COVID-19 CASES RISE
Pettis County Health Center offers coronavirus FAQ • **News 3A**

SEDALIA DEMOCRAT

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Gas prices across Missouri drop due to pandemic

By Emily Walton
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As gas prices fall nationwide, some Sedalia area residents have been asking why prices seem to be higher in the area.

According to GasBuddy, as of Monday, Missouri gas prices fell 9 cents per gallon in the past week with an average price of $1.37 statewide Monday according to a survey of 3,940 gas stations. Gas in Missouri is 24.4 cents per gallon lower than a month ago. As of May 4, 2019, the Missouri average was $2.57.

Furthermore, according to GasBuddy, as of May 4, the average gas price in Kansas City was $1.44, $1.59 in Topeka, Kansas, and $1.67 in St. Louis. As far as area stores go, as of Wednesday morning, unleaded gas was $1.47 at Casey's in Tipton, $1.49 at the Casey's in Lincoln, $1.45 at Phillips 66 in Warsaw, $1.33 at Murphy USA in Boonville, $1.40 at Casey's General Store in La Monte and $1.29 at Break Time in Warrensburg.

In Sedalia as of Wednesday afternoon, unleaded gas at eight various gas stations was $1.48 or $1.49.

Many local gas stations managers the Democrat spoke with said they did not know why gas prices were higher in the area than in some other parts of the state.

One Sedalia gas station said it goes off of how other competitors are pricing their gas.

"We get complaints all the time," said Cindy Fosnow of Shell/Jiffy Stop on the 1700 block of West Broadway Boulevard. "However, I have absolutely no control over it. I just punch in the numbers of what my competitors are at my home office."

See GAS | 5A



PHOTO BY EMILY WALTON | DEMOCRAT

A woman wears a mask as she fills up two gas containers Wednesday afternoon at Break Time, 101 Rebar Road.



PHOTOS BY FAITH BEMISS | DEMOCRAT

Harry Hoffert, owner of Stone Laser Imaging, holds up acrylic face shield material after cutting it with a laser Wednesday morning. Hoffert and members of the community have banded together to create face shields for first responders and medical personnel dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Project Face Shield a community effort

Stone Laser is nearing 5,000 shields

By Faith Bemiss
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Stone Laser Imaging's Project Face Shield was nearing 5,000 shields Wednesday, and owner Harry Hoffert said the effort wouldn't be possible without community support.

The business located in downtown Sedalia has received donations from individuals and local businesses in the effort to create face shields, which act as protection against the COVID-19 virus. Volunteers have also stepped in to help create the face shields. Hoffert said when the pandemic's stay-at-home orders were issued for Missouri, his business was also affected.

"As soon as they canceled school, we knew we were going to have to shut down," he explained.

Stone Laser specializes in laser engravings for schools, sports and park events. After the shutdown, the business found it had no orders.

"We haven't had a check come in since March," Hoffert said. "But, we decided we were going to rearrange the shop, add some new products and then we started seeing the things on the news about the shortages of (face shields)."

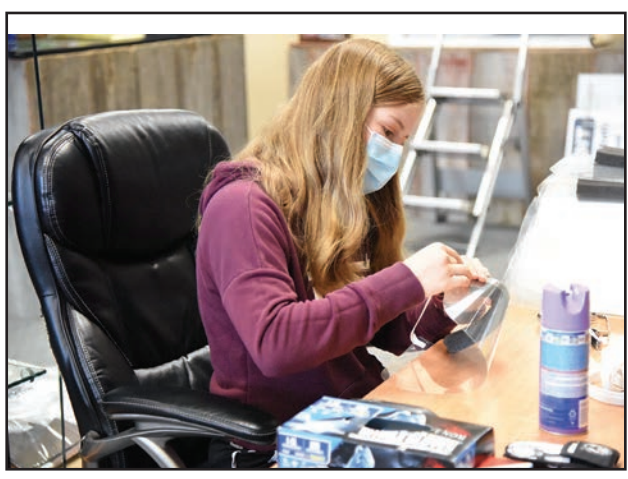
Hoffert began to research online and realized people often ordered and paid for face shields, but didn't receive them for weeks. He knew there had to be a better way to help the community.

"I've got a lot of businesses we partner with on a lot of community events, and I just reached out to them," he noted.

He told the businesses he would donate time along with his employees and area students to create the shields if they could help with the cost of the materials. He added Stone Laser also would pay for the machines and run them.

Once the shields were created, the first donations were given to area first responders, Hoffert said. Donations then moved on to nursing homes, Bothwell Regional Health Center, Fitzgibbon Hospital, urgent care centers, the Pettis County Health Center, health care providers in Kansas City and even to salons and barbershops.

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Alexia VanBrocklin, a student at Green Ridge High School, attaches elastic to an acrylic face shield Wednesday morning at Stone Laser Imaging. Since stay-at-home orders were issued due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Stone Laser, the community and volunteers have created around 5,000 face shields.

Lipps seeking seat on SFCC board

By Nicole Cooke
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Voters will have four choices, including WyAnn Lipps, for two positions on the State Fair Community College Board of Trustees in next month's election.

Lipps, who ran for the board in 2016, also faces Richard L. Parker, Christopher Paszkiewicz and Justin Hubbs in the June 2 municipal election. Board members Jerry Greer and Ron Wineinger decided not to seek re-election so two seats are up for grabs.

Lipps has been a volunteer at SFCC for 13 years, helping with the booster club where she has served on the board for nine years, commencement ceremonies, Jingle on the Green and many other campus events. Lipps said State Fair means family for her because many family members have been involved in some way: Her husband is a Navigator and adjunct history professor, her mother-in-law was an ESL teacher, her daughter and son-in-law are alumni, and her nephew is a student.

Lipps is also a co-chair for the Walk to End Alzheimer's in Sedalia and previously worked for a nonprofit organization.

"My entire life has been one of service starting as a kid all the way up. I just wanted to expand what I do there (at SFCC) and do whatever I can to be a help to the school," Lipps said of why she wanted to run for the board. "I feel that it's very important in whatever community you're in, whether it's your family, your block, your city, your church, that you do your part to make the best of where you are. For me, that's giving and volunteering and doing what I can to help where I can."



WyAnn Lipps

See BOARD | 5A

Smith-Cotton honors seniors with video Awards Night

By Hope Lecchi
hlecchi@sedaliademocrat.com

Smith-Cotton High School recognized members of the Class of 2020 in a special virtual awards presentation May 6. Although the seniors were unable to physically shake the hands of the donors, they did express their gratitude in a most befitting manner.

Smith-Cotton High School Principal Wade Norton said the district worked on the ceremony for the last six weeks.

"We wanted to ensure our seniors have the same events as the alum before them," Norton said via email. "We knew we couldn't have a live ceremony and keep everyone safe and meet all the guidelines that have been put in place.

"It is important for our current seniors, future graduates, and alum to see that traditions live through tough times," Norton continued. "You just have to step back and rearrange what we thought was going to happen and make a new reality. Recognition is important for the students, their families, and our community to see and feel."

Norton noted approximately 70 seniors were recognized during the video presentation.

According to Sedalia School District 200 Foundation President Deidre Esquivel, recipients of foundation scholarships were individually notified of their awards prior to Wednesday. The students were then asked to create a short video in which they thanked their donor. Esquivel said the donors were also asked to submit a video if they wished. The foundation board submitted a video as part of the program as well.

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LOTTERY
Midday Drawing
Pick 3: 5-3-6
Pick 4: 8-4-1-8

Evening Drawing
Pick 3: 1-7-4
Pick 4: 2-7-0-3
Show-Me Cash: 21-22-24-29-36

JOIN THE CONVERSATION
What's your take on today's news? Go to sedaliademocrat.com or visit us on Facebook to share your thoughts @ SedaliaDemocrat!

