese city of 11 million people in 10 days got underway.

One compound in the city's Qiaokou district said several hundred people had been tested since Wednesday. Another compound in the same district said Thursday it was registering residents before starting. The city ordered local communities to test everyone after six new cases surfaced last weekend, the first infections there in more than a month.

Wuhan, where the virus was first detected last December, was the hardest-hit city in China with 3,869 reported deaths. China reported three new cases nationwide for 82,929 cases in total.

France, Germany, Italy vow to provide more economic help

Associated Press

ROME — European governments promised more relief to their citizens on Thursday.

France's government announced an 18-billion-euro (\$19.4 billion) plan to support restaurants, hotels and other tourist facilities that have been closed since mid-March amid the coronavirus crisis.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe promised the French on Thursday that they will be able to go on vacation in France in July and August, including in French overseas territories, as the country has started lifting its lockdown this week.

Germany's parliament approved plans to increase the amount paid to people who spend months in a government-backed short-time work program during the coronavirus crisis. Companies are making extensive use of the program, which was credited with keeping down unemployment during the financial crisis over a decade ago. It allows them to keep employees on the payroll while they await better times.

Those announcements came after Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte promised a massive package of tax cuts and other financial aid to help businesses and families.

"Your cry of alarm didn't escape

us," Conte said late Wednesday. His government also promised to legalize the status of foreigners, many of them illegal migrants who are crop-pickers, babysitters and caretakers.

Italy is one of the countries worst hit by the coronavirus. But U.S. has the largest coronavirus outbreak in the world by far: 1.39 million infections and over 84,000 deaths, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Worldwide, the virus has infected more than 4.3 million people and killed some 297,000. Experts say the actual numbers are likely far higher.

The fallout from the pandemic includes heightened political tensions between nations.

In China, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian, criticized the United States, saying authorities there have failed to effectively fight the global coronavirus pandemic and "abused American people's trust."

Zhao appeared to be firing back against accusations from the Trump administration that China mishandled or deliberately delayed releasing information about the outbreak, first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year.

Zhao said the U.S. should "focus more on fighting the epidemic and safeguarding the lives and



GIAN EHRENZELLER, KEYSTONE/AP

A technician wears a protective mask during inspection work at the Heidibuel panorama cable car in Churwalden, Switzerland, on Thursday. European governments promised more relief to their citizens on Thursday amid the coronavirus crisis.

health of the American people, and stop playing such [a] buck-passing game."

Australia said it will push for an inquiry into the origins of the coronavirus even if it hurts trade relations with China. Prime Minister Scott Morrison had been accused of playing "deputy sheriff" to the U.S. after calling for the inquiry.

Morrison brushed off the criticism, telling reporters: "We have always been independent, we have always pursued our national interests, and we always will."

The world's public health measures continue to provoke conflict between officials and the public.

In Ethiopia, police said they arrested over 1,000 people for refusing to wear face masks in public, while in Greece a spat broke out over a government plan

to install cameras in high school classrooms. The idea is to provide live-streaming to allow for reduced classroom attendance when schools reopen next week. But a privacy watchdog and a left-wing opposition party called cameras a serious privacy risk.

In many parts of the world, communities and individuals were finding inventive ways to cope with what many view as a "new normal." Apartment dwellers in Rio de Janeiro were getting much-needed entertainment from children's movies projected onto screens set up outside their buildings, similar to a drive-in theater. Cesar Miranda Ribeiro, president of city-owned RioFilme company, said the effort, called "Cinema in the Windows," is aimed at "trying to take care of the mental health of the people."

Back to jail for mobsters sent home fearing virus

Associated Press

ROME — Italian convicted mobsters who had been temporarily transferred from prison to house arrest for fear of coronavirus contagion are being brought back behind bars, the country's justice minister said Thursday, after their treatment was criticized as unduly lenient.

Alfonso Bonafede came under fire after more than 370 convicted mobsters and drug traffickers successfully argued they needed to be temporarily released to avoid becoming infected with the new coronavirus in prison.

Corriere della Sera daily on Thursday reported that one of the first inmates returned to prison was a convicted Cosa Nostra boss, Antonio Sacco. He won temporary release despite being incarcerated in a cell on his own under strict prison rules for mobsters, which include limited occasions to mingle with other inmates.

Responding to questions on Thursday from members of Chamber of Deputies' Justice Commission, Bonafede confirmed that mobsters were being ordered back to prison. "The (administrative) machinery has started to review the health situation of those who asked to get out" of prison on grounds they were at risk of catching COVID-19, the minister said.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

As pandemic rolls on, GOP hits pause on new aid

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Businesses are going belly up, tens of millions have been laid off and, by some measures, the U.S. seems headed for another Great Depression. But Republicans surveying the wreckage aren't ready for another round of coronavirus aid, instead urging a "pause."

It's a position based on a confluence of factors. Polls have showed that GOP voters think the government is already doing enough. Republicans on Capitol Hill are divided over the best approach. Billions approved by Congress have yet to be spent. And it's also unclear what President Donald Trump wants to do next, if anything, to juice the economy — his payroll tax cut idea hasn't gained any traction on Capitol Hill.

For these and other reasons, GOP leaders see an unfolding crisis that does not yet cry out for further action.

"There's just a pragmatic piece to this, which is, if we're going to do another bill, let's get into June and July so we know how people are reemerging," said Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-N.C., who gave up his leadership post last year to take the top GOP job on the Financial Services Committee.

The political balancing act comes as the long-dormant deficit-wringing of the GOP members back to life, receding from the House Democratic proposal to spend another \$3 trillion in taxpayer money. Yet many Republicans have conceded that there is risk to standing pat at a time of massive unemployment,

financial struggles for local governments and growing COVID-19 caseloads, particularly with the November election fast approaching.

Despite their distaste for further negotiations with Democrats, many Republicans privately see passage of another coronavirus measure as inevitable.

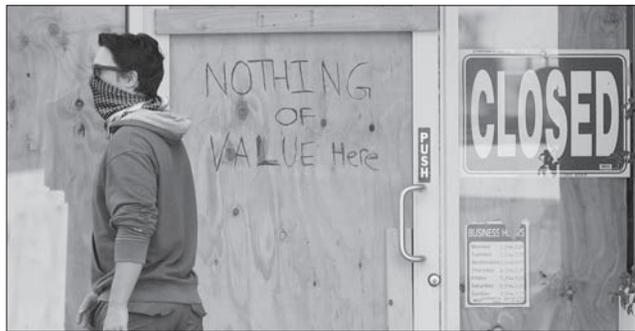
Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a proponent of the pause, said Tuesday that Republicans are "taking a look at what we've already done. And we've added about \$3 trillion to the national debt, and assessing the effectiveness of that before deciding to go forward."

Yet McConnell also cracked open the door, cautiously, to more legislation, provided that it is "narrowly targeted."

"I'm in discussion, we all are, with the administration. If we reach a decision along with the administration to move to another phase, that'll be the time to interact with the Democrats," he said.

All recent polls have shown that GOP voters are more likely to be satisfied with the government's response than Democrats. They are less fearful of a second wave of cases as states loosen stay-at-home orders, and they are not clamoring for more aid.

"We're starting to hear grumbling against spending that I haven't heard for a while," said Adam Brandon, president of FreedomWorks, a conservative group that has helped promote demonstrations around the country demanding a relaxation of state lockdown orders.



JEFF CHU/AP

A man wears a face mask while walking past a handwritten sign advising that nothing of value is inside a boarded up Union Nails salon during the coronavirus outbreak in San Francisco on Tuesday.

Jobless: Unemployment numbers continue to plummet amid hitting more historic lows

FROM FRONT PAGE

A handful of states have gone further, including Georgia, which has opened barber shops, bowling alleys, tattoo parlors and gyms. South Carolina has reopened beach hotels, and Texas has reopened shopping malls.

Data from private firms suggested that some previously laid-off workers have started to return to small businesses in those states, although the number of applications for unemployment benefits remains high.

The latest jobless claims follow a devastating jobs report last week. The government said that the unemployment rate soared to 14.7% in April, the highest rate since the Great Depression, and employers shed a stunning 20.5 million jobs. A decade's worth of job growth was wiped out in a month.

Even those figures failed to cap-

ture the full scale of the damage. The government said that many workers in April were counted as employed but absent from work, but should have been counted as temporarily unemployed.

Millions of other laid-off workers didn't look for a new job in April, likely discouraged by their prospects in a mostly shuttered economy, and weren't included either. If all those people had been counted as unemployed, the jobless rate would have reached nearly 24%.

Most economists have forecast that the official unemployment rate could hit 18% or higher in May before potentially declining by summer.

The job market's collapse has occurred with dizzying speed. As recently as February, the unemployment rate was 3.5%, a half-century low. Employers had added jobs for a record 9½ years. Even in March, unemployment

was just 4.4%.

Now, with few Americans shopping, traveling, eating out or otherwise spending normally, economists are projecting that the gross domestic product — the broadest gauge of economic activity — is shrinking in the April-June quarter at a roughly 40% annual rate. That would be the deepest quarterly contraction on record.

Few analysts expect a quick rebound. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell warned Wednesday that the virus-induced recession could turn into a prolonged downturn that would erode workers' skills and employment connections while bankrupting many small businesses.

Powell urged Congress and the White House to consider additional spending and tax measures to help small businesses and households avoid bankruptcy.

US immunologist warns of 'darkest winter' if virus rebounds

BY RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — America faces the "darkest winter in modern history" unless leaders act decisively to prevent a rebound of the coronavirus, said a government whistleblower who alleged that he was ousted from his job after warning the Trump administration to prepare for the pandemic.

Immunologist Dr. Rick Bright made his sobering prediction in testimony prepared for his appearance Thursday before the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Aspects of his complaint about early administration handling of the crisis are expected to be backed up by testimony from an executive of a company that manufactures respirator masks.

The federal watchdog agency has found "reasonable grounds" that

Bright was removed from his post as head of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority after sounding the alarm at the Department of Health and Human Services. Bright alleged that he became a target of criticism when he urged early efforts to invest in vaccine development and stock up on supplies.

"Our window of opportunity is closing," Bright says in his prepared testimony posted on the House committee website. "If we fail to develop a national coordinated response, based in science, I fear the pandemic will get far worse and be prolonged, causing unprecedented illness and fatalities."

Bright's testimony follows this week's warning by Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, that a rushed lifting of store-closing and stay-

at-home restrictions could "turn back the clock," seeding more suffering and death, and complicating efforts to get the economy rolling again.

President Donald Trump on Thursday dismissed Bright in a tweet as "a disgruntled employee, not liked or respected by people I spoke to and who, with his attitude, should no longer be working for our government." It's a sentiment some of the president's political allies have expressed about Fauci as well.

In his prepared testimony, Bright said, "The undeniable fact is there will be a resurgence of (COVID-19) this fall, greatly compounding the challenges of seasonal influenza and putting an unprecedented strain on our health care system."

"Without clear planning and implementation of the steps that I and other experts have outlined,

2020 will be darkest winter in modern history," Bright wrote.

Bright, who has a doctoral degree in immunology, outlined a path forward that would be based on science, even as researchers work to develop better treatments and an effective vaccine. The steps include:

- Establishing a national testing strategy. The White House has urged states to take the lead on testing, even as the federal government pushes to make more tests and better ones widely available. Trump said that the U.S. has "prevailed" on testing through this strategy, but in Congress, Democrats are demanding a federal framework to encompass the whole nation.

- Doubling down on educating the public about basic safety measures like frequent hand-washing and wearing masks in public places as guidelines indicate.

"Frankly, our leaders must lead by modeling the behavior," said Bright, in a not-too-subtle reference to a president who conspicuously goes maskless.

- Ramping up production of essential equipment and supplies, from cotton swabs for testing to protective gear for health care workers and essential workers.

- Setting up a system to fairly distribute equipment and supplies that are scarce and highly sought. Eliminating state vs. state competition would increase efficiency and reduce costs, he wrote.

As part of his whistleblower complaint, Bright is seeking to be reinstated in his old job. HHS, his employer, said that it strongly disagrees with his allegations and that it reassigned him to a high-profile position helping to lead the development of new coronavirus tests at the National Institutes of Health.

VIRUS OUTBREAK



MICHAEL DWYER/AP

Members of the boogaloo movement, attend a demonstration against the lockdown over concern about COVID-19 at the State House in Concord, N.H., on April 18.

Restrictions fuel anti-government 'boogaloo' movement across US

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
Associated Press

SILVER SPRING, Md. — They carry high-powered rifles and wear tactical gear, but their Hawaiian shirts and leis are what stand out in the crowds that have formed at state capital buildings to protest COVID-19 lockdown orders. The signature look for the “boogaloo” anti-government movement is designed to get attention.

The loose movement, which uses an ‘80s movie sequel as a code word for a second civil war, is among the extremists using the armed protests against stay-at-home orders as a platform. Like other movements that once largely inhabited corners of the internet, it has seized on the social unrest and economic calamity caused by the pandemic to publicize its violent messages.

In April, armed demonstrators passed out “Liberty or Boogaloo” fliers at a statehouse protest in Concord, N.H. A leader of the Three Percenters militia move-

ment who organized a rally in Olympia, Wash., last month encouraged rally participants to wear Hawaiian shirts, according to the Anti-Defamation League.

Another anti-lockdown rally was planned for Thursday at the state Capitol in Lansing, Mich., site of an angry protest last month that included armed members of the Michigan Liberty Militia. Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, has been the target of violent threats on Facebook forums, including a private one called “The Rhett E. Boogie Group.”

One user said Whitmer should be “guillotined” after another suggested another governor should be hanged from a noose, according to a screenshot captured by the Tech Transparency Project research initiative.

The coronavirus pandemic has become a catalyst for the “boogaloo” movement because the stay-at-home orders have “put a stressor on a lot of very unhappy people,” said J.J. MacNab, a fellow at George Washington Uni-

versity’s Program on Extremism. MacNab said their rhetoric goes beyond discussions about fighting virus restrictions — which many protesters brand as “tyranny” — to talking about killing FBI agents or police officers “to get the war going.”

“They are far more graphic and far more specific in their threats than I’ve seen in a long time,” she said.

An April 22 report by the Tech Transparency Project, which tracks technology companies, found 125 Facebook “boogaloo”-related groups that had attracted tens of thousands of members in the previous 30 days. The project pointed to coronavirus crisis as a driving factor.

“Some boogaloo supporters see the public health lockdowns and other directives by states and cities across the country as a violation of their rights, and they’re aiming to harness public frustration at such measures to rally and attract new followers to their cause,” the project’s report says.

Wis. court rules against stay at home order

By TODD RICHMOND
Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — The Wisconsin Supreme Court struck down Gov. Tony Evers’ coronavirus stay-at-home order Wednesday, ruling that his administration overstepped its authority when it extended it for another month without consulting legislators.

The 4-3 ruling essentially reopens the state, lifting caps on the size of gatherings, allowing people to travel as they please and allowing shuttered businesses to reopen, including bars and restaurants. The Tavern League of Wisconsin swiftly posted the news on its website, telling members, “You can OPEN IMMEDIATELY!”

The decision let stand language that had closed schools, however, and local governments can still impose their own health restrictions. In Dane County, home to the capital of Madison, officials quickly imposed a mandate incorporating most of the state’s order. City health officials in Milwaukee said a stay-at-home order they enacted in late March remains in effect.

Evers reacted angrily in a conference call Wednesday night, saying the state has been doing well in the fight against the coronavirus. He predicted the court ruling will lead more counties to adopt their own restrictions, leading to a confusing patchwork of ordinances that will allow infection to spread.

“Today, Republican legislators convinced four members of the state Supreme Court to throw the state into chaos,” Evers said. “They have provided no plan. There’s no question among anybody that people are going to get sick. Republicans own that

chaos.”

Chief Justice Patience Roggen sack wrote for the majority that health secretary Andrea Palm’s order amounted to an emergency rule that she doesn’t have the power to create on her own.

“Rule-making exists precisely to ensure that kind of controlling, subjective judgment asserted by



Evers

one un-elected official, Palm, is not imposed in Wisconsin.” Roggen sack, part of the court’s 5-2 conservative majority, wrote.

Rebecca Dallet, one of the court’s liberal justices, dissented, saying the decision will “undoubtedly go down as one of the most blatant examples of judicial activism in this court’s history. And it will be Wisconsin’s undoing and the price.”

State Assembly Speaker Robin Vos and Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, both Republicans, said they’re confident businesses can safely reopen by following guidelines calling for letting workers stay home if they’re sick, making workers wash their hands and implementing telework and social distancing and postponing travel and events.

“This (court decision) does not promote people to act in a way that they believe endangers their health,” they said.

Evers first issued a stay-at-home order in March that closed schools and nonessential businesses. The order was supposed to lift April 24, but Palm, an Evers appointee, extended it to May 26.

Trump’s push for opening school clashes with Fauci’s caution

By KEVIN FREKING
AND JILL COLVIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump called on governors across the nation to work to reopen schools that were closed because of the coronavirus, pointedly taking issue with Dr. Anthony Fauci’s caution against moving too quickly in sending students back to class.

The president accused Fauci of wanting “to play all sides of the equation,” a comment that suggested he is tiring of the nation’s top infectious disease expert.

“I think they should open the schools, absolutely. I think they should,” Trump told reporters at the White House, echoing comments he had made in a television interview. “Our country’s got to get back and it’s got to get back as soon as possible. And I don’t consider our country coming back if the schools are closed.”

Fauci had urged caution in testimony before a Senate committee Tuesday, although he made clear that he believes reopening decisions will likely differ from one region to the next.

“We don’t know everything

about this virus and we really better be pretty careful, particularly when it comes to children,” Fauci told the committee. At one point, he told members that “the idea of having treatments available or a vaccine to facilitate the re-entry of students into the fall term would be something that would be a bit of a bridge too far.”

Fauci later clarified that he was not implying students should be barred from returning to class until a COVID-19 vaccine is developed. But his comments were nonetheless seized on by conservative commentators, as well as

Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., who called the notion “kind of ridiculous.”

“To me, it’s not an acceptable answer,” Trump said of Fauci on Wednesday. He said the coronavirus has “had very little impact on young people,” although there is growing concern over cases of a mysterious inflammatory syndrome in young people that is thought to be related to the virus.

Speaking of Fauci, Trump told Maria Bartiromo in an interview for Fox Business Network’s “Morning with Maria” that “I totally disagree with him on schools.”

In his testimony, Fauci issued a blunt warning that cities and states could “turn back the clock” and see more death and economic damage if they lift stay-at-home orders too quickly — a message that stands in sharp contrast to Trump’s push to reopen the nation as he tries to blunt the economic damage caused by the pandemic during an election year.

“There is a real risk that you will trigger an outbreak that you may not be able to control,” Fauci warned as more than two dozen states have begun to lift their lockdowns.

VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDUP

Some Pa. counties resist after funding threat from governor

Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Two days after Gov. Tom Wolf lambasted them as “cowardly” and vowed to withhold funding, several Pennsylvania counties signaled Wednesday that they are moving ahead with plans to defy him by lifting some of their pandemic restrictions. Others, however, backed down under the governor’s threat.

Commissioners in many GOP-controlled counties where the Democratic governor has yet to ease any restrictions have said that they can manage the public health impacts of the coronavirus and reopen safely. They said that the shutdown threatens to destroy local economies — especially small businesses — the longer it goes.

Beaver County, home to a severe nursing home outbreak, said that it plans to operate as if Wolf had already eased restrictions there, meaning that residents can freely leave their homes and retailers, offices and other kinds of businesses can reopen. Because of the outbreak, Beaver is the lone western Pennsylvania county that remains closed down.

Georgia

ATLANTA — Georgia’s governor said that he continues to see positive signs in the state’s battle against the coronavirus, even as the state’s death toll from the virus surpassed 1,500 and some health officials expressed concern about the state’s aggressive plans to restart the economy.

Gov. Brian Kemp said Wednesday that Georgia has the lowest number of COVID-19 patients in hospitals — 1,094 — since April 8. Kemp said that the number of patients on ventilators has also dropped to 873.

Kemp eased a few restrictions this week on businesses and child care operations, but said that he was keeping most current rules until at least the end of May.

The Republican governor reiterated that he believes Georgia is containing the COVID-19 respiratory illness, despite areas of concern.

Hawaii

HONOLULU — Some Hawaii hotels said that they need more guidance about how to enforce a 14-day quarantine on travelers, including what to do if guests refuse to comply or how to participate if they still use physical keys instead of cards.

The Hawaii Tourism and Lodging Association recently asked hotels to give out room keycards that are only good for checking in, so that if a guest leaves the room, they need a new one to re-enter

— signaling to hotel staff that a guest defied the quarantine.

Gov. David Ige mandated the traveler quarantine starting on March 26 in an attempt to curb the spread of the coronavirus. As of Wednesday, the state reported 638 coronavirus cases and 17 deaths.

Some visitors who allegedly violated the quarantine have been arrested.

Idaho

WEISER — A cluster of COVID-19 cases has been confirmed in Washington County, leading to the voluntary shutdown of a food processing plant, Idaho health officials said Wednesday.

Southwest District Health said that some people infected with the coronavirus work at Fry Foods Inc. in Weiser.

Company Human Resources Manager Douglas Arnold Wolf said that eight workers are infected, and all of them had attended a family gathering of at least 30 people last weekend in Weiser or are related to someone who attended. Wolf said that some people from Utah also took part.

Health officials were working to contact people who have been in close proximity to those who became infected.

Louisiana

BATON ROUGE — On Monday, Gov. John Bel Edwards’ administration will start releasing the names of nursing homes where residents have tested positive for the coronavirus and where there have been deaths from COVID-19.

The administration initially released that information early in the outbreak, but later stopped providing details, offering only the numbers of nursing home residents statewide who have tested positive and who have died.

That raised questions about whether family members of nursing home residents who aren’t infected were told what was happening in the facility.

Dr. Alex Billioux, leader of Louisiana’s public health office, said that the state will resume offering the details, including which nursing homes have seen residents or staff test positive for the coronavirus, how many have recovered and how many residents have died at a facility. The information will be released weekly, Billioux said Wednesday.

Maryland

ANNAPOLIS — Maryland residents will no longer be required to stay at home, but will be strongly advised to continue doing so, especially if they are older and more vulnerable to the



MARK LENNIRAN/AP

Seth Goldberg has food delivered to his car by a waiter with the Bel Aire Diner on Wednesday in Queens, N.Y. The diner is using its parking lot to host 35 cars for a pop-up drive-in movie theater. The movie shown twice Wednesday was “Dirty Dancing.”

North Carolina

RALEIGH — A judge on Wednesday rejected requests of several offenders and civil rights groups exhorting him to tell North Carolina corrections leaders to reduce the prison population further to protect inmates from COVID-19.

The denials from Superior Court Judge Vince Rozier came after he received an extensive report he demanded last week from prison officials on what wardens are doing to discourage the virus’ spread in the more than 50 prisons. The plaintiffs who are serving time behind bars have said in affidavits that they were worried for their health if they remained in prison.

Lawyers for the state argued in court documents that Gov. Roy Cooper’s administration was best equipped to protect the health and safety of prisoners and had responded vigorously. The prison system has sent home several hundred more offenders that were otherwise imprisoned, blocked visitations and stopped taking in offenders from county jails.

More than 640 offenders in about a dozen prisons have tested positive for the coronavirus, and five of them have died. The Department of Public Safety said this week that more than 500 of them are now deemed to have recovered, based on government health guidelines, and are no longer in medical isolation.

South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS — The head of a Native American tribe said Wednesday that it won’t comply with South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem’s demand to remove coronavirus checkpoints it set up on federal and state highways that run through its reservation.

Harold Frazier, the chairman of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, told Noem in a short letter that the tribe would consider her request to restrict checkpoints to tribal roads. But he made it clear

to The Associated Press that he believes the tribe’s sovereignty allows it to operate checkpoints anywhere on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation, which is in northern South Dakota. The checkpoints are essential to protecting the health of the people on the reservation, he said.

The Republican governor demanded that the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe remove the checkpoints from federal and state highways, calling them illegal. The tribes began monitoring their borders last month in an effort to stop unnecessary visitors who could be carrying the coronavirus.

Noem on Friday threatened to sue the tribes if they didn’t disassemble the road checks. But this week, she tried a different tack, offering to meet if they would consider limiting the checkpoints only to tribal roads.

Texas

HOUSTON — The hundreds of contact tracers being trained in Texas’ most populous county will help it manage any flare-ups of the coronavirus, but it doesn’t mean that things are back to normal, and residents should still be doing their part to help stop the virus’ spread, officials said Wednesday.

A key part of Texas’ plan as it continues to reopen its economy has been building a team of 4,000 contact tracers, investigators who contact people who test positive for COVID-19, track down their contacts and get them into quarantine before they can spread the virus.

Harris County, which has more than 4.7 million residents, was expected to train 200 new contact tracers by Friday and another 100 by May 22.