2020 VISION: MACKEY LED FROM THE BACKSTOP
• **Sports 1B**

OBITUARIES

Michael Wayne Adams

SEDALIA — Michael Wayne Adams, 55, of Sedalia, passed away Tuesday, May 5, 2020, at his home in Sedalia, MO.



He was born on February 12, 1965, in Boonville, MO, the son of Jerry Lee and Kay (Tomlinson) Adams, who reside in Tipton, MO.

On February 13, 2010, in Weston, MO, he was united in marriage to Ann Catherine Rees, who resides in the home.

Mike was a lineman for Central Missouri Electric Coop in Sedalia for over 30 years. He was a founding member of Dirt Road Addiction Band with whom he played rhythm guitar. Mike loved to fish, travel with the band, go on road trips with his wife Ann, and took special joy in sharing his knowledge with everyone.

In addition to his wife and parents, he is survived by a daughter, Michenna Adams of Hughesville; a brother, Rob Adams (Debbie) of California, MO; and his mother-in-law, Carolyn Rees of Sedalia.

Mike was preceded in death by a son, Jordan Michael Adams; maternal grandparents, Cecil and Maebelle Tomlinson; and paternal grandparents, David and Viola Adams.

Funeral service will be held at 12 p.m. Friday, May 8, 2020, at Cornerstone Baptist Church with Pastor Chris Guffey officiating.

The family will receive friends from 10 a.m. until service time at the church.

Friends may come by Rea Funeral Chapel between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Thursday evening to sign the guest register book.

Burial will be at Masonic Cemetery, Tipton, MO.

Pallbearers will be Dave Bergman, Gary Ballard, Clay Clear, JR Kenyon, Rob Rialti, and John Rooks.

Honorary bearers will be Lawrence Cooper and Mathew Kidder.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are suggested to the family in care of Rea Funeral Chapel.

Michel Earl Thomas

ST. LOUIS — Michel Earl Thomas, 61, of Warsaw, MO, passed away Tuesday, May 5, 2020, at St. Louis University Hospital.

He was born on June 24, 1958, in Sedalia, MO, the son of Earl and Geneva (Braden) Thomas.

On July 2, 1976, in Sedalia, he was united in marriage to Jackie Steele, who survives of the home.

Michel enjoyed hunting mushrooms, fishing, and boating. He loved playing Santa Claus for kids everywhere, especially in the hospitals. He enjoyed spending time at the lake with his family.

Besides his wife, survivors include three sons, James Thomas of Sedalia, Nick Thomas (Kristen) of Warsaw, Doug Thomas of Sedalia; two sisters, Kim Sanchez of Friendswood, TX, and Juli Thomas of Sedalia; and nine grandchildren, Kolby Thomas, Delaney Thomas, Emmy Thomas, Harley Allee, Jaylyn Thomas, Jordyn Thomas, Journey Thomas, Kelsey Thomas, and Tyler Boatman.

He was preceded in death by his father, Earl Thomas and his grandparents, William and Fern Thomas.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Arrangements are under the direction of Rea Funeral Chapel.

POLICE REPORTS

This list is a sampling of crime in Sedalia and the surrounding area. Information is taken from official police reports, which do not necessarily contain statements from all parties involved in each case.

Sedalia Police Department

Arrests

May 5

1:11 a.m.: An officer initiated a traffic stop on a vehicle for a moving violation on West 11th Street at South Harrison Avenue. The driver showed signs of impairment. Antonio T. Gray, 35, of the 1300 block of South Harrison Avenue, was arrested for driving while intoxicated, driving with a revoked license and failure to comply with the interlock required in the vehicle.

May 4

7:43 p.m.: An officer stopped a vehicle on West Broadway Boulevard at South Stewart Avenue. During the stop, the odor of marijuana was detected coming from the vehicle. A search revealed both occupants were in possession of a felony amount of marijuana with the intent to distribute. Charles L. Wright, 36, of the 300 block of West Sixth Street, and Leandrea R. Chandler, 32, of the 400 block of East Walnut Street, were arrested for felony possession of marijuana and distribution of marijuana.

Incidents

May 5

9:56 a.m.: An officer took a report of a theft of $686.68 which occurred April 17 at a business in the 2800 block of West Broadway Boulevard. The investigation was still ongoing at the time of the report.

10:25 a.m.: An officer responded to a business in the 1500 block of Thompson Boulevard for a theft from the night before. The amount of money stolen was $149.25.

Compiled by Emily Walton.

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FUNERALS

Nevils, Mariah K.

1 p.m. today at Highland Sacred Gardens. Arrangements are under the direction of Rea Funeral Chapel in Sedalia.

Cecilia, Donna "Sue,"

11 a.m. Friday at Sweeney-Phillips and Holdren Funeral Home in Warrensburg. Arrangements are under the direction of Sweeney-Phillips and Holdren Funeral Home.

Adams, Michael W.

noon Friday at Cornerstone Baptist Church. Arrangements are under the direction of Rea Funeral Chapel in Sedalia.

Arbogast, Charlotte J.

1 p.m. Friday at Slater City Cemetery. Arrangements are under the direction of Weiker Funeral Home in Slater.

Berry, Jacqueline J.

1 p.m. Friday at Crown Hill Cemetery in Sedalia. Arrangements are under the direction of Rea Funeral Chapel in Sedalia.

Goff, David W.

visitation 3 to 5 p.m. Monday, June 22 at Heckart Funeral Home in Sedalia. Arrangements are under the direction of Heckart Funeral Home.

LOCAL BRIEFS

Resurfacing projects to begin in May

The Missouri Department of Transportation announced drivers can expect one-lane traffic and occasional traffic delays when a project to resurface four state routes in Henry, Johnson and Bates counties begins the week of May 11.

Drivers can expect pilot cars and flaggers directing work zones and should wait for pilot cars on side roads before entering areas where resurfacing is being done. Drivers are urged to use caution while traveling through work areas. Crews will work Monday through Friday with some work on Saturdays possible. All routes will receive a new asphalt driving surface and new pavement striping.

The projects are:

Henry County Route AA from state Route 7, east of Clinton traveling south approximately 2 miles to Henry County Southeast 200 Road.

Bates/Henry County Route H from Loop 49 in Butler traveling east approximately 18 miles to Henry County Route K near Montrose.

Henry County Route K from state Route 7 in Urich traveling south approximately 17 miles to state Route 52 in Montrose. The Route 7 bridge over South Grand River also will receive new guardrail at both ends of the bridge.

Henry/Johnson County Route B from Missouri Route 2 in Johnson County south of Medford traveling south approximately 11 miles to state Route 7 in Urich.

Upcoming local blood drives

With no known end date to the coronavirus fight, the American Red Cross is encouraging healthy individuals to make appointments to donate blood or platelets to ensure blood remains readily available for patients who still rely on transfusions.

Healthy individuals who are feeling well are asked to make an appointment to donate by downloading the free Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device. Donors are asked to schedule an appointment prior to arriving at the drive and are required to wear a face covering or mask, in alignment with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention public guidance.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities:

May 12 from 3 to 7 p.m. at Warrensburg Community Center, 445 E. Gay St. in Warrensburg.

May 12 from 3 to 7 p.m. at Springhill Mennonite Church, 35937 state Route E in Latham.

May 18 from 2 to 6 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 154 W. Washington St. in Warsaw.

May 18 from 3 to 7 p.m. at Providence School House, 13247 state Route E in Versailles.