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo on Wednesday, however, warned residents that the small army of contact tracers being trained locally doesn’t mean residents should let their guard down.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police stun suspect in firing of officer's gun

MD BALTIMORE — Baltimore police stunned a suspect accused of grabbing and firing an officer's gun Monday, the department said.

Officers responding to a disorderly conduct call in North Baltimore encountered the suspect, The Baltimore Sun reported, citing police. An officer and the suspect began to struggle, and the suspect grabbed the officer's department-issued weapon and fired off a single round, police said. The suspect was the stunned and taken into custody.

A department spokeswoman did not identify the suspect or say whether they were charged, the newspaper said.

9-year-old boy catches 80-pound sturgeon

TN HENDERSONVILLE — A 9-year-old boy in Tennessee became the third child in his family to catch a monster fish, reeling in an 80-pound sturgeon that outweighed him by far.

Coye Price was eager to catch something big after his 11-year-old sister Caitlin hooked a 40-pound striper and his 8-year-old sister Farrah reeled in a 58-pound blue catfish a while back, the Tennessee Wildlife and Resource Agency said Tuesday in a Facebook post.

Coye, who weighs just 55 pounds, was targeting catfish in Old Hickory Lake before he hooked the sturgeon. It took him 15 minutes to get the fish in the boat, where they weighed it and took some pictures before returning it to the water, the Tennessee reported.

Woman injures self in closed national park

WY MAMMOTH HOT SPRINGS — A woman illegally visited Yellowstone National Park while it's closed during the coronavirus pandemic and suffered burns Tuesday when she fell into a thermal feature, officials said.

She was reportedly backing up while taking photos and fell into a hot spring or hole where hot gases emerge near Old Faithful geyser, park spokeswoman Linda Veress said in an email.

Despite her injuries, the woman drove for roughly 50 miles until park rangers stopped her near Mammoth Hot Springs. She was flown to a hospital in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

Park officials did not release the woman's name or the extent of her injuries.

Judge to be sentenced to jail for 2nd DUI

CO DENVER — A Colorado judge is expected to be sentenced to a jail term for pleading guilty to a second DUI charge within two years.

Debra Gunkel, 62, pleaded guilty to violating the terms of her probation from a 2018 DUI charge in Prowers County, KCNC-TV reported Monday.



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

On edge during the pandemic

A skateboarder completes a jump in an open skate park during the coronavirus pandemic in Castle Rock, Colo., on Tuesday.

The conviction would have been erased from the Baca County judge's record if she completed two years of probation, but Gunkel was arrested for driving while drunk in Kansas in August. Gunkel's probation was revoked after the charge was filed.

Jail time will be mandatory after her expected plea in June to the Kansas DUI charge.

Injured manatee gives birth at SeaWorld

FL ORLANDO — An injured pregnant manatee was rescued by crews from a Tampa Bay area marine laboratory and taken to SeaWorld in Orlando for treatment, officials said in a news release.

The manatee gave birth to a calf Tuesday at SeaWorld, the statement said.

Jess Blackburn, a stranding biologist at Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium, and Sarasota police marine patrol officer Michael Skinner responded to calls about a distressed manatee on Saturday in Siesta Key. She noticed the manatee was listing to one side and had both healed and fresh boat strike wounds, Blackburn said in the news release.

"Those kinds of wounds likely caused air to be trapped in the manatee's chest cavity, making it difficult for the animal to submerge efficiently," she said. Crews from the Florida Fish

THE CENSUS

343

The number of acres that burned in a wildfire Florida officials say was caused by a man who set up an illegal burn barrel on his property. Allen Smith, 58, was arrested Tuesday and charged with misdemeanor counts of reckless burning of lands, violating open burning requirements and burning of illegal materials, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services said in a news release. Smith had been burning prohibited materials in a barrel behind his Santa Rosa Beach home on May 5 and didn't fully extinguish the illegal fire before leaving it unattended, investigators said. The remaining hot materials escaped into the surrounding dry vegetation and caused it to ignite and damage or destroy about 59 homes, officials said.

and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Mote, Sarasota police and the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office assisted in getting the manatee into a boat, which took it to shore, where a transport truck took it to SeaWorld.

US attorney: Man sold cocaine, left it on deck

NH CONCORD — A man pleaded guilty in New Hampshire federal court to distributing cocaine, once leaving the drug for pickup on his back deck, the U.S. attorney's office said.

According to court documents, Michael Baez, 39, of Pelham, sold cocaine to a cooperating individual on a number of occasions last year. Baez sold over 420 grams of cocaine, the documents said.

Baez is scheduled to be sentenced on Aug. 19.

"Time after time, Michael Baez

pushed thousands of dollars' worth of cocaine from his home, where he once left the dangerous narcotic out on his grill, on his back deck, ready for pickup," said Joseph Bonavolonta, special agent in charge of the FBI Boston Division.

Fugitive who escaped restraints is caught

RI PROVIDENCE — A Rhode Island man who freed himself from restraints and escaped police custody in January has been caught in Puerto Rico, federal authorities say.

David Marroquin was arrested Monday by U.S. Marshals after a brief foot chase, the Marshals Service said in a statement.

Marroquin, 20, of Providence, was arrested on a breaking and entering charge on Jan. 18, but escaped from custody. Authorities developed information that

he had fled to Puerto Rico.

Marroquin is being held pending extradition to Rhode Island to face several charges, including committing a crime of violence while in possession of a weapon, breaking and entering, conspiracy and escape.

Marroquin also had two outstanding bench warrants issued in January out of Rhode Island Superior Court for failing to appear for a bail violation hearing.

Regulators might cut US catch of bluefish

MA BOSTON — Federal regulators are considering reducing the East Coast's harvest of bluefish to prevent overfishing.

Bluefish are popular gamefish that are also harvested commercially for food. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said the catch of the fish would be reduced by 25%, to about 2.8 million pounds, under the current plan.

The recreational harvest would be cut by nearly 40% to a little less than 9.5 million pounds. The federal bluefish recreational daily bag limit would also be reduced.

Fishermen seek bluefish from Maine to Florida, with North Carolina accounting for the largest share of the harvest in 2018.

From wire reports

NATION

Ex-Navy pilot wins Calif. House seat

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Mike Garcia grew up a single-minded kid from Southern California: He just wanted to fly fighter jets. His decision to enter national politics wouldn't come until decades later, after he had seen one California election too many.

A career as a Navy aviator would lead to a decade in the defense industry. But it was the 2018 elections that prompted Garcia to enter public life, as his home state moved deeper into Democratic-dominated government that he faults for job-crushing regulation and climbing taxes.

"I don't want my country to turn into what my state has become," says Garcia, who claimed a vacant U.S. House seat Tuesday north of Los Angeles.

The political newcomer's win over Democrat Christy Smith marked the first time in over two decades that a Republican captured a Democratic-held congressional district in California.

What was supposed to be a tossup election ended up with Garcia holding a comfortable 12-point edge in an incomplete tally Wednesday.

Garcia appeared to benefit

from enthusiasm among conservatives who saw a rare opportunity to seize a Democratic-held seat in California, while the electorate that turned out in the unusual special election skewed toward reliable, older Republican voters, even though the district has a Democratic registration edge.

His Hispanic surname was likely a benefit in a district with a significant Latino population. His military service would play well in a district popular with veterans and Los Angeles police officers.

The son of a Mexican immigrant father, Garcia will go to Congress as a fresh face who campaigned as a supporter of President Donald Trump and railed against "socialist-style" policies coming from the Sacramento statehouse.

Smith delivered her congratulations, but said that she expected their roles to be reversed in November when the two meet in a rematch for the full House term that begins in January.

The race in the 25th District was being watched nationally as a proxy vote on Trump's leadership during the coronavirus crisis, as well for hints about the political climate heading toward the November elections.



Mike Garcia

Garcia, 44, a father of two boys whose wife is an interior designer, grew up in the same area he will represent, a district that cuts through suburbs and small ranches in northern Los Angeles and eastern Ventura counties.

"I didn't grow up wanting to be a politician," he told supporters at a Simi Valley tavern in January, before statewide stay-at-home orders took effect. "I literally just saw the last elections and I said, 'Hey, if I'm not going to do it, who is going to do it?'"

A top graduate at the Naval Academy, he went on to fly over 30 combat missions in Operation Iraqi Freedom. After his time in the military, he worked for defense contractor Raytheon.

The seat became vacant last year after then Rep. Katie Hill acknowledged an affair with a campaign worker and the House opened an ethics probe into an allegation that she was involved with a member of her congressional staff, which Hill denied.

Ex-judge asked to see if Flynn should be held in contempt

By MICHAEL BALSAMO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The judge presiding over Michael Flynn's criminal case appointed a retired jurist on Wednesday to evaluate whether the former Trump administration national security adviser should be held in criminal contempt.

The judge's order is the second signal in as many days registering his resistance to swiftly accepting the Justice Department's motion to dismiss all charges against Flynn.

In his order, U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan appointed former federal judge John Gleeson as an amicus curiae — or friend-of-the-court — and asked him to explore whether Sullivan should hold Flynn in "criminal contempt for perjury."

Flynn pleaded guilty, as part of special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation, to lying to the FBI about conversations with the then-Russian ambassador to the United States during the presidential transition period.

As part of the plea, he had to admit in court, under oath, that he lied to the FBI and violated federal law.

Justice Department spokeswoman Kerri Kupec declined to comment on Sullivan's order.

In January, Flynn filed court papers to withdraw his guilty plea, saying that federal prosecutors acted in "bad faith" and broke their end of the bargain when they sought prison time. Initially, prosecutors said that

Flynn was entitled to avoid prison time because he had cooperated extensively with the government, but the relationship with the retired Army lieutenant general grew increasingly contentious in the months before he withdrew his plea, particularly after he hired a new set of lawyers who raised misconduct allegations against the government.

But the Justice Department filed a motion last week to dismiss the case, saying that the FBI had insufficient basis to question Flynn in the first place, and that statements he made during the interview were not material to the broader counterintelligence investigation into ties between Russia and the Trump campaign.

Officials have said that they sought to dismiss the case in the interest of justice, upon the recommendation of a U.S. attorney who had been appointed by Attorney General William Barr to review the handling of the Flynn investigation.

But Sullivan, who has to approve the motion, made clear Tuesday that he wouldn't immediately rule on the request and would let outside individuals and groups weigh in with their opinions in court documents.

Gleeson was a federal judge in New York for more than two decades. Before becoming a judge, he had been a federal prosecutor handling numerous high-profile cases, including the case against late Gambino crime family boss John Gotti. He's been in private practice since 2016.

Amid probe, Burr steps aside as chairman of intelligence committee

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., temporarily stepped aside as chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee on Thursday after the FBI served a search warrant for his cellphone as part of an ongoing insider-trading investigation tied to the coronavirus pandemic.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced the move, saying he and Burr had agreed that it was in the committee's best interests.

FBI officials showed up at Burr's home with the warrant on Wednesday, two people familiar with the investigation said Thursday, marking a significant escalation into the Justice Department's investigation into whether Burr broke the law with a well-timed sale of stocks before the coronavi-

rus caused markets to plummet. The people spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation.

The search warrant was served on Burr's lawyers, and FBI agents went to Burr's home in the Washington area to retrieve the cellphone, a senior Justice Department official said. The decision to obtain the warrant, which must be authorized by a judge, was approved at the highest levels of the department, the official said.

His attorney said in a statement last month that the law is clear that any senator can participate in stock market trading based on public information "as Sen. Burr did." The attorney, Alice Fisher, said that Burr welcomed a review of the stock sales, "which will

establish that his actions were appropriate."

Burr has denied wrongdoing but has also requested an ethics review of the stock sales.

Burr is an amiable member of the Senate, and his quick call for an ethics investigation and willingness to cooperate with authorities appears to have bought him some goodwill among colleagues tapping down immediate calls for him to step aside.

Senate records show that Burr and his wife sold between roughly \$600,000 and \$1.7 million in more than 30 transactions in late January and mid-February, just before the market began to nose-dive and government health officials began to sound alarms about the virus.

Several of the stocks were in companies that own hotels.

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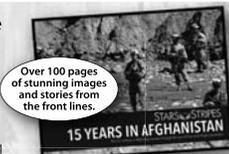
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NATION

Calls for removal of swastikas from vet cemeteries rejected

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Three German soldiers' gravestones etched with swastikas will remain in national cemeteries in Texas and Utah, the Department of Veterans Affairs said Wednesday, despite demands from an advocacy group to have them removed.

Two gravestones of the German prisoners of war are in Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio and another one is in Fort Douglas Post Cemetery in Salt Lake City. The gravestones are placed among American veterans, some of whom fought against Nazi Germany in World War II.

The Military Religious Freedom Foundation, which attempts to protect religious freedom for service members, said it is demanding the VA remove the symbols, which were discovered recently by a retired colonel vis-

iting his Jewish grandfather's grave at the Texas cemetery. Mikey Weinstein, founder of the MRFF and a former Air Force officer, said he will not reveal the identity of the retired colonel, who fears reprisal from the VA.

Weinstein said he sent a letter to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie on Monday about the gravestones but only learned of the VA's response through media coverage.

The VA's National Cemetery Administration released a statement Wednesday that it "will continue to preserve these headstones, like every past administration has."

"All of the headstones date back to the 1940s, when the Army approved the inscriptions in question," according to the statement.

The headstones were in place when the cemeteries were transferred into the VA's cemetery administration. The Texas cemetery was absorbed into the VA system in 1973 and the Utah cemetery



Wikicommons

Headstone of a dead German World War II POW.

was in 2019.

"It's intolerable," Weinstein said. "This should not require explaining why this is wrong."

More so, he argued the headstones also display the phrase, which translated from German, reads: "HE DIED FAR FROM HOME FOR FUHRER, PEOPLE AND FATHERLAND."

But the VA said in its statement that "the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 assigns stewardship responsibilities to federal agencies, including VA and the Army, to protect historic resources, including those that recognize divisive historical figures or events." For that reason, the headstones will remain.

These three Germans are not the only POWs buried in American veteran cemeteries. There are 11 other cemeteries with POWs from World War II interred, though none of the other gravestones include swastikas.

Ex-VA doctor charged in sexual assaults of vets

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — A former Department of Veterans Affairs doctor working in West Virginia was indicted on charges of sexually assaulting veterans, the Justice Department said.

Dr. Jonathan Yates, 51, is charged with five counts of depriving veterans of their civil rights and two counts of abusive sexual contact stemming from his 14-month stint at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Beckley, W.Va., according to the Justice Department. The charges are based on a criminal complaint against Yates filed Feb. 20 in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia.

Between September 2018 and February 2019, Yates examined six male patients, and sexually molested them during their appointments, according to the court documents. Yates, who served as director of the facility's Whole Health Clinic from about April 2018 to June 2019, is a doctor of osteopathic medicine and is trained in osteopathic manipulative therapy, which is a hands-on technique similar to ones used by a chiropractor.

Yates temporarily immobi-

lized two of the veterans — one by cracking his neck, and the other with the use of acupuncture needles — and sexually molested them while they were incapacitated, according to court documents. The indictment also alleges his abuses caused five of the veterans to suffer bodily injury and the way that he touched the veterans was not medically necessary.

One veteran told FBI investigators that Yates made suggestive comments during the visit.

After asking the veteran to remove his shirt, Yates massaged his bare chest and said he was "a real man."

Later, Yates said the veteran's choice of underwear was his favorite. Multiple patients said he would not immediately stop touching them after he was asked to stop and he locked or blocked the door to the exam room.

If convicted, Yates faces a maximum sentence of life in prison. He was arrested April 2 and later released on a \$10,000 bond and according to court documents.

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Messages of hope

'Ghostbusters' actor Ernie Hudson reaching out to housebound fans

By ROHAN PRESTON
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Sequestered in Minneapolis after Hollywood shut down, charismatic actor Ernie Hudson sometimes dons his old "Ghostbusters" jumpsuit and records messages to cheer up fans. Or he may sing happy birthday to a kid stricken with cancer.

Hudson is doing his part to bring light and joy to the populace during the pandemic.

"I'm thankful that we're OK, but I really feel for people and what they're going through," Hudson said. "If you do get the virus, are you going to be hit with a crazy bill? And if you're already in financial crisis, is the bill still going up? It's a rough time with everybody getting cabin fever or worrying about money."

Hudson decamped from the West Coast in March just as California was about to shut down. He had been working on two shows that were brought to a halt — Carl Weber's "The Family Business," a crime family series that started on BET and is now on its streaming service, and "L.A.'s Finest," the "Bad Boys" spinoff headlined by Gabrielle Union and Jessica Alba.

Just before closing to Minnesota, Hudson, 74, had a jet set call with the novel coronavirus.

A cast member on "The Family Business" tested positive for COVID-19 in the waning days of shooting. Hudson had close contact with the actor.

"The last scene we shot was a shootout where the guy jumps out, gets shot and the



AARON LAVINSKY, MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE/TNS

"Ghostbusters" costar Ernie Hudson — and Slimmer — record an uplifting video message for a fan through the Cameo app. He creates about a dozen messages a week.

wife cradles him," Hudson said. "I go pick him up and put him in the car. Well, that (actor) ends up with coronavirus. Totally freaked me out. He's recovered now, but I had to check myself for weeks."

At first, Hudson welcomed the breather that the shutdown provided.

"Usually, necessity drives you, and you're just running, running," he said. "All those gotta-go, gotta-do things are on hold."

Then he wanted to get ambitious — to do something big to remember the pandemic by.

"People are always talking about all the things they would do if they had more time," he said. "Well, for me, that excuse doesn't carry water anymore. I have more time, and I'm just at the place now where I'm kind of tired of it. I'm just trying to get myself downstairs to work out."

Still, he's savoring the days that he has with family, including nightly dinners. "We don't have TV or anything on," Hudson said.

The messages that Hudson records for fans are through the Cameo app, where celebrities do such gestures for a nominal fee. Actor Marla Maples is on it for \$72 a pop. Debra Messing of "Will and Grace" fame will set you back \$300.

It costs \$135 for a message from Hudson, with or without his Winston Zeddemore ghost-busting jumpsuit.

"Generally, it's people celebrating anniversaries, welcoming new babies and things like that," said Hudson, who records about a dozen messages a week.

"You can do it from your home on the phone — it doesn't take a lot of time and it feels very connected and positive," he said. "If someone picks me out, it's personal. They're a fan of something I've done."

The release date for "Ghostbusters: Afterlife," where Hudson reunites with costars Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd, has been pushed back from July to March 2021.

Common pushes for jail releases

From wire reports

Rapper and activist Common went into quarantine concerned about incarcerated people he has met during visits to jails, prisons and juvenile detention centers around the U.S. and who aren't able to maintain social distance or adopt rigorous hygiene routines to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

"It's a troubling time for them," Common said, "because they are the people who usually are overlooked."

On Wednesday, his criminal justice reform organization Imagine Justice launched a campaign with dozens of advocacy and activist groups calling attention to the threat that the coronavirus pandemic poses on millions of men, women and youths who are incarcerated in the U.S.

The campaign, dubbed #WeMatterToo, is urging authorities to immediately release people who have served the vast majority of their sentences, especially if they have underlying health conditions that put them at greater risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19. Although state and local correctional institutions have already released thousands of people from confinement due to the pandemic, supporters of the campaign also want governments to pay for testing and housing for inmates after they are released.

Common said he also hopes to create greater public awareness about what happens inside the nation's jails and prisons and the impact that has on society.

Concert stream will reunite cast of 'Smash'

The cast of "Bombshell," the fictional Broadway musical about Marilyn Monroe, is coming together again to aid those confronting the coronavirus.

Katharine McPhee, Debra Messing, Megan Hilty and others will reunite May 20 to present a stream of the one-night-only 2015 Broadway concert of the musical within the TV show "Smash." It will be seen on People.com, PeopleTV and the magazine's Facebook page and Twitter.

The evening will be introduced by two-time Academy Award winner Renee Zellweger and will involve memories, stories and comments from the original cast.

The reuniting — and self-isolating — cast also includes Christian Borle, Jaime Cepero, Will Chase, Brian d'Arcy James, Jack Davenport, Ann Harada, Jeremy Jordan, Andy Mientus, Leslie Odom Jr., Krysta Rodriguez and Wesley Taylor.

Other news

■ On Wednesday, Disney announced that "The New Mutants," director Josh Boone's horror installment within Fox's "X-Men" franchise, will be hitting theaters Aug. 28. The film was previously slated to open in April, but was postponed along with a number of other upcoming Disney titles because of the coronavirus outbreak.

'Quaranchella' lets locked-down neighbors loosen up

By ANDREW DALTON
Associated Press

For 15 years, Adam Chester has subbed for Elton John, performing John's parts in rehearsals with the rocker's band. But with John sitting out the pandemic, Chester had to find another gig.

And he did, weekly, socially distant concerts in his suburban Los Angeles cul-de-sac.

Which is how Chester has come to serenade a few dozen of his face-masked neighbors from inside a broad rectangle of rainbow chalk with "social distance" and a heart written at its edge. They dance to John's "Crocodile Rock" and sing along to the Beatles' "Hey Jude."

They call this "Quaranchella" and it has become a source of community and connection at a time when they're sorely lacking.

"It's been an incredible experience," said Chester's wife, Maria, who serves as his road crew along with their two teenage sons. "It kind of organically happened because he needed to play, and it's been evolving."

Chester jokes about his role as John's substitute — "He's Sir Elton and I'm 'Sir' Elton, with a 'u,' the surrogate Elton John" — but his career has not been spent entirely in the superstar's shadow.

He played a major role in the 2018 Grammy salute to Elton John at New York's Madison Square Garden. And he also played his own club and party gigs, but the lockdown put a halt to that.

"I was going out of my mind inside the house here as a lot of musicians are," Chester said. "I thought, 'Why don't we take this outside once a week?'"

Chester said "there wasn't a dry eye on the block" one recent evening when he played Simon & Garfunkel's "The Boxer," the favorite song of one neighbor's dying father.

The response from neighbors has been overwhelmingly positive.



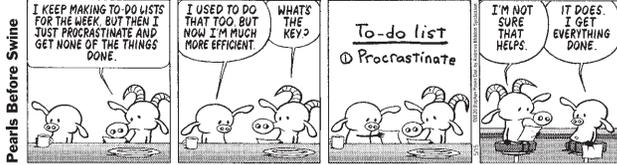
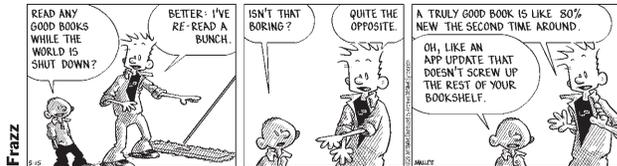
PHOTOS BY CHRIS PIZZELLO/AP

Musician Adam Chester performs his weekly neighborhood concert in Sherman Oaks, Calif., for his neighbors.

"All week I look forward to that Saturday show," said neighbor Lisa Silver, who along with others pitched in to buy a tripod to hold Chester's phone so the shows can be streamed on Facebook.

Exhilarated after the concert, Chester said these Saturday night shows may outlast the quarantine era.

"I can't imagine going back to anything normal after this," he said.



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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45	46	47				48	49				
50						51			52		
53						54			55		

ACROSS

- 1 "East of Eden" brother
- 4 ShriII barks
- 8 Has a bug
- 12 Batter's stat
- 13 E Pluribus —
- 14 Faucet problem
- 15 Frenzied gathering
- 17 Indolent
- 18 Tempt
- 19 Blackbird
- 21 Young fellow
- 22 Scotch cocktail
- 26 Aegean island
- 29 Wager
- 30 Bio stat
- 31 Sci-fi vehicles
- 32 — Faithful
- 33 From the start
- 34 Bikini half
- 35 Likely
- 36 Cool veggies
- 37 Jump from gig to gig
- 39 New England catch
- 40 "Evil Woman" band
- 41 Record label owned by Sony
- 45 Charon's river
- 48 Pitiful tale
- 50 Met solo
- 51 "Tommy" actress Falco
- 52 West of Hollywood

DOWN

- 2 Curved molding
- 3 Evergreens
- 26 Pt. of a sentence
- 27 Roundish do letters
- 28 Biblical kingdom
- 29 Crunchy sandwich
- 32 Went up against
- 33 Taxpayer's dread
- 35 "You've got mail" ISP
- 36 Waist-cinching garment
- 38 Group of six
- 39 Rustic home
- 42 A few
- 43 Streetcar acronym
- 44 Pro votes
- 45 Tree fluid
- 46 Three, in Rome
- 47 Feminine side
- 49 Praise in verse

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

5-15

CRYPTOQUIP

BV GMT DEMSSFJ KMLHBCZ O

UBCF BCEM DMLFHMJG'D YOBN

EMM DMMC, B ZTFDD GMT JBJ

BE YOUV-SONEFJUG.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: COMMITTEE THAT MAKES DISHES OF PORK BITS AND CORNMEAL, SLICED AND FRIED: A SCRAPPLE BOARD.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals Y

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OPINION

Forced quarantines are not the American way

By TYLER COWEN
 Bloomberg Opinion

There has been surprisingly little debate in America about one strategy often cited as crucial for preventing and controlling the spread of COVID-19: coercive isolation and quarantine, even for mild cases. China, Singapore and South Korea separate people from their families if they test positive, typically sending them to dorms, makeshift hospitals or hotels. Vietnam and Hong Kong have gone further, sometimes isolating the close contacts of patients.