Virus-hit St. Louis city, county to begin reopening May 18

By Jim Salter
Associated Press

O'FALLON, Mo. (AP) — St. Louis and St. Louis County will begin easing stay-at-home orders this month, but officials cautioned that the process would be slow in the area of Missouri most ravaged by the coronavirus.

St. Louis Mayor Lyda Krewson and St. Louis County Executive Sam Page announced late Tuesday that public health restrictions would be reduced starting May 18. Page said Wednesday that the reopening process will be driven by metrics such as hospitalizations, ventilator usage and rises or falls in confirmed cases.

"We have to move forward in a responsible manner," Page said. "If we move too quickly, we know what can happen. We can have a second wave, and it can be much worse than the first wave."

The city and county are coordinating their plans, and Page and Krewson said details will be released soon. But Page said the plan would include a recommendation that workers wear masks "and we will request everyone out in public wear masks, especially when social distancing measures, being at least 6 feet away from someone else, can't be easily followed."

The mayors of 25 St. Louis County municipalities want those details immediately. On Tuesday, they presented a resolution asking the county council to publish plans for emerging from the lockdown.

Businesses across most of the rest of the state reopened Monday after Gov. Mike Parson's stay-at-home order ended, even though confirmed cases of COVID-19, the illnesses caused by the coronavirus, continued to rise. The state health department said Wednesday that Missouri had 9,102 confirmed cases, 186 more than Monday, and deaths rose by 19 for the second straight day. The department has reported 396 coronavirus deaths.

St. Louis city and county began shutdown orders before the state, and kept them going longer, because the region has been the epicenter of the virus in Missouri, accounting for about two-thirds of all confirmed cases, and about half the deaths.

The number of infections is thought to be far higher than the confirmed number because many people haven't been tested and studies suggest people can be infected without feeling sick.

Kansas City began phasing in its reopening on Wednesday, but with very strict rules on social distancing and crowd sizes. Jackson County's order ends Sunday. Other counties neighboring Kansas City and St. Louis reopened Monday.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms that clear up after two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The Missouri State Emergency Management Agency has ordered more than $42 million of personal protective equipment and medical supplies since the pandemic began, according to data compiled for The Associated Press. The purchases are on behalf of SEMA, the state health and mental health departments, the Missouri Veterans Commission and for police and fire departments across the state.

The data shows that through Tuesday those orders included $15.4 million to buy 4.6 million gowns, $9 million for 11.3 million N95 masks, $7 million for 14.6 million surgical masks and $6.4 million for 1.8 million face shields. SEMA said it couldn't to break down the exact quantity of supplies and dollar amount ordered from each particular vendor.

Gov. Mike Parson announced Wednesday afternoon that Missouri will receive $66 million from the federal coronavirus relief bill to provide funding for child care to assist families needing child care, including low-income residents searching for work, as well as providers.

Parson said it's too soon to say if the Missouri State Fair, scheduled for August, would be canceled. He expects discussions to take place next month.

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Associated Press reporter David A. Lieb in Jefferson City, Missouri, contributed to this report.

CRASH REPORTS

Woman injured in Benton crash

A woman was injured in a crash at 1:25 p.m. Tuesday in Benton County.

According to a Missouri State Highway Patrol report, Julia A. Morrison, 59, of Osceola, was driving south on state Route MM at Wildcat Drive when she failed to negotiate a turn. Her vehicle traveled off the left side of the road and hit an embankment.

Morrison suffered minor injuries and was taken to Golden Valley Memorial Hospital in Clinton by Warsaw-Lincoln Ambulance District.

The report states Morrison was not wearing a seat belt.

One seriously injured in Benton crash

A man suffered serious injuries in a crash at 8:44 p.m. Tuesday in Benton County.

According to a Missouri State Highway Patrol report, Brandon L. Hardesty, 21, of Lincoln, was driving north on state Route W at Wurdeman Avenue when his vehicle traveled off the left side of the road and overturned.

Hardesty suffered serious injuries and was taken to the University of Missouri Hospital in Columbia by Life Flight Eagle.

The report stated Hardesty was not wearing a seat belt.

Information is taken from preliminary Missouri State Highway Patrol reports, which do not necessarily contain statements from all parties involved.

Compiled by Emily Walton.

Photo Submissions

We invite readers to submit photos for "Community Snapshot," which features images of local residents and events. Images must be current, in JPEG format and must be the property of the person submitting the photo. Please include your name, city and a contact telephone number with your submission (phone numbers will not be published). Please also include the names of all persons in the photo and any additional information. Email your submissions to news@sedaliademocrat.com.

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PHOTO BY VINCE WARBURTON VIA AP

In this Monday, April 27 file photo provided by Vince Warburton, passengers get off an American Airlines flight after they landed at Los Angeles International Airport in Los Angeles.

Why are some planes crowded even with air travel down?

By David Koenig
AP Airlines Writer

Every once in a while, social media lights up with photos or video from flights that are nearly full, with passengers clearly violating advice from public health officials about social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic.

That raises the question: How can planes still be full when air travel is down more than 90% from a year ago?

In some cases, airlines are creating the crowds by canceling other flights and packing passengers on the few remaining planes. Carriers say, however, that they are taking action to ease passengers' fears about coronavirus contagion. Some are blocking middle seats — or letting passengers pay extra to guarantee an empty seat next to them. They are also starting to require passengers to wear facial coverings.

Here are some questions and answers about flying during the coronavirus pandemic.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE STILL FLYING?

The number of people traveling on airlines is scraping along at levels not seen in decades, and there are only about 17 passengers on the average domestic flight. But that's just an average.

The number of people passing through airport security checkpoints has been rising since mid-April, but it is still down 93% from a year ago. The Transportation Security Administration screened 163,692 people on Monday, compared with nearly 2.5 million on the comparable day a year ago.

SO WHY ARE SOME FLIGHTS FULL?

Partly it is due to the high number of canceled flights.

"On routes where there used to be scores of flights between the different carriers, now there may be two or three," says Robert Mann, a former airline executive and now a consultant in the New York area.

Airlines slash their flight schedules, and then they cancel even more flights in the last few days before departure. That can force passengers who were booked on several different flights to board the same plane.

Planes are more likely to be crowded on certain routes, especially those between so-called hub airports operated by the same airline.

ARE AIRLINES SPACING PASSENGERS?

Several carriers are blocking some middle seats.

Delta Air Lines said Tuesday that through June 30, it will also block some window and aisle seats, leaving 50% of first class and 60% of the main cabin empty. Southwest CEO Gary Kelly said his airline will temporarily cap the number of seats it sells, probably at 67% of capacity.

Frontier Airlines said Monday that through Aug. 31 it will guarantee passengers get an empty middle seat next to them — if they pay an extra fee ranging from $39 to $89.

"Sure, there are people saying, 'You're charging for social distancing?' No, no, no," Frontier CEO Barry Biffle told The Associated Press. "We are offering the option, and it is guaranteed. We don't believe you need it -- if everybody is wearing a facial covering – to be safe."

Brett Snyder, who runs the Cranky Flier website and a travel concierge business in California, said it was a great product for Frontier to sell during the downturn in travel.

"Why not make money on a seat that is going to be empty anyway?" he said.

So far, other carriers haven't copied Frontier.

WHAT ABOUT FACE MASKS?

All the leading U.S. airlines have announced plans to start requiring passengers to wear facial coverings during flights. JetBlue Airways was the first to announce the policy, which took effect Monday. The big four — Delta, American, United and Southwest — followed suit in recent days.

Airlines say they won't let customers without masks board a plane. Small children and people with medical conditions that make a mask hazardous will generally be exempt, and others will be allowed to briefly remove coverings while eating or drinking.

Crews are bracing for the inevitable passenger who will flout the rules.

"We're not going to land a plane because somebody won't keep their mask on unless they are violent or crazy," said an industry official who wasn't authorized to discuss the airline's procedures and requested anonymity. "We will flag that for corporate security, and they may not be welcome to fly us again."

The airlines are also requiring crew members to wear face masks.

HOW DO AIRLINES CLEAN PLANES?

Every airline says it has stepped up the cleaning of plane cabins to help prevent spread of the coronavirus. Some, like Delta, say they are using misting machines to spray antiviral chemicals inside the cabin.

Airlines insist that the air inside their planes is safe to breathe. Cabin air on most jetliners is a mix of fresh air from the outside and recirculated air that is passed through high-efficiency or HEPA filters designed to trap most airborne particles.

HOW LONG WILL THESE CHANGES LAST?

Until there is a proven treatment or widely available vaccine for COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus, the changes are likely to stay in place.

If people start venturing out on airplanes this summer, it won't look anything like summer 2019.

Traffic "will be light, you will have to wear a mask, there will be social distancing on planes and reduced on-board service to limit contact," Snyder said. "If there really isn't a vaccine until the first half of next year, you're not going to see anything approaching a new normal until next summer at the earliest."

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Missouri Western Fall 2019 Dean's List

The following local students were recently named to the Missouri Western State University dean's honor roll for the fall semester of 2019. Students who carried 12 hours or more for graded credit and earned a grade point average of 3.5 or better qualify for the honor.

Sedalia: Michala Pulliam, Chaz Satnan.

STATE BRIEF

Police: Man and woman found shot to death in car in Missouri

WEST PLAINS, Mo. (AP) — Two people have been found shot to death in a car in south-central Missouri's West Plains near the Arkansas border, police there said.

Someone called 911 Tuesday night to report finding the bodies in a car abandoned on a private drive, Springfield television station KYTY reported. Officers arrived to find a man and a woman dead in the car, West Plains Police said. Both had suffered gunshot wounds.

Police had not released the names of the victims by Wednesday afternoon. Investigators also had not released any details on how the shooting occurred or announced any arrests.

Positive COVID-19 cases rise by three

By Democrat Staff

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Pettis County has risen by three individuals in the past day.

According to numbers posted Wednesday on the Pettis County Health Center Facebook page, the total of confirmed cases in Pettis County now stands at 57.

Ten individuals have been released from care. One individual remains hospitalized. As of Friday, a total of 1,032 tests had been administered. Ninety-four residents are being monitored by health center staff.

According to a graph posted on the health center Facebook page, based on the 54 confirmed cases from Tuesday, 40 of those are people under the age of 50.

The health center recently posted a list of Frequently Asked Questions regarding COVID-19. Listed below are the top five questions and the health center responses.

Q: Why is Pettis County not opening everything on May 4? The Governor says we can.

A: The information from the Governor is officially published through a Public Health Order signed by Dr. Randall Williams who is the Director of the Department of Health and Senior Services.

The order permits local public health authorities to provide orders that are more restrictive, but not less. In Pettis County, our cases have been increasing for two weeks, doubling in the past week. Therefore, we must move more slowly to reopen.

Q: Who is the County Health Officer and what gives that person the right to restrict what we can do?

A: The County Health Officer is the Administrator of the Pettis County Health Center and is appointed by the County Commission. In the State of Missouri, both the statutes and regulations give the County Health Officer the responsibility and authority to protect the county from communicable diseases. The statutes covering this issue are in Chapter 192, specifically RsMo 192.020 and 19 CSR 20-20.040.

In Missouri, the authority to restrict activities in a communicable disease emergency as declared by the Governor rests with the Director of the Department of Health and Senior Services for the state and the County Health Officer for the county.

Q: What should people do to protect themselves from the virus?

A: Stay at home when possible, do not participate in activities that bring people together such as family dinners, parties, housewarming events or other places where people gather, wash your hands frequently for 20 seconds and use hand sanitizer, stay home if you are sick, cover your cough and sneeze in your elbow, clean and sanitize the surfaces you touch, clean your hands when you have been out of your home and don't visit people who are at risk.

Q: What is the story about masks? Why should I wear a mask in public?

A: For the general public, masks protect those around you. The number of people who have tested positive for the virus without symptoms is growing. If you have the virus and cough, sneeze, sing or speak forcefully, you are sending virus particles into the air that spread the virus to others. By wearing a mask, those virus particles are trapped.

Cloth masks are fine but should be washed daily. Any filter that absorbs moisture can be used in those masks that have a pocket. If everyone wore a mask while in public, there would be many fewer places where people can be exposed.

Q: When can I go back to church?

A: Under the County Public Health order, churches may reopen on May 4 but with limitations. There are restrictions on the number of people who can be in the building based on the size of the worship space and those who attend services must remain 6 feet apart. Six feet apart means a circle all around: front, sides and back.

During a meeting with pastors, additional guidance was provided to include having members of the congregation use hand sanitizer upon entry, wear masks, having ushers seat members of the congregation and dismiss the congregation in a manner to reduce people grouping together, no common touch items such as collection baskets, hymnals, prayer books or communion trays, extra cleaning and sanitizing between services to include pews, restrooms and doors, and propping doors open during service to avoid touching the door. Singing can spread the virus as coughing and sneezing so singing should be limited.

Continuing online or other electronic means to provide services is encouraged. Some pastors have determined that the plans in place can meet the needs of their congregation and others have determined to wait a while longer. At-risk members of the congregation should carefully consider if attending in-person services is best for them.

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Lawsuit on behalf of Missouri meat plant workers dismissed

By Jim Salter
Associated Press

O'FALLON, Mo. (AP) — A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit filed on behalf of employees at a rural Missouri meatpacking facility, ruling that oversight of how the plant adheres to guidance aimed at slowing the spread of the coronavirus falls to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, not the courts.

U.S. District Judge Greg Kays issued his 24-page ruling Tuesday in favor of Smithfield Foods. A lawsuit on behalf of workers at Smithfield's pork processing plant in Milan, Missouri, sought an injunction requiring the plant to abide by federal guidelines. The lawsuit accused Virginia-based Smithfield of not doing enough to protect workers from the coronavirus.

"Plaintiffs are naturally concerned for their health and the health of their community in these unprecedented times," Kays wrote. "The Court takes their concern seriously. Nevertheless, the Court cannot ignore the USDA's and OSHA's authority over compliance ... or the significant steps Smithfield has taken to reduce the risk of a COVID-19 outbreak at the Plant."

The attorney for the workers, David Muraskin, didn't rule out an appeal but said the lawsuit itself prompted several changes at the plant, including better spacing of employees, additional cleaning and sanitizing, and an improved sick leave policy that means workers don't feel obligated to come to work if they have symptoms of the coronavirus.

"This worker power is starting to be effective," Muraskin said Wednesday. "Workers will organize and they will protest and when necessary they will sue to protect themselves because these companies need to be held to account."

Smithfield said it was pleased the court dismissed what it called a "frivolous" lawsuit.

"Importantly, the Court recognized the 'significant measures' Smithfield is taking to protect the health and safety of its employees," the company said in a statement.

The Milan plant has not seen an outbreak of COVID-19. Just one case has been reported in Sullivan County, where the plant is located.

But outbreaks have become common at other meat plants across the U.S., infecting thousands of workers, leading to the closure of some plants and prompting meat shortages.

President Donald Trump issued an executive order last week requiring meatpacking plants to stay open. The order was widely seen as giving processors protection from liability for workers who become sick on the job, and it came after the Missouri lawsuit against Smithfield Foods.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said Wednesday that since Trump's order, the USDA has worked with OSHA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ensure that meat plants are abiding by federal guidelines.