I am here to tell you that those practices are wrong, at least for the U.S. They are a form of detainment without due process, contrary to the spirit of the Constitution and, more important, to American notions of individual rights. Yes, those who test positive should have greater options for self-isolation than they currently do. But if a family wishes to stick together and care for each other, it is not the province of the government to tell them otherwise.

It is true that such practices very likely save lives, sometimes many lives. A recent working paper from three economists noted that "a policy that uses tests to quarantine infected people has very large social benefits." One reason the pandemic has been so deadly in Italy, for example, is the high rate of family transmission in the northern part of the country.

So it is possible that tens or hundreds of thousands of American lives could be saved by the forced removal of people from their homes. Still, it would not be the right thing to do.

Consider the scale and scope of the coercion that could be required. The situation could suddenly improve, but a common es-

imate is that 40% to 60% of the American public might end up infected. It is an open question how many of those cases the authorities will catch, or if the virus could be shut down altogether. Nevertheless, at least 150 million Americans could be subject to a forced quarantine regime.

And since family members may wish to care for the sick, any coerced quarantine of a single person will very often be a deprivation against more than just that person. Given America's dismal record with nursing-home fatalities, does anyone really expect that quarantine dormitories or temporary hospital facilities will be such great places for caregiving? Forcible quarantines might save many lives in the future — but only by imposing a de facto death sentence on some people now.

Furthermore, all tests have false positives, not just medically but administratively (who else has experienced the government making mistakes on your tax returns?). Fortunately, current COVID-19 tests do not have a high rate of false positives. But even a 1% net false positive rate would mean — in a world where all Americans get tested — that more than 1 million innocent, non-sick Americans are forcibly detained and exposed to further COVID-19 risk.

Who exactly do these people get to return to their families? No one currently knows exactly how long the risk of contagion lasts.

And it's not just the violation of individual rights. A policy of forcible detainment would put Americans at each other's throats. It would reinforce the view that all Americans should own guns and be ready to use them. The very fear of such forthcoming detainments would compound polarization, encourage belief in pseudo-

science and all but guarantee that millions of Americans will avoid COVID-19 testing altogether.

Coercive containment was tried during one recent pandemic — in Castro's Cuba, from 1986 to 1994, for those with HIV/AIDS. It is not generally a policy that is endorsed in polite society, and not because everyone is such an expert on Cuban public health data and epidemiological calculations. People oppose the policy because it was morally wrong.

And what about uncertainty? Is it really a safe bet that America's quarantine policy would be executed successfully and save many lives? What if scientists are on the verge of discovering a cure or treatment that will lower the COVID-19 death rate significantly? Individual rights also protect society from the possibly disastrous consequences of its own ignorance.

It is a commonplace observation that a policy of forced quarantine is not culturally suited for an individualistic society such as the U.S. That is a point worth making, but I am struck by the cowardice implicit in this perspective. Who among us will speak up for individual rights? And why do we find it necessary to tiptoe around this topic? Much as I disagree, I'm actually more impressed by those willing to take a stand in favor of a policy of coerced quarantine.

In the meantime, in judging pandemic policies, there are more considerations than just lives saved and effect on GDP. The most important is a strong and defensible notion of right and wrong.

Bloomberg Opinion columnist Tyler Cowen is a professor of economics at George Mason University. This column does not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board of Bloomberg LP and its owners.

Our virus strategy properly called harm reduction

By LEANA S. WEN
 Special to The Washington Post

Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease expert, has warned of "careless suffering and death" if reopening occurs prematurely. No state has met the White House's own reopening criteria, yet more than 40 of them have loosened or are loosening social distancing restrictions. So here's the question I would have asked the witnesses at Tuesday's Senate coronavirus hearing: Have we formally retreated from a goal of containing COVID-19 to one of harm reduction?

At the beginning of the outbreak, the United States had a chance to contain the virus by identifying each person bringing the infection into the country and stopping it before it spread in the community. We failed, with a lack of testing largely to blame. Instead of individual-level containment, which would have had minimal effect on the economy, we had to employ so-called level lockdowns to slow the explosive spread of the virus and buy us time until we developed the capacity to rein it in. The idea was that restrictions would be lifted once we reduced the number of infections far enough and built up the public health infrastructure needed to find new positive cases, trace contacts and quarantine those exposed.

Unfortunately, due to a late start, inconsistent state actions and a lack of federal direction, most states have yet to see a consistent decline in cases, much less reduced them to low enough levels for this to work. No state has achieved sufficient testing and contact tracing. Reopening under these circumstances means we are giving up on

containing COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

What's next, then? The administration has yet to use these words, but it appears that we're adopting a strategy that I recognize from other aspects of public health: harm reduction.

Harm reduction was initially developed as a public health approach to reduce the negative consequences of drug use. It recognizes that while stopping drug use is the desired outcome, many people won't be able to do that. For those individuals, needle-exchange programs can reduce their risk of acquiring HIV and hepatitis and transmitting these infections to others. Such programs do not promote or condone drug use, as some critics contend. Rather, they face the reality that if a behavior with harmful consequences is going to happen regardless, steps should be taken to reduce the risk for individuals and others around them. Think, too, of safe-sex campaigns, or motorcycle helmets.

And this seems to me where we are with COVID-19: We're no longer trying to eliminate the virus. Instead, we are accepting that Americans will have to live with it.

If that's the case, then our efforts should pivot from justifying why reopening is a good idea to figuring out how best to reduce the harm it is certain to cause. If employees have to go to work, let's at least come up with evidence-based practices that help them do so more safely. Should workplaces all get regular deep cleaning, close off any communal areas and meet new standards for ventilation? Can employees be mandated to wear masks, work six feet apart and keep a contact diary?

We know that COVID-19 is most likely to be transmitted when a lot of people are

in an enclosed area for a prolonged period. I would not have advised that hair salons and gyms open for business, but since they have in some states, we should aim to use the highest-risk practices — prolonged treatments and crowded indoor fitness classes, for example. If people are going to get together in large groups despite the danger, we should at least advise that they do so outdoors, for shorter periods of time, and avoid practices with a higher likelihood of disease transmission, like sharing utensils and group contact sports.

A switch to harm reduction doesn't mean the Trump administration is off the hook on testing and tracing. Regular, rapid testing will make it much safer for employees to return to work and school. Of course, there is also a fundamental difference between this new iteration of societal harm reduction and what I know as the standard public health practice of individual harm reduction — this disease risk is being forced upon the many Americans who would not have chosen it for themselves and their loved ones. That's a real tragedy.

I wish the United States had taken a different path. We could have contained the virus earlier, and we still had a chance to do it until we reopened against the guidance of public health experts — including the Trump administration's own top doctors. But now that we are where we are, we should at least be honest and call our new strategy what it is. It's our best hope left for saving lives.

Leana S. Wen is an emergency physician and visiting professor at George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health. Previously, she served as Baltimore's health commissioner and president of Planned Parenthood.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editors are responsible for the associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

For everyone's safety, Musk must get his ducks in a row

Los Angeles Times

Elon Musk is a billionaire who will, on occasion, tweet ridiculous things, act impulsively, display a prodigious ego and act as if the law doesn't apply to him. And now he's throwing a tantrum that threatens the state's ability to move safely and smartly out of its current lockdown.

It would be a good idea just ignore Musk as he broadcasts his sometimes trenchant, sometimes bizarre musings to 34 million Twitter followers. ("I am selling almost all physical possessions. Will own no house.") But he's also the leader of Tesla and SpaceX, which employ thousands of people.

On Monday, Musk defied Alameda County health department orders and reopened Tesla's electric car manufacturing plant in Fremont, tweeting Monday afternoon, "I will be on the line with everyone else. If anyone is arrested, I ask that it only be for persisting in the lawsuit. Newsom had given 'essential' businesses permission to reopen, the company said on its website Saturday that it would restart the Fremont factory in keeping with a plan developed in consultation with county officials and modeled after his "smooth and healthy operations" in Shanghai.

The plan stipulates that Alameda County hasn't signed off on that plan. Instead, county health officials have said they'd like Tesla to hold off for a few days until they see results from the county's first steps to ease its shelter-in-place order. That delay seems reasonable, given how volatile the pandemic has become. Nevertheless, it was too much for Musk; on Saturday, he tweeted that he was "moving Tesla's headquarters and future programs" to Texas or Nevada "immediately," and the company sued the county for allegedly violating its constitutional rights to due process and equal protection under the law.

We get it, it's hard out here for an entrepreneur! And for everybody else. Unemployment is skyrocketing and the economy is in free-fall, largely because of the restrictions that were designed to prevent COVID-19 from overwhelming the health care system.

But getting back to the pre-coronavirus status quo won't be easy, given the risk that the pandemic will flare up again and force more lockdowns. That's why the decisions on which businesses and activities resume when need to be made by people who are created to help the public and to reassure CEOs who threaten to pull up stakes when they don't get their way. Or any business owners who, like Musk, consider themselves better judges of the public good than the government.

Newsom's May 4 executive order explicitly gives local governments the authority to adopt more restrictive COVID-19 measures than the state's orders where necessary. Alameda County's steps need to be reasonable, and it needs to get businesses open as soon as it is safe to do so. But that's the county's call to make, not Musk's.

Posturing is not productive while the economy sinks

The Washington Post

For anyone still counting on a swift and sharp "V-shaped" economic recovery, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell had some sobering news to share Monday afternoon: The economy is the worst



BEN MARCOTTA/AP

The Tesla plant in Fremont, Calif., has cars in the parking lot Tuesday, CEO Elon Musk reopened the plant Monday despite not having approval from Alameda County.

since World War II, with 40% of households making \$40,000 or less having lost a job in March. And, Powell said, the "path ahead is both highly uncertain and subject to significant downside risks." More help from Congress may well be needed on top of the trillions already provided. "Additional fiscal support could be costly but worth it if it helps avoid long-term economic damage and leaves us with a stronger recovery," Powell said.

That's correct. Unfortunately, Powell spoke as Congress has begun to divide along partisan lines about how much more to spend, when and for what purposes. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., has unveiled a \$3 trillion measure, key provisions of which are \$395 billion in cash for state, local, tribal and territorial governments and another round of direct payments to households potentially larger than the first, which cost an estimated \$290 billion. The bill also includes \$3.6 billion to meet a crucial non-economic need: helping as many voters as possible participate securely in the November elections.

The huge measure has no chance of passing the Republican Senate and is therefore part political statement, part opening bid in inevitable negotiations with the GOP. Republicans are balking, both because they insist on their own policy priorities, such as lawsuit protection for reopening businesses, and because they believe there's "no rush" (President Donald Trump's posture) to tee up more spending before the money already approved has had a chance to work. Indeed, only about \$1.4 trillion of Congress's total \$3.6 trillion in COVID-19 relief spending has actually hit the economy as of May 8, according to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. (Notably, Powell has yet to activate a \$600 billion business lending program backed by capital Congress gave to the Treasury Department.) It's also true that states are still petitioning for reopening help already and that the next installment must be based on carefully assessed needs — especially given the inevitable difficulties of asking taxpayers everywhere to help states, sometimes wealthy ones, where they don't live.

Nevertheless, even many Republican senators admit, red and blue state and local governments alike have taken a revenue hit and need aid, as will households — especially low-income ones — small businesses and health care. Pelosi's bill is expensive, and studded with pet Democratic policies like reinstating a federal state and local tax deduction for federal income taxpayers. But it actually omitted much of the wish list of the House's most progressive members, a bit of restraint Republicans could choose to see as a sign of Pelosi's willingness to be pragmatic, as she has in previous talks. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's, R-Ky., initial

reaction was to denounce the House bill and double down on his demand for lawsuit protection. Republicans should start talking in earnest, sooner rather than later. The country's needs are too urgent to withstand much more partisan posturing.

Obama's comments on Flynn case self-serving, not accurate

The Wall Street Journal

Barack Obama is a lawyer. So it was stunning to read that he ventured into the Michael Flynn case in a way that misstated the supposed crime and ignored the history of his own administration in targeting Flynn. Since the former president chose to offer his legal opinion when he did, we wonder what he's really worried about.

"There is no precedent that anybody can find for someone who has been charged with perjury just getting off scot-free," Obama said in the May 8 call to about 3,000 members of the Obama Alumni Association. The comments were leaked to Yahoo News and confirmed by Obama's spokeswoman to The Washington Post and other outlets. Obama added: "That's the kind of stuff where you begin to get worried that basic — not just institutional norms — but our basic understanding of rule of law is at risk. And when you start moving in those directions, it can accelerate pretty quickly as we've seen in other places."

Even discounting for Obama's partisan audience, this gets the case willfully wrong. Flynn was never charged with perjury, which is lying under oath in a legal proceeding. Flynn pleaded guilty to a similar crime. Yet the FBI did not prosecute at the White House on Jan. 24, 2017, that he was led to believe was a friendly chat among colleagues.

As for "scot-free," that better applies to former President Bill Clinton, who lied under oath in a civil case and was impeached for perjury but was acquitted by the Senate. We understand why Obama wouldn't bring that up.

We doubt Obama has even read the Justice Department motion to drop the Flynn prosecution. If he does ever read it, he'll find disconcerting facts that certainly do raise doubts about whether our basic understanding of rule of law is at risk," though not for the reasons he claims.

Start with prosecutorial violation of the Brady rule, which Obama knows is a legal obligation that the prosecution must turn over potentially exculpatory evidence to the defense. Yet the FBI did not disclose counsel Robert Mueller didn't disclose that the interviewing FBI agents at the time didn't think that Flynn had lied about a phone call with the Russian ambassador.

Worst of all, as a legal matter, it is that they never told Flynn that there was no investigative evidentiary basis to justify the interview. The FBI had already concluded there

was no evidence Flynn had colluded with Russia in the 2016 election and had moved to close the case. James Comey's FBI cronies used the news of Flynn's phone call with the Russian ambassador as an excuse to interview the then national security adviser and perhaps catch him in a lie.

All of this was moved along politically by goals to make a deal with the Russian president with the Russian. The U.S. eavesdrops on foreign officials as a routine, but names of innocent Americans on those calls are supposed to be shielded from review to protect their privacy. Yet senior Obama officials have had to acknowledge that they "unmasked" Flynn's name and others in their last months in power. Then, what a surprise, news of Flynn's call and its contents pop up in The Washington Post. Did someone say "institutional norms"?

All of this raises questions about the role the Obama Justice Department and White House played in targeting Flynn. We already know the FBI had opened up a counterintelligence probe into Flynn and other Trump campaign officials, yet it had come up with no evidence of collusion.

Donald Trump's victory increased the chances that this unprecedented spying on a political opponent would be uncovered, which would have been politically embarrassing at the very least. Targeting Flynn — and flogging the discredited Steele dossier — kept the Russia collusion pot boiling and evolved into the two-year Mueller investigation that turned up no evidence of collusion.

This among other things is what U.S. Attorney John Durham is investigating at the request of Attorney General William Barr. Maybe that's why Obama is so eager to distort the truth of the Flynn prosecution.

Tangle of conflicts taint initial actions taken in Arbery probe

The Brunswick (Ga.) News

Many questions have been understandably raised about how the investigation into the shooting death of Ahmaud Arbery unfolded. Why did the Glynn County Police Department not hand the case over to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation considering one of the suspects, Greg McMichael, was a former county officer? What part did the Brunswick District Attorney's Office play in the investigation since McMichael was also a former investigator for the office?

These questions became even more confusing when the district attorney and county commission, which was acting on behalf of the county police department, gave different accounts of what happened. Even with the differences, it is easy to look at both versions and see where head-scratching decisions were made.

Let's start with the county police. The county's official statement said the reason the police did not hand the case to the GBI right away was because none of the officers working the case were with the department when Greg McMichael worked with the department from 1982 to 1989. That was an incredibly shortsighted and naive decision by the individual who made it. The county that got involved in the decision, leaving out a key detail in this puzzle.

The stink of impropriety would still be on the public's mind, even if none of the people involved in the investigation worked with McMichael when he was with the department. It isn't hard for someone to assume that he got involved in the decision because he was a former county police officer.

This investigation needed to be free from all implications of bias. It should have been turned over immediately to the GBI, something that has since been acknowledged by interim county police chief Jay Higgins, who has no recollection of when the decision occurred. Even if you take the word of the county or the word of the district attorney's office as gospel, it is clear mistakes were made on both sides. Instead of playing the blame game, both sides should acknowledge the evidentiary basis for the two mist work together to ensure justice.

SCOREBOARD/GOLF

Sports on AFN

Go to the American Forces Network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules. myafn.net

Deals

Wednesday's transactions

FOOTBALL
National Football League
HOUSTON TEXANS — Signed DE Jonathan Greenard to a four-year contract.
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Signed CB Isaiah Rodgers to a four-year contract.
MIAMI DOLPHINS — Signed S Brandon Jones.
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Signed TE Dalton Keene to a four-year contract.
TENNESSEE TITANS — Signed DT Larrin Mitchell to a four-year contract.

Auto racing

Monster Energy NASCAR Cup schedule and winners

Feb. 9 — x-Busch Clash at DAYTONA (Erik Jones)
Feb. 13 — x-Bluegreen Vacations Duel 1 at DAYTONA (Joey Logano)
Feb. 13 — x-Bluegreen Vacations Duel 2 at DAYTONA (William Byron)
Feb. 16 — DAYTONA 500 (Denny Hamlin)
Feb. 23 — Pennzoil 400 presented by Jiffy Lube (Joey Logano)
March 1 — Auto Club 400 (Alex Bowman)
March 8 — Folds of Honor (Joey Logano)
March 15 — Fans of Monster QuikTrip 500, Hampton, Ga. (postponed)
March 22 — Dixie Vodka 400, Homestead, Fla. (postponed)
March 29 — O'Reilly Auto Parts 500, Fort Worth, Texas (postponed)
April 5 — Food City 500, Bristol, Tenn. (postponed)
April 19 — Toyota Owners 400, Richmond, Va. (postponed)
April 26 — GEICO 500, Talladega, Ala. (postponed)
May 3 — NASCAR Cup Series Race at Darlington, S.C. (postponed)
May 9 — Blue-Emu Maximum Pain Relief 500, Martinsville, Va. (postponed)
May 16 — x-NASCAR Open, Concord, N.C. (postponed)
May 16 — x-NASCAR All-Star Race, Concord, N.C. (postponed)
May 24 — NASCAR Cup Series at Darlington, Darlington, S.C. (postponed)
May 27 — NASCAR Cup Series at Charlotte, Charlotte, N.C. (postponed)
May 31 — Kansas 400, Kansas City, Kan.
June 7 — FireKeepers Casino 400, Brooklyn, Mich. (TBA)
June 14 — Toyota/Save Mart 350, Sonoma, Calif. (TBA)
June 21 — Chicagoland 400, Joliet, Ill. (TBA)
June 27 — Kids First 325, Long Pond, Pa. (TBA)
June 28 — Worry-Free Weather Guarantee 300, Long Pond, Pa. (TBA)
July 5 — Big Machine Vodka 400 at the Boyd Brothers & Son Raceway, Daytona International Speedway, Ind. (TBA)
July 11 — Quaker State 400 Presented by Wal-Mart, Sparks, Ky. (TBA)
July 19 — Foxwoods Resort Casino 301, Loudon, N.H. (TBA)
Aug. 9 — Consumers Energy 400, Byron, Mich. (TBA)
Aug. 16 — Go Bowling at The Glen, Watkins Glen, N.Y. (TBA)
Aug. 23 — Driven400, Dover, Del. (TBA)
Aug. 29 — Coke Zero Sugar 400, Daytona Beach, Fla. (TBA)
Sept. 14 — Toyota 500, Darlington, S.C. (TBA)
Sept. 12 — Federated Auto Parts 400, Richmond, Va. (TBA)
Sept. 19 — Bass Pro Shops North Side Race, Bristol, Tenn. (TBA)
Sept. 27 — South Point 400, Las Vegas, Nev. (TBA)
Oct. 4 — Alabama 500, Talladega, Ala. (TBA)
Oct. 11 — Bank of America ROVAL 400, Concord, N.C. (TBA)
Oct. 18 — Hollywood Casino 400, Kansas City, Kan. (TBA)
Oct. 25 — Dixie Vodka 400, Fort Worth, Texas (TBA)
Nov. 1 — Xfinity 500, Martinsville, Va. (TBA)
Nov. 8 — NASCAR Cup Series Championship Race, Phoenix, Ariz. (TBA)
x-non-points race

AP spotlight

May 15 — Citation, ridden by Eddie Arcaro, wins the Preakness by 5½ lengths over Vulcan's Forge.

On the fringe

Soft opening begins with 2 events

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

The next few weeks might resemble a return to the silly season.

Except this is serious business. Besides, this isn't the cash grab from the old "silly season" days of the Skins Game, the Skills Challenge and the Diner's Club Matches. In two notable events, there's no prize money at all. Televised golf returns Sunday in South Florida with an exhibition match at Seminole to fund COVID-19 relief efforts. Two of golf's biggest talents, Rory McIlroy and Dustin Johnson, take on Rickie Fowler and Matthew Wolff, who are linked by their time spent a decade apart at Oklahoma State (all four of them are linked by endorsement deals with TaylorMade, the title sponsor of the match).

The following Sunday, some of the biggest names in golf and in the NFL get together for a \$10 million charity match. Tiger Woods will have Peyton Manning as a partner against Phil Mickel-son and Tom Brady.

It doesn't really matter who wins.

This is about bringing entertainment to a sporting world devoid of live golf for the last two months and raising some small sums of money for coronavirus relief funds.

And in some respects, it's a glimpse into golf not looking exactly the same when the real thing returns.

For the matches, there will be no caddies, no spectators and no media outside a very limited number to provide still photos and live commentary for a television production that will have fewer cameras. Some of the commentary Sunday will be done off property. Mike Tirico will be



PHILAN M. EBERHACKER/AP

At No. 70, Joel Dahmen is the highest-ranked player in the Scottsdale Open field which is chasing a \$130,000 purse.

home in Michigan. With no caddies for the Seminole match, laser measuring devices are likely. There won't be any rakes alongside bunkers, though the sand will be raked by someone, perhaps a rules official.

All state and local mandates are to be followed — to what degree remains to be seen. This is an exhibition, sure, but it's not quite the same as four players booking tee

times online. This is more about the show than recreation.

These are made-for-TV exhibitions. Another test began Tuesday at the Scottsdale Open in Arizona, which in some respects is even more intriguing.

In its fourth year, the 54-hole event at Talking Stick Golf Club ordinarily goes unnoticed outside the greater Phoenix area. But these are extraordinary times.

PGA Tour-sanctioned events have been shut down for two months because of the pandemic, and they are a month or more away from resuming.

The Scottsdale Open suddenly has more than a dozen players with PGA Tour experience, a list that includes Rocket Mortgage Classic winner Nate Lashley, two-time tour winner Kevin Streelman and Joel Dahmen, who at No. 70 is the highest-ranked player in the field.

In a normal year, they would be at the PGA Championship this week.

The Scottsdale field is 162 players, and it even had a waiting list. Scott Harrington, a PGA Tour rookie, got in at the last minute. They are competing for a guaranteed purse of \$130,000, which is a lot for this tournament, not so much for someone like Dahmen. He earned \$330,000 in the last tournament he played, a tie for fifth at Bay Hill.

Dahmen was installed as the 5-1 favorite, and for good reason.

The last time he played was in a group of six at Mesa Country Club that included Ian Happ and Kyle Schwaber of the Chicago Cubs. There were drinks and laughs, and then Dahmen recalls it getting quiet on the 18th tee. Only after he made a 20-foot eagle putt did he realize he shot 55. "I didn't have any idea," said Dahmen, who shot 26 in the back nine. "If I did, I would have choked."

Dahmen also is a past champion at the Scottsdale Open. That was in 2017, his rookie year. Just like now, there was no golf for him to play, but only then because of his status. Dahmen wasn't eligible for Colonial or the Memorial.

"I had a lot of time on my hands, and I needed something to play in," he said.

That's kind of how it is now.

Tour plans constant testing, limited access

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

Players, caddies and key staff around there will be tested once a week for the new coronavirus, and everyone at the golf course will have their temperatures taken every day when the PGA Tour returns next month and tries to show it can resume its season with minimal risks.

Testing was a big part of the process outlined Wednesday that revealed significant changes to how tournaments are conducted.

No pro-ams. No spectators for at least a month, perhaps longer. No family members. No direct contact. America's social distancing everywhere from the clubhouse to the practice range.