"This ruling is directly in line with what the Federal government has been calling for companies and communities to do in light of the President's Executive Order. If we continue to work together, we can maintain the critical supply of meat and poultry for Americans while also protecting worker health and safety," Perdue said in a statement.

Trump said Wednesday that he has asked the Justice Department to investigate allegations of potential market manipulation and possible price fixing by meatpackers during the pandemic.

Justice Department spokeswoman Kerri Kupec confirmed the president asked the agency to investigate potential antitrust issues. Officials said the department also received a number of inquiries from members of Congress. Attorneys general for 11 Midwestern states have also asked for a federal investigation.

Separately, the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported Wednesday that more than 300 federal meatpacking inspectors are either sick from the coronavirus or in self-quarantine after exposure. Citing a USDA spokesman, the newspaper said through Tuesday, 197 inspectors had tested positive; the Food Safety and Inspection Service has about 8,000 employees. The agency said it continues to meet its responsibilities.

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Associated Press writer Michael Balsamo in Washington contributed to this report.

April jobs data to show epic losses and soaring unemployment

By Christopher Rugaber
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The economic catastrophe caused by the viral outbreak likely sent the U.S. unemployment rate in April to its highest level since the Great Depression and caused a record-shattering loss of jobs.

With the economy paralyzed by business closures, the unemployment rate likely jumped to at least 16% — from just 4.4% in March — and employers cut a stunning 21 million or more jobs in April, economists have forecast, according to data provider FactSet. If so, it would mean that nearly all the job growth in the 11 years since the Great Recession had vanished in a single month.

Yet even those breathtaking figures won't fully capture the magnitude of the damage the coronavirus has inflicted on the job market.

Many people still employed have had their hours reduced. Others have suffered pay cuts. Some who've lost jobs won't have been able to look for work amid widespread shutdowns and won't even be counted as unemployed. A broader measure — the proportion of adults with jobs — could plunge to a record low.

"What we're talking about here is pretty stunning," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at Grant Thornton. "The shock is unique because the cause is unique. It's such a different animal from anything that we've ever seen."

The government will issue the April jobs report on Friday morning. On Thursday, it will release the latest weekly report on applications for unemployment benefits. It will likely show that about 3.5 million people sought jobless aid last week. That would bring the total number of layoffs to nearly 34 million since the shutdowns began seven weeks ago.

That figure is much larger than the expected April job loss because the two are measured differently: The government calculates job losses by surveying businesses and households. It's a net figure that also counts the hiring that some companies, like Amazon and many grocery stores, have done despite the widespread layoffs. By contrast, the total jobless claims is a cumulative figure that includes aid applications that began in March.

Still, the job loss for April may be much larger than expected, with most economists acknowledging that their usual models might not work as well in a collapsing job market. Swonk notes that several million unauthorized immigrants who weren't able to file for unemployment benefits were nevertheless probably laid off last month. Those jobs losses would be counted, though, in the government's surveys. Swonk estimates that April's job loss could total as high as 34 million.

Companies are still cutting jobs in the midst of a severe downturn, with the economy possibly shrinking at an unheard-of 40% annual rate in the April-June quarter. GE Aviation said it is cutting up to 13,000 jobs. Uber will shed 3,700 positions.

Amy Egert, a dental hygienist in Severn, Maryland, was laid off in mid-March. She was told she could return a month later, but she's still waiting and it's unclear when she will able to go back. She monitors Maryland statistics on coronavirus cases in hopes that the figures will show enough of a downward trend for her to work again.

"As I watch the numbers, it's like OK, are we going to make it back by the end of May?" Egert asked. "Is it going to be the first of June? Is it going to be mid-June?"

She is receiving the extra $600 in unemployment included in the government's relief package but still wants to return.

"I've got diabetics out there that haven't had their teeth cleaned," Egert said. "They come every four months, and I'm thinking they're going to be a mess."

Even as the unemployment rate reaches dizzying heights, it will likely be held down by several factors. The Labor Department counts people as unemployed only if they're actively searching for work. Yet many laid-off workers may be discouraged from looking for a new job given that so many non-essential businesses are closed. Others may stay home to protect their health. Still others may feel they have to stay with children who are home from school.

In addition, some workers on temporary layoff might be incorrectly classified as what the government calls "employed, but absent from work." This can happen if employees assume they will return to their jobs once their employer reopens. In March, the Labor Department said that such misclassification by its survey takers — who have never before dealt with pandemic-related shutdowns — lowered the unemployment rate by a full percentage point.

Jason Faberman, senior economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, says that including those workers, as well as millions who still have jobs but who have been reduced to part-time status, could raise a broader gauge of what's called under-employment to 25% or higher on Friday.

Alexander Bick and Adam Blandin, economists at Arizona State University and Virginia Commonwealth University, respectively, have conducted two surveys since the virus outbreak began that mirror the government's monthly survey that it uses to calculate the unemployment rate. They conclude that the proportion of American adults in their prime working years — 25 through 54 — who have jobs, fell to just 60.4% in April, the lowest on record.

They also noted that millions of Americans have had their hours cut in April.

"We have never had such low hours" worked, on average, for each employed person, Bick said.

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AP Writer Brian Witte contributed to this report from Annapolis, Maryland.

Justices wary of 'Obamacare' birth control coverage changes

By Jessica Gresko and Mark Sherman
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court seemed concerned Wednesday about the sweep of Trump administration rules that would allow more employers who cite a religious or moral objection to opt out of providing no-cost birth control to women as required by the Affordable Care Act.

The justices were hearing their third day of arguments conducted by telephone because of the coronavirus pandemic. The first of two cases before them Wednesday stemmed from the Obama-era health law, under which most employers must cover birth control as a preventive service, at no charge to women, in their insurance plans.

In 2017, the Trump administration announced it would broaden an exemption to the contraceptive coverage requirement that previously applied to houses of worship, such as churches, synagogues and mosques. But the change was blocked by courts.

The Supreme Court's four liberal justices suggested they were troubled by the changes, which the government has estimated would cause about 70,000 women, and at most 126,000 women, to lose contraception coverage in one year.

Chief Justice John Roberts, a key vote on a court split between conservatives and liberals, suggested that the Trump administration's reliance on a federal religious freedom law to expand the exemption was "too broad."

And Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who joined the conversation from a Maryland hospital where she was being treated for an infection caused by a gallstone, gave the government's top Supreme Court lawyer, Solicitor General Noel Franciso, what sounded like a lecture.

"You have just tossed entirely to the wind what Congress thought was essential, that is that women be provided these .... services with no hassle, no cost to them," said Ginsburg, who is expected to be in the hospital for a day or two.

The court's conservative justices seemed more willing to side with the administration, with Trump appointee Justice Brett Kavanaugh suggesting the administration's changes might be considered "within the bounds of reasonable."

Beyond exempting churches, synagogues and mosques from the contraceptive coverage requirement, the Obama administration also created a way by which religiously affiliated organizations including hospitals, universities and charities could opt out of paying for contraception, but women on their health plans would still get no-cost birth control. Some groups complained the opt-out process itself violated their religious beliefs.

That opt-out process was the subject of a previous Supreme Court case, but the court, with only eight justices at the time because of the death of Justice Antonin Scalia, didn't decide the issue. It instead sent both sides back to see if they could work out a compromise.

That didn't happen. "Is it really the case that there is no way to resolve those differences?" Roberts asked at one point.

After the Trump administration took over, officials announced a rule change that allows many companies and organizations with religious or moral objections to opt out of covering birth control without providing an alternate avenue for coverage.

New Jersey and Pennsylvania challenged the rules in court, and a judge blocked them from going into effect. The judge found the Trump administration did not follow proper procedures for issuing the rules. An appeals court agreed, and the administration appealed to the Supreme Court to step in, as did the Little Sisters of the Poor. The order of Roman Catholic nuns had been instrumental in challenging the Obama administration rules.

But on Wednesday, Justice Sonia Sotomayor questioned why the Little Sisters of the Poor were even at the court because for a number of reasons they don't have to provide contraceptive coverage. Sotomayor also referenced the coronavirus pandemic during her questioning, asking attorney Paul Clement, who was representing the nuns, whether an employer might be able to object to paying for a coronavirus vaccine. He said "no."

Even though the Trump rules remain blocked, a ruling by a federal judge in Texas in June already allows most people who object to covering contraception to avoid doing so.

In the second case the justices heard Wednesday, political consultants and pollsters were among those asking the Supreme Court to strike down a federal law from 1991 that bars them from making robocalls to cellphones. The case only arose after Congress in 2015 created an exception in the law that allows the automated calls for collection of government debt.

The court wrestled with whether it could get rid of just the government-debt restriction or would have to invalidate the entire ban on cellphone robocalls. "No one wants robocalls on their cellphone," Roberts said, though he typically votes for the challengers in free-speech cases.

The argument provided a light moment of the day when Justice Stephen Breyer got cut off when someone tried calling him. Breyer said after he rejoined the court's arguments: "The telephone started to ring, and it cut me off the call and I don't think it was a robocall."

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Pets of the Week



Mia
Female Dog (#456569)
Spayed ✓Size: Large: 51lbs-80lbs
Breed: Coonhound, Treeing Walker/ Terrier
Estimated Date of Birth: 6/17/2019
Age 10 mnths
Color: Brindle/White
Location: Adoptables
Adoption Fee: $150



Millie
Female Dog (#457336)
Spayed ✓
Size: Large: 51lbs-80lbs
Breed: Australian Cattle Dog/American Blue Heeler
Estimated Date of Birth: 3/8/2017
Age: 3 yr 1 mnths
Color: Golden
Location: Adoptables
Adoption Fee: $150

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
50 Hours — Lanyard
150 Hours — Shirt
250 Hours — Water Bottle
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Purina Kitten Chow
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Dawn Dish Soap, Leashes
Grooming Supplies, Toys

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Gas

From Page 1A

Many of the stations also said the prices are dictated by the company's corporate offices.

"We get an email saying please move gas down to this whenever they're (corporate) ready to move it," explained Anna Williams, general manager at Break Time in the 2800 block of West Broadway Boulevard.

Tiffany Hokaday, assistant manager at Casey's in the 1900 block of West Main Street, said the same. As of Wednesday morning, the station's unleaded gas was $1.48.

"Corporate sends us a message through the register telling us when to change and what to change to..." Hokaday said. "We just do whatever they (corporate) tell us to do. We don't get to put it in anymore. We just authorize what they choose for us to have."

According to MFA Oil Company in Columbia Senior Media Relations and Communications Specialist Adam Buckallew, gas prices can vary for a variety of reasons.

"Gas prices are heavily influenced by the price of crude oil and its refinement, which typically accounts for more than half of the price of a gallon of gasoline," Buckallew told the Democrat. "Fuel prices can vary by market due to a number of factors including wholesale costs, state and federal taxes, transportation costs, the brand of fuel sold and competition."

Some stations go by both, like Tiger Eagle Stop in Sedalia where unleaded gas was $1.48 Wednesday morning. Employee Melissa Rath said she was unsure why prices were higher in Sedalia than neighboring towns but said she had been "told by people it was because of the taxes in Sedalia." The stop goes by both corporate's guidance and competitors' prices.

"It's pretty much from corporate but it's also, we kind of go with what everyone else is in town," Rath explained. "We try to match the cheapest that's going on in town also. So like if another gas station goes to like $1.40, then we would go to $1.40."

Emily Walton can be contacted at 660-530-0146.



PHOTO BY EMILY WALTON | DEMOCRAT

Gas was $1.49 at Break Time at 101 Rebar Road in Sedalia Wednesday afternoon.

Board

From Page 1A

Enrollment declines have been a trend at Missouri community colleges for a few years. Lipps said that when the economy is doing well, college enrollment tends to decline since more people are working, something she acknowledged is out of SFCC's control. However, she said she thinks being more proactive in area high schools could help.

"I think if we were more active in the high schools to find out what the kids are looking for, that if we did not have that program at State Fair we could look at implementing that program so they don't have to go somewhere else, they can go right to State Fair," she said.

Last year, SFCC decided to move forward with the Olen Howard Workforce Innovation Center. The proposed $9 million facility will house the college and Career and Technology Center's welding and precision machine programs.

Lipps said she didn't know a lot about the new facility but said she thinks that "any time we improve, add on, it's a positive." She added that she feels there are other facility needs to be addressed, such as adding more dorms and improving existing ones.

The new center aligns with current trends to enhance workforce development across the state. Lipps said she believes State Fair is doing a good job with both workforce training options and traditional two-year degree programs.

"There are a lot of areas now where the certificate such as welding or truck driving, you don't need the degree you need the certificate and that is becoming wildly popular throughout the country," she said. "I think that State Fair is doing a great service by offering both. I would also like to see more general education classes taught at night so the workforce could go to school, the single mothers."

Lipps' husband served in the U.S. Air Force and each year he received a COLA, or cost of living, raise. Lipps said she thinks SFCC faculty should get the same.

"I do understand that when enrollment is down, budget is down. I do think we should stay competitive with those in our region and if not more," she said. "We want to keep quality workers and that is really what my whole stance is for running because students are our top priority and part of keeping the students there is making sure we have quality teachers and quality staff. In order to have quality teachers and staff, we need to make sure they are appreciated and they are valued in every way."

If elected, Lipps said one of her biggest goals would be to stress the importance of letting employees know how important they are. Another would be helping the college stay on track financially.

"I think it's very important for the board to be good stewards of the money we have coming in and I think students are the No. 1 priority but your employees go right along with that to making sure we give students the best," she said. "If you don't have happy employees, it will show."

She said she does not make decisions lightly and plans to keep that mentality if elected, getting all the pertinent information and learning all sides of a situation before casting a vote.

"State Fair is family," she said. "I have been there for 13 years. I know the employees, I know the students, and I will do 100% of my abilities to make sure everyone is valued and it's just another avenue for me to help from what I've already been doing."

Nicole Cooke can be reached at 660-530-0138 or on Twitter

Awards

From Page 1A

"We (the foundation) are giving away a minimum of $58,250 this year," Esquivel said via email. "That's up about $4,000 from last year – and it could be $5,000 more than that as we are waiting for one selection process."

Esquivel added, "It is not the year we all planned for – but it will definitely be memorable for our seniors."

As the Sedalia School District 200 continues to make plans for the graduates, Superintendent Steve Triplett continue to praise the efforts of the administrators and staff for going above and beyond to ensure the students are not forgotten in this unprecedented time.

"Mr. Norton deserves praise for all he did to ensure our senior scholarship recipients are recognized for their achievements. Senior Awards Night is one of our 'rite of passage' events for graduating students, and Mr. Norton has gone above and beyond to try to keep those milestones in place for the Class of 2020," Triplett said via email.

A total dollar amount has not been finalized for the Smith-Cotton High School class of 2020 as some scholarships are still pending.

The SCHS Senior Awards Night video presentation can be viewed on the Sedalia 200 Facebook page.

Hope Lecchi can be reached at 660-826-1000 ext. 1484.

STATE BRIEFS

Thousands of applications for Missouri's first elk hunt

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Thousands of hunters are taking their shot at participating in the first elk hunt in modern Missouri history.

The state began taking applications for five elk hunt permits on Friday and had received 7,181 applications by Monday, The Springfield News-Leader reported. The winners of the permits will be determined in a drawing in early summer.

"Given this is the first time we have added an entirely new hunting opportunity in Missouri in many decades, it is hard to predict how many people will apply," said Aaron Hildreth, cervid biologist and elk expert for the Missouri Department of Conservation.

The first elk season will include an archery portion from Oct. 17-25 and a firearms portion Dec. 12-20. The five permits will be for bull elk and will be valid for both portions.

The state's conservation department began restoring elk to Missouri in 2011 and the herd has grown to more than 200, with their range stretching into parts of Carter, Reynolds and Shannon counties.

Judges dismissed from suit over public defender wait lists

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Seven judges have been dismissed from a lawsuit over Missouri's use of wait lists for public defenders.

Judge William Hickle, presiding judge in the 25th Circuit, ruled Monday the judges were not necessary parties to the lawsuit, The Jefferson City News-Tribune reported.

Civil rights advocates filed the lawsuit in February, contending that wait lists deprived thousands of people of their right to an attorney. The lawsuit contends about 4,600 people were on the lists, making criminal defendants wait months or years before they are assigned attorneys.

Hickle overruled a motion to dismiss the state, the Missouri Public Defender System and Mary Cox, director of the Office of State Public Defender, from the lawsuit.

A hearing is scheduled in June, and a three-day trial is scheduled in September.

The lawsuit was filed in Cole County on behalf of eight criminal defendants but the plaintiffs are seeking class action status.

Missouri relies almost exclusively on the Office of State Public Defender to provide indigent defense services. The lawsuit alleges chronic lack of funding and increasing caseloads have led to attorneys operating at more than double the maximum workload that would allow adequate representation.

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Astronomers find closest black hole to Earth, hints of more

By Seth Borenstein
AP Science Writer

Meet your new but shy galactic neighbor: A black hole left over from the death of a fleeting young star.

European astronomers have found the closest black hole to Earth yet, so near that the two stars dancing with it can be seen by the naked eye.

Of course, close is relative on the galactic scale. This black hole is about 1,000 light-years away and each light-year is 5.9 trillion miles. But in terms of the cosmos and even the galaxy, it is in our neighborhood, said European Southern Observatory astronomer Thomas Rivinius, who led the study published Wednesday in the journal Astronomy & Astrophysics.

The previous closest black hole is probably about three times further, about 3,200 light-years, he said.

The discovery of a closer black hole, which is in the constellation Telescopium in the Southern Hemisphere, hints that there are more of these out there. Astronomers theorize there are between 100 million to 1 billion of these small but dense objects in the Milky Way.

The trouble is we can't see them. Nothing, not even light, escapes a black hole's gravity. Usually, scientists can only spot them when they're gobbling up sections of a partner star or something else falling into them. Astronomers think most black holes, including this newly discovered one, don't have anything close enough to swallow. So they go undetected.

Astronomers found this one because of the unusual orbit of a star. The new black hole is part of what used to be a three-star dance in a system called HR6819. The two remaining super-hot stars aren't close enough to be sucked in, but the inner star's orbit is warped.

Using a telescope in Chile, they confirmed that there was something about four or five times the mass of our sun pulling on the inner star. It could only be a black hole, they concluded.

Outside astronomers said that makes sense.

"It will motivate additional searches among bright, relatively nearby stars," said Ohio State University astronomer Todd Thompson, who wasn't part of the research.

Like most of these type of black holes this one is tiny, maybe 25 miles in diameter.

"Washington, D.C., would quite easily fit into the black hole, and once it went in it, would never come back," said astronomer Dietrich Baade, a study co-author.

These are young hot stars compared to our 4.6 billion-year-old sun. They're maybe 140 million years old, but at 26,000 degrees F they are three times hotter than the sun, Rivinius said. About 15 million years ago, one of those stars got too big and too hot and went supernova, turning into the black hole in a violent process, he said.



PHOTO BY FAITH BEMISS | DEMOCRAT

Ian Wallen, a student at Missouri State University, staples on a piece of foam for a face shield Wednesday at Stone Laser Imaging. Wallen and volunteers are helping with Project Face Shield.

Shield

From Page 1A

Hoffert takes no credit for the project's success.

"It's all been the community coming together," he added. "I just had an idea."

Don and Rini Goodman with Auto Glass Express researched the cost of material for Hoffert and A&B Auto Trim Inc. donated elastic while Advance Building Supply donated material for the foam.

Don Prevost, of Columbia, stepped in to provide a machine to help with the punch press for the project.

"He's probably cut 2,000 (face shields) for us," Hoffert noted.

Volunteers include Stone Laser employees John Wilbanks and Josh Johnson. Student volunteers include Alexis VanBrocklin, Mason Harding and Harrison Needy, all of Green Ridge High School, and Ian Wallen, a student at Missouri State University. Melissa Johnson, a teacher from Parkview Elementary School, also helped cut foam.

"It's not super hard to put them together," Wallen said Wednesday at Stone Laser. "But it definitely feels good to help people."

VanBrocklin, who was helping Wallen assemble shields, agreed.

"He's from Sedalia too, so we're both Sedalia raised," she noted. "It feels good to give back to the community that kind of raised us. We are taking care of the people who are taking care of us."

> *"It feels good to give back to the community, that kind of raised us. We are taking care of the people who are taking care of us."*
>
> *— Alexia VanBrocklin, a student at Green Ridge High School*

Johnson, a Stone Laser employee, is actually laid off but is donating his time for the project.

"I love helping the community, we all do here," he said. "My mother was a nurse, I have a lot of respect for the health care community. I feel like we're doing a good thing here."

Hoffert added it was "amazing" how many people combined their resources to get the project up and running.

"It makes you feel humble," he said. "To where you're like, man there's a lot of people who wanted to come together to try to help … It makes you feel good to live in Sedalia and Pettis County."

Faith Bemiss can be reached at 660-530-0289 or on Twitter @flbemiss.

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SEVEN-DAY FORECAST

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
64 / 47	58 / 35	62 / 45	60 / 39	57 / 41	53 / 52	69 / 53
An afternoon thunderstorm	Breezy in the a.m.; clearing	Mostly sunny	Partly sunny and cool	Mostly cloudy and cool	Cloudy with showers possible	A p.m. t-storm possible

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:08 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:11 p.m.
Moonrise today	8:45 p.m.
Moonset today	6:30 a.m.

Full	Last	New	First
May 7	May 14	May 22	May 29

WEATHER HISTORY

The most deadly and destructive tornado in the United States occurred on May 7, 1840. "The Great Natchez Tornado" destroyed Natchez, Miss., killing 340 people. Most died by drowning in the Mississippi River.

ALMANAC

Sedalia Regional Airport Tuesday

TEMPERATURES

High	70
Low	49
Normal high	71
Normal low	49
Record high	91 in 1952
Record low	32 in 1944

PRECIPITATION

Tuesday	0.01"
Month to date	0.41"
Normal m-t-d	0.90"
Year to date	13.15"
Normal y-t-d	11.73"

COOLING DEGREE DAYS

Index of energy consumption indicating how many degrees the average temperature was above 65 degrees for the day.

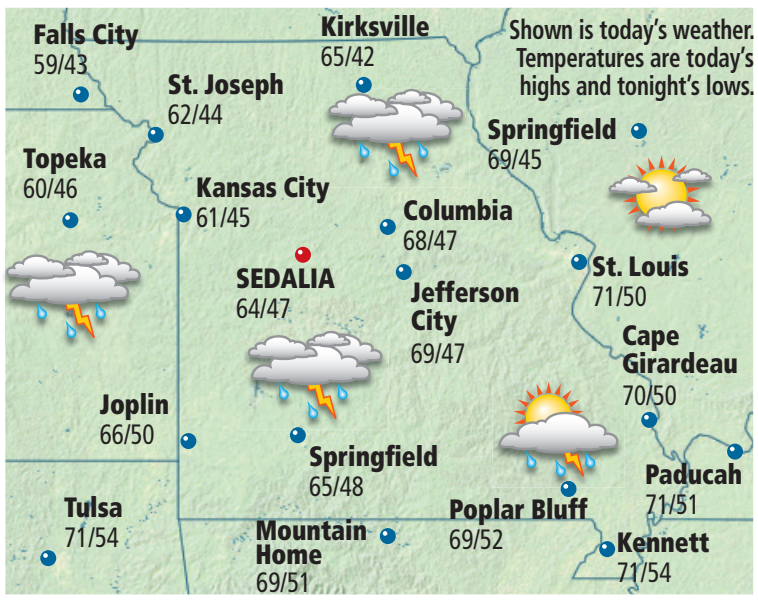
Tuesday	0
Month to date	9
Year to date	24
Normal year to date	26
Last year to date	6

RIVER LEVELS

In feet as of 7 a.m. Wednesday

Blackwater	Stage	Chg	Fld Stg
Blue Lick	16.56	+6.77	24
Valley City	8.40	-7.35	22
Lamine			
Otterville	4.81	+2.16	15
Missouri			
Boonville	13.89	+0.36	21

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather, Inc.** ©2020



BRANSON
High: 69. **Low:** 51. Mostly cloudy today with a shower or thunderstorm in spots during the afternoon. Periods of rain and a thunderstorm tonight.

KANSAS CITY
High: 61. **Low:** 45. Mostly cloudy today with a shower or thunderstorm. Periods of rain tonight. Breezy and cool tomorrow with clouds giving way to sun.

ST. LOUIS
High: 71. **Low:** 50. Some sun, then clouds today with a thunderstorm in spots late in the afternoon. Heavy showers late tonight. A bit of rain tomorrow morning.

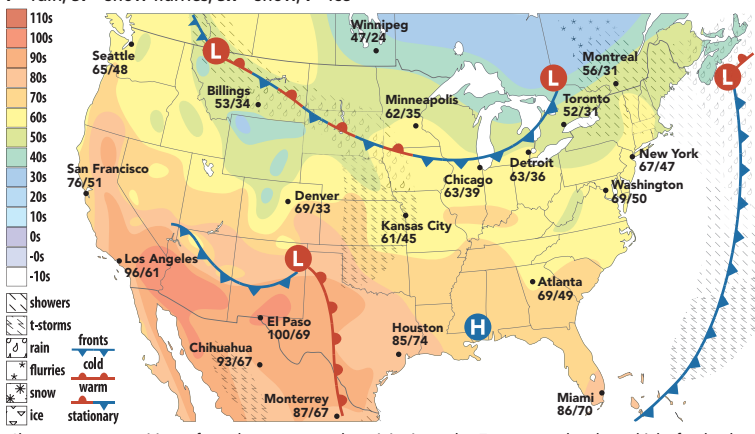
NEW YORK CITY
High: 67. **Low:** 47. Times of clouds and sun today. Mainly clear tonight. Mostly cloudy tomorrow with occasional rain and drizzle in the afternoon.

LOS ANGELES
High: 96. **Low:** 61. Sunshine today with the temperature near the record of 97. Mostly clear tonight. Sunshine tomorrow.

NATIONAL WEATHER

	Today Hi/Lo/W	Friday Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	69/49/s	65/41/t
Baltimore	68/48/pc	60/37/r
Billings	53/34/r	59/38/c
Boston	56/45/c	59/39/pc
Buffalo	51/31/sh	41/28/c
Charlotte	69/45/s	66/40/t
Chicago	63/39/pc	46/31/pc
Cleveland	63/36/pc	44/30/r
Dallas	85/67/s	75/49/t
Denver	69/33/s	61/36/c
Detroit	63/36/pc	48/28/sn
Honolulu	85/71/sh	84/70/s
Houston	85/74/s	86/59/t
Indianapolis	68/46/pc	51/28/r
Las Vegas	95/70/s	96/72/pc
Milwaukee	57/35/pc	45/31/c
Nashville	71/52/pc	60/34/t
New Orleans	78/63/s	85/56/pc
Norfolk	67/52/s	74/44/pc
Oklahoma City	76/52/pc	66/39/pc
Orlando	79/55/s	85/65/s
Phoenix	106/76/s	102/77/s
Pittsburgh	61/38/pc	46/26/r
Portland, ME	58/40/c	56/36/pc
Portland, OR	75/53/s	82/59/s
Sacramento	94/55/pc	96/55/pc
St. Louis	71/50/pc	58/37/r
San Francisco	76/51/pc	75/51/pc
Seattle	65/48/pc	79/54/s
Washington, DC	69/50/s	62/37/r

Weather (W): **s** - sunny, **pc** - partly cloudy, **c** - cloudy, **sh** - showers, **t** - thunderstorms, **r** - rain, **sf** - snow flurries, **sn** - snow, **i** - ice



Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation today. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

Summary: As showers linger in part of the Northeast today, rain will spread from Montana to Iowa and storms will rumble farther south. As fresh cold air invades the Great Lakes, heat will build west of the Rockies.

2020 Vision: Mackey unparalleled as Lincoln backstop



By Alex Agueros
aagueros@sedaliademocrat.com

Editor's Note: To recognize spring season student-athletes whose senior campaigns were canceled, the Sedalia Democrat is pleased to publish 2020 Vision, a series of stories highlighting 20 of the most accomplished baseball, softball, golf, soccer and track and field participants in the area.

Behind the plate for a pair semifinal runs, including a program-first state softball championship, Lincoln senior Haley Mackey is used to heavy lifting.

But without a senior season to defend the title, Mackey is putting in work on the farm.

"My job, I lift heavy stuff all the time, so I get a little workout in," she said.

Providing backstop security and line-drive power unparalleled by spring softball contemporaries, Mackey represented the blue-collar strength necessary to lead the red-and-white Lady Cards to a state title.

"I never went up there trying to hit home runs," Mackey said. "I just go up there to make good contact, try to get a base hit."

Mackey committed to State Fair Community College after hitting better than .400 as a junior, helping Lincoln capture its first-ever state championship. Joined by one other senior in Chloe Reese, Mackey said the Lady Cards were well-equipped to defend their title.

"It was going to be kind of difficult, but having those younger girls who had that experience at the high level, it wasn't going to be that different," Mackey said. "We've all known each other for a number of years."

Tight-knit camaraderie was not only an advantage to the champion Lady Cards, but it was her favorite part of the game, Mackey said. "Playing with the girls that I played with since I was nine years old, they made everything so much better," Mackey said. "It was easier communicating on and off the field. We never had any problems team-wise, we just always knew we needed to communicate to each other. I think that's what set us apart, we knew how to play together. We knew how to play as a team."

See MACKEY | Page 6B



Lincoln senior Haley Mackey prepares a throw during an April 7 contest in the Kaysinger Conference Softball Tournament in Cole Camp.
DEMOCRAT FILE PHOTOS

Patchwork decisions throw wrinkle in college football plans

By Ralph D. Russo
AP College Football Writer

There are 130 major college football teams, spread across 41 states and competing in 10 conferences, save for a handful of independents.

The goal is to have all those teams start the upcoming season at the same time — whether that's around Labor Day as scheduled or later — and play the same number of games.

With each passing