"Our goal is to minimize risk as much as possible, with the full understanding that there is no way to eliminate all of the risk," said Andy Levinson, senior vice president of tournament administration for the tour. "But one of the best ways we can do that, to reduce the likelihood of exposure, is by limiting the number of people we have on site and limit-



Knox

ing access to certain areas, keeping groups separated."

It starts June 8-14 at Colonial with the Charles Schwab Challenge in Fort Worth, Texas.

Testing and social distancing was the backbone of the 37-page presentation titled "Return to Golf Events." The idea is to keep players and essential staff in a bubble, and those estimated 400 people would be tested for COVID-19. Players would have a designated hotel unless they had other options the tour approved. Charter flights were made available for \$600 a seat (\$300 for caddies), and another test would be required before they fly and when they land in a new city for the next tournament.

Everyone on site will have thermal readings and a health questionnaire daily. "We're not going to play if we can't do it in a safe and healthy environmental for all our constituents," said Tyler Dennis, the tour's

chief of operations.

"And the tournament won't shut down if someone tests positive. Such a player would have to withdraw immediately and self-isolate for at least 10 days, provided there are no subsequent symptoms and he gets two negative test results 24 hours apart.

"That was the No. 1 concern," said Russell Knox, who serves on the Player Advisory Council. "Nobody wants to go through that in a hotel. You're going to be away from your family and someone will knock on the door every few hours with food."

He also said that was a key message from Commissioner Jay Monahan: Risks remain and everyone has to do something from what had been a comfort-driven lifestyle.

The tour said it would provide a stipend to pay for costs associated with anyone having to self-isolate.

The tour also is providing masks for whoever wants them and will cover the costs of all testing each week, whether it's RT-PCR nasal swab test or thermal screening. Each tournament picks up the tab for hand sanitizer stations and a hygiene plan on site.

NFL

Source: Virtual workouts extended through May

By BARRY WILNER
Associated Press

The NFL has extended its virtual offseason workouts through the end of May, a person familiar with the move said.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the decision to bar in-person sessions beyond the previous deadline of May 15 has not been announced publicly.

NFL teams normally would be holding Organized Team Activities (OTAs) during May, followed by June minicamps. Due to

the coronavirus pandemic, such activities have been done remotely.

Coaching and training staffs have worked with the players by conducting classroom instruction and on-field activities through digital applications instead of at team facilities, which have been closed since late March. Those virtual meetings can occur for four hours per day, four days per week.

Teams can send up to \$1,500 to each player to purchase equipment.

All 32 teams must submit plans for re-

opening their facilities to the league by Friday, though no dates for such reopenings are set. Offseason workouts (OTAs and minicamps) must end by June 26, a week or so later than usual. That, of course, could change depending on developments with the pandemic.

According to a memo to teams, the league will inform them promptly about how to proceed with on-field activities "in the event club facilities reopen at some point in June." The league said it would work with medical advisers to establish

protocols for reopening facilities.

For nearly three months, the NFL has kept to its offseason schedule of conducting the scouting combine, free agency, the draft, and the release of the regular-season schedule. While it is making contingency plans for both preseason and regular-season games in the event that the pandemic makes it necessary to play games without fans or at different sites, the league has publicly said it expects to play a full schedule beginning Sept. 10 with Houston at Super Bowl champion Kansas City.



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Indianapolis Colts outside linebacker Darius Leonard wears a monitor at home that the Colts can track to see if he's working too hard, inviting injury, or not hard enough to get into playing shape.

High-tech devices help teams keep players training safely

By MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Darius Leonard works relentlessly at his rural South Carolina home to prepare for another football season. He's also wary of pushing too hard, knowing a minor injury could be a major setback given the dearth of medical experts in his area.

So when in doubt, the Indianapolis Colts star confers with his coaches, who are creating safer, more efficient individual workout programs based on data collected the past few weeks.

It's all part of a changing NFL world: high-tech devices supplementing old-school creativity.

"We are getting a ton done," Colts coach Frank Reich says. "With the technology today, they all have heart-rate monitors, so they do their workouts, it's all logged, it all kind of shoots to our system. This isn't, 'Hey, I'm watching you.' This is, 'Hey, I'm interested in you.' I'm a little bit of a numbers guy, so I like to see these charts. Then I'll show them to the team."

Players also can voluntarily wear monitors to track workouts. Teams can send up to \$1,500 to each player to purchase equipment.

Not everyone has followed the same script. New Orleans canceled its offseason program. But the Colts are taking advantage of their allotted time. Reich estimates Indy spends half its time in meetings and the rest monitoring workouts.

Technological advances are helping everyone cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I understand a lot more about the NFL now than I did 10 years ago," new Dallas Cowboys backup

quarterback Andy Dalton said, comparing the difficulty he faced during the 2011 lockout with today's circumstances. "So I guess the advantage now is there's still these virtual meetings, so you're able to connect and talk through the offense and talk through different things, stuff that I didn't have my rookie year during the lockout."



Reich

Social media also plays a part.

Detroit Lions coach Matt Patricia recently reminded running back Ty Johnson about training safely — after watching a video of Johnson pulling a Jeep while wearing a helmet.

Companies such as WHOOP and Myzone could become a part of teams' training even after things return to normal.

WHOOP, an online fitness company, partners with the NFLPA to provide wearable monitors for players. Nearly 1,000 players have used the service over the past three years as well as teams from Major League Baseball, the NBA, NFL and Major League Soccer.

The waterproof device can be worn around the wrist or bicep and tracks heart rate and strain during workouts and recovery periods.

In addition to measuring heart rate variability, resting heart rate and respiratory rate, it provides information about sleep performance to give coaches the necessary information to ensure safe, efficient workout plans that won't overstress the body.

Lavish W. Va. resort is potential training site

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE
Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Several NFL teams are eyeing a resort owned by West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice as a potential training facility during the coronavirus pandemic, a spokesman for the retreat said Wednesday.

The Greenbrier, a lavish resort in southern West Virginia, has previously hosted training camps for New Orleans Saints and the Houston Texans. Although several other teams have contacted the resort, no franchise has officially signed on to practice there this year, hotel spokesman Cam Huffman said.

Justice, a Republican billionaire thought to be the state's richest man, bought the resort out of bankruptcy in 2009. The Greenbrier has been closed since March 19 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Built for the Saints, The Greenbrier's practice facility includes two natural grass practice fields, a synthetic field, and a 55,000-square-foot building with kitchen and dining facilities, meeting rooms, weight and locker rooms, training and physical therapy accommodations. At an elevation of 2,000 feet, the location offers a cooler climate than some NFL teams' training camps in the summer.

The Arizona Cardinals practiced there for a three-day stretch

in 2015, though some players warned of some uninvited guests: ghosts.

Tony Jefferson, then a Cardinals safety, said he heard "a little voice," it was like a little girl's voice" on his first night at The Greenbrier. Cornerback Patrick Peterson said some players were so spooked that they began traveling in groups.

"I haven't seen anything, but I do hear some weird noises at night, but I don't pay no mind to it. I fall right to sleep," Peterson said.

The NFL continues to plan for a preseason and regular season as scheduled, with the season beginning Sept. 10 with Houston at Super Bowl champion Kansas City. The league is conducting its offseason program virtually with training facilities closed because of the pandemic.

An annual PGA Tour event at The Greenbrier was scrapped last month when the tour released its new, virus-altered schedule. Turnout for the tournament had lagged and federal prosecutors targeted the facility in an investigation that subpoenaed Justice's administration for documents about the resort, the tournament's nonprofit financial arm and Justice's tax records.

The governor's personal lawyer told reporters in January that the investigation ended with no finding of wrongdoing.



STEVE HELBER/AP

The Greenbrier resort, nestled in the mountains in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va. Several NFL teams are eyeing the resort owned by West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice as a potential training facility.

AUTO RACING/SOCCER

Fox calling race from the studio

By JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Jeff Gordon thought his wife, a former model, was kidding when she asked the NASCAR Hall of Famer to color her gray hairs. He realized she was serious after the third request, FaceTimed her regular stylist and took a crash course in mixing color.

"Those are the types of things we do when we're in quarantine," Gordon said Wednesday. "There are things that you do to keep the glue together, to keep everybody healthy and sane. So if having gray hair stresses her out, then I am happy to contribute."

The adjustments will continue Sunday when NASCAR resumes its schedule at Darlington Raceway in South Carolina. Gordon, now in his fifth season as part of Fox Sports' broadcast team, will not be at the track. He and Mike Joy will call the race from a studio in Charlotte and Regan Smith will be the only at-track reporter for the broadcast team, working the pits. Larry McReynolds, an analyst, will also work from the Charlotte studio.

NASCAR is limiting the number of people at the track to only those essential to compete and broadcast the race, so Fox will have a dramatically reduced roster and use a high-speed custom-built drone that can offer more perspectives than usual since fans won't be in the stands. The Fox team is still finalizing its approach, but expects to use instant messaging with crews to glean the critical information Gordon and Joy need to properly call a race.

Gordon and Joy spent the last two months calling iRacing events from a studio, so they have some experience with broadcasting remotely. Still, they will be winging some things as they adapt to watching the race on monitors instead of describing what's unfolding right in front of them at the track.

"I'm just excited that the opportunity is there for NASCAR and motorsports," Gordon



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

Fox Sports broadcasters Adam Alexander, left, Jeff Gordon, center, and Darrell Waltrip are shown on pit row before a NASCAR Cup series race last year at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn, Mich. NASCAR's broadcast team for Fox will not travel to Darlington Raceway this weekend, and instead will call the race from a studio in Charlotte.

told The Associated Press. "We are always comparing our sport to others but now we really get to really talk about the uniqueness of our sport and showcase that, because that is what is giving us this opportunity when other sports are going to be more delayed.

"Motorsports is fortunate to have this opportunity. I am more excited to see that in action, but I think everybody is nervous. Normally in a broadcast we have practice, we have qualifying, we get to work some things. This is going to be 'Boom,' just like the drivers and the teams. They are going to get in the car and drop the green flag and it is on, and for us it is going to be the same thing."

NASCAR's return will be conducted in just one day, with qualifying and practices canceled for a consolidated schedule. A random draw will be used to help set the field at Darlington — positions 1-12 will be set by a random draw from teams in those positions in owner points, followed by a draw for teams in positions 13 through 24, and finally another draw for teams ranked between 25th and 36th. The final four slots will go to non-chartered teams based on order of owner points.

The field will be frozen for a competition caution on Lap 30 and only the top 20 cars will be allowed to pit on that lap. The other 20 cars will pit on the next lap.

Gordon, a four-time NASCAR champion ranked third in all-time victories, applauded

the new approaches the sanctioning body is taking as it attempts to restart the season. There are at least two Wednesday night races coming up, with the field May 20 at Darlington set by the finishing order of Sunday's race — with a twist: The top 20 finishers Sunday will be inverted for Wednesday's starting lineup.

With so much happening and NASCAR being the first major sports league with a nationally televised event, Gordon recognizes the responsibility he and Joy have to set the right tone. Gordon was a driver in NASCAR's first race back after the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001 when Dale Earnhardt Jr. won in Dover, Del., and set an iconic image for the nation by waving the American flag out his window during his celebration.

"These are unique and challenging times and I hope that people that tune in are tuning in because they recognize the importance that sports play in our every day life," Gordon said. "I think it can show hope. I think there's going to be a lot of eyeballs on this event to see how it's going to play out and how it's going to be able to continue after this, and what that means for our country as people are trying to figure out how they are going to get back to work or normally or school and what life is going to look like over the next year. If a sporting event like this can happen, then, what's the next step?"

MLS could resume play in Orlando this summer

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

Major League Soccer is looking at the possibility of resuming the season this summer with all teams playing in Orlando, Fla.

Details of the plan are still under consideration, but the league's 26 teams and limited staff would likely be sheltered in a resort with games played without fans at ESPN's Wide World of Sports Complex at Disney World, a person with knowledge of the plan told The Associated Press. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity Wednesday because the plan has not been formally announced. The proposal was first reported by The Washington Post.

Teams could head to Florida as early as June 1 for training camps. The league suspended play on March 12 after teams had played just two games.

"I think the league is still at a stage, from what I understand, where this particular idea is something that they have in mind and are trying to get feedback from teams about as to what it could look like and how it could work," Nashville coach Gary Smith said. "Personally, again, we're in uncharted territory here. I certainly, along with probably most other people, have never seen anything like it before. So therefore, you have to be a little bit more open-minded about what a season could look like."

Other proposals have included teams playing a tournament-style competition in four different cities. There's also the possibility teams could return to their home stadiums for games following the resumption of the season in Orlando.

It was not immediately clear whether any of the plans had been presented to the players' union.

Earlier Wednesday, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said his state was open to leagues looking to restart or start their seasons.

"All professional sports are welcome here for practicing and for playing," DeSantis said. "What I would tell commissioners of leagues is, if you have a team in an area where they just won't let them operate, we'll find a place for you here in the state of Florida."

The ESPN facility has 17 fields, so it could accommodate multiple teams. MLS held its All-Star Game in Orlando last year.

MLS took the first step toward resuming the season last week when teams were allowed to start voluntary individual workouts at team facilities under strict guidelines. The next step would be small group workouts.

But a number of teams, including the Seattle Sounders and the San Jose Earthquakes, have not been able to participate because of stay-at-home restrictions in their communities.

Racing: NASCAR getting back on track after shutdown

FROM BACK PAGE

you want and we also heard through the teleconference we had with NASCAR about the protocols," said Daytona 500 winner Denny Hamlin. "Obviously there will be a huge microscope on how we're doing things, making sure it's done in a safe manner. For all of us, it's just the unknown of making sure we're doing it the right way."

Much has changed since Joey Logano scored his second victory of the season — which has so far consisted of just four Cup races — at Phoenix in March. Kevin Harvick is still the points leader and Hamlin, Logano and Alex Bowman are locked into the playoffs as race winners.

Ryan Newman will be back in the field Sunday after his horrific crash on the last lap of the Daytona 500. He suffered a head injury that took him out of his Roush

Fenway Racing Ford, but the long pause in the season gave him enough time to heal and receive medical clearance to race again.

Matt Kenseth has come out of retirement to drive for Chip Ganassi Racing, which fired Kyle Larson during the shutdown for using a racial slur during an on-line race. NASCAR is not running any practices or qualifying before Sunday's race, so Kenseth will be cold when he climbs into a stock car for the first time since the 2018 season finale. At 48, he will be the oldest driver in the field.

NASCAR had hoped to announce a revamped 2021 schedule in April that included midweek races, more short tracks and road courses, and other efforts to shake things up. Those plans have been delayed as completing the 2020 jigsaw puzzle is now the priority, NASCAR said last week it

won't race this year as scheduled at Chicagoland Speedway or on the road course in Sonoma, Calif. The spring race in Richmond, Va., also will not be rescheduled.

The series, which has seen attendance and ratings drops for several years, is desperate to get going and not just for the sake of its hard-hit teams. NASCAR has issued two rounds of layoffs during the pandemic — cuts last week decimated staffing at many race tracks — and those still employed took pay cuts, furloughs or forced vacation.

NASCAR last fall closed its \$2 billion purchase of International Speedway Corp. to consolidate control of 12 tracks that include Daytona, Talladega and Homestead-Miami Speedway.

The move gives the France family almost total autonomy of the largest racing series in the United States and flexibility to

make its own plan to survive the pandemic.

Still, making money means being on the track even if the full 36-race Cup Series schedule isn't possible. NASCAR said it wants to run at least seven Cup races within driving distance for the teams before it ventures outside the South.

For now, Hamlin said drivers have faith in NASCAR's process.

"I'm pretty certain that no matter what, we're in an advantage because we're a non-contact sport, especially with the players themselves," Hamlin said. "I'm confident that we can go from our street car that we drive to the racetrack into our race car (and) not be within six feet of anyone, except for the person that is on the window net.

"We're going to be able to do this and it should be pretty effective."

NBA/COLLEGE BASKETBALL/MMA

One-third of NBA teams hold individual workouts

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

MIAMI — The NBA is now one-third of the way back, at least in terms of voluntary workouts.

With Miami re-opening its doors Wednesday, 10 of the league's 30 teams have gone forward with on-court individual workouts — the first permitted sessions since the league ordered teams to close their training facilities as part of the coronavirus pandemic response about two months ago.

Besides the Heat, the other teams that have opened so far are Portland, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Denver, Atlanta, Indiana, Sacramento, Toronto and Utah. More are expected in the coming days; among them, Orlando is close, and the Los Angeles Lakers are targeting Saturday.

And while there still is no decision about whether the season can resume — NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, according to a person with knowledge of the situation, has told the league's players he expects to make that call by mid-June at the latest — getting back to some semblance of work is generally being considered a positive step.

"We're kind of just feeling it out, playing it by ear, taking it day by day," said Toronto assistant coach Brittni Donaldson, who is in the gym with Raptors wing Malcolm Miller when the reigning NBA champions opened their facility again Monday. "Hopefully, you know, in a week we can start ramping it up a little more. But to start we're just keeping it very basic, very simple."

The league has very strict rules about these workouts; no head coaches can be involved, no more than four players can be at a facility. At the Raptors are limiting it to one player — and intense safety precautions must be taken before, during and after the sessions. When Donaldson was throwing passes to Miller, she did so while wearing a mask and gloves.

Heat captain Udonis Haslem was one of Miami's players to report back to work on Day 1 at their facility, though it wasn't his priority. Heat is sporting a customized mask with the team's logo earlier Wednesday when he appeared at a food distribution drive that he helped organize near downtown Miami.

"This is first," Haslem said at the food drive. "This is most important."

Haslem said the workout started well, then he began to fade a bit toward the end. Like most NBA players, he's been doing individual workouts during the league's hia-

DID YOU KNOW?

As of Wednesday, 10 of the NBA's 30 teams have begun on-court individual workouts. The teams are: Miami, Portland, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Denver, Atlanta, Indiana, Sacramento, Toronto and Utah.

SOURCE: Associated Press



AARON GASH/AP

Giannis Antetokounmpo of the Milwaukee Bucks plays for one of 10 NBA teams that are holding individual workouts.

tus but said nothing replicates what it takes to get through an on-court workout.

Meanwhile, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis let professional leagues know that the Sunshine State is ready to welcome them all if needed.

With Orlando often mentioned as a potential centralized site if the NBA resumes play, and it was one of the sites Silver told players late last week that is under consideration, DeSantis said Wednesday that the state is putting a premium on the value of professional sports.

"Professional sports are going to be welcome in Florida," DeSantis said. "That may not be the case in every other state in this country, as we've seen. And so what I would tell commissioners of leagues is, if you have a team in an area where they just won't let them operate, we'll find a place for you here in the state of Florida, because we think it's important and we know that it can be done safely."

Associated Press Writer Ian Harrison in Toronto contributed.

NCAA delays date for draft entrants to return to school

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — The NCAA is pushing back its deadline for early entrants to the NBA Draft to withdraw and return to school, though it will wait to set a new date.

The deadline was June 3, which would've come 10 days after the completion of the NBA scouting combine. But with the combine postponed amid the coronavirus pandemic, NCAA senior vice president of basketball Dan Gavitt said in a statement Wednesday that college sports' governing body won't set a new deadline until the NBA has determined its revised timeline for the pre-draft process.

"This modification is being made with the health and well-being of our student-athletes in mind, along with their ability to make the most informed decisions during this uncertain time," Gavitt said, specifically noting the postponement of the combine.

Gavitt said the NCAA will work with the National Association of Basketball Coaches to ensure the change "supports a player's decision-making process" on the draft while also allowing them to retain their college eligibility.

The NBA announced May 1 that it was postponing the draft lottery and combine scheduled for Chicago this month.



JONATHAN HAYWARD, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Glover Teixeira, left, fights Nikita Krylov during their light heavyweight match Sept. 14 at UFC Fight Night in Vancouver, British Columbia. Teixeira dominated Anthony Smith and finally stopped him with punches early in the fifth round Wednesday night.

Teixeira's upset win highlights UFC show

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Glover Teixeira dominated Anthony Smith and finally stopped him with punches early in the fifth round Wednesday night, earning an upset victory to cap the UFC's second show since returning to action amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Heavyweight veteran Ben Rothwell grabbed an entertaining split-decision victory over Ovince Saint Preux, and Drew Dober stopped fellow lightweight contender Alexander Hernandez with a second-round barrage of punches during the second of three UFC cards in eight days at a fan-free VStar Veterans Memorial Arena.

The promotion returned to action last Saturday with UFC 249 after an eight-week hiatus. The UFC established extensive protocols for health and safety in its return, and veteran fighter Jacare Souza was pulled off last weekend's show after he tested positive for COVID-19 along with two cornermen.

The COVID-19 test, and more masks were visible on UFC personnel inside and outside the cage Wednesday. Middleweight Karl Roberson's bout with Marvin Vettori was scrapped when Roberson was hospitalized overnight after he fell ill, but the illness was related to his weight cut and not coronavirus, according to the UFC.

The UFC's third show in Jacksonville is Saturday night on ESPN Plus, headlined by veteran heavyweights Alistair Overeem and Walt Harris.

The UFC hopes to begin holding fight cards back home in Las Vegas later this month, but is waiting for clearance from the Nevada Athletic Commission.

The 40-year-old Teixeira (31-7) was shockingly dominant in his fourth consecutive victory. The light heavyweight took control with strikes in the second round, and almost finished Smith several times while dominating the ensuing two rounds.

Teixeira finally ended it 1:04 into the final round, earning his first stoppage by punches since 2017.

"It's not how hard you hit," Teixeira said. "It's how hard you get hit and keep coming forward.... The guy hits like a truck, but I moved my head a lot. I trained so hard."

Smith (33-15) was in the cage for the first time since he had to fight an intruder in his family home in Nebraska last month. He lost a close fight to Jon Jones for the light heavyweight title last year, and Teixeira was superior after the opening minutes.

Smith appeared to be battered beyond repair by the end of the third round, but his corner declined to stop the fight after the third or fourth rounds. His corner didn't stop the fight even when Smith told them: "My teeth are falling out."

The 38-year-old Rothwell (38-12) punctuated his 50th professional bout with a back-and-forth meeting with Saint Preux (24-14), a former light heavyweight title contender who moved up to heavyweight after losing three of his past five fights. Rothwell improved to 2-2 since returning from a two-year doping suspension.

Dober (23-9) is a training teammate of Justin Gaethje, who won the UFC interim lightweight title with an electrifying stoppage of Tony Ferguson in UFC 249.

Dober lived up to Gaethje's standard with an exciting performance capped by a series of dynamic strikes to force a stoppage of Hernandez (11-3).

"Coming from a muay thai background, I had trouble fighting guys who constantly moved," Dober said. "I wasn't trying to hit hard. I was just trying to hit often. The more times you touch a guy on his chin, the more likely he's going to fall over." Andrei Arlovski, the UFC's 41-year-old career leader in heavyweight victories, won a decision over Philippe Lins for his second victory in seven fights.

Earlier, Ricky Simon picked up the biggest win of his UFC career with a split-decision victory over veteran Ray Borg. The flyweights punctuated their lively fight with plenty of good-natured trash talk, which was audible on the television broadcast from the otherwise quiet arena.

SPORTS

AUTO RACING

DARLINGTON

Big return

All eyes on NASCAR as racing resumes

By JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C.

NASCAR's season started with the Secret Service doing a security check on the firesuit-clad pole-sitter for the Daytona 500 and thousands of fans waiting hours in line to pass through a metal detector. When the season resumes on Sunday some 13 weeks later, drivers will have their temperatures taken as they enter Darlington Raceway in South Carolina and they will be wearing masks as they leave their isolated motorhomes and make their way to their cars. There will be no fans allowed inside.

Faced with many of its teams falling into financial ruin, NASCAR is waving the green flag on a plan it believes allows the series to safely return to racing. Only essential personnel will be permitted into the infield with strict guidelines on social distancing, access and protective clothing.

'Obviously there will be a huge microscope on how we're doing things, making sure it's done in a safe manner.'

Denny Hamlin
Daytona 500 winner

There will be no one to boo reigning series champion Kyle Busch, no pre-race concert, no pump and probably no flyover.

The seven races so far announced in May are at Darlington and Charlotte Motor Speedway, tracks within driving distance from teams' North Carolina bases. Four are in the elite Cup Series and the other three are lower-tier Xfinity and Truck Series races.

NASCAR hasn't raced since March 8 so Wednesday night events at Darlington and Charlotte are the only way to cram in some of the missed events.

These races will be nothing close to the weekly traveling circus NASCAR typically stages and participants will be figuring out a new normal when they pull up to the gate at Darlington.

"Just the unknowns about the procedures — you can read about them all

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NASCAR will have a much different feel when it resumes this weekend. There will be no fans in the stands at Darlington Raceway, and the Fox broadcast team will not travel to South Carolina, instead calling the race from a studio in Charlotte.

TERRY RENNA/AP

ENTER



TO OUR READERS

As the sports world pauses to join the rest of the world in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, you will see fewer sports stories in Stars and Stripes. We look forward to resuming our normal coverage when the leagues and governing bodies determine it is safe for athletes and fans to return to competition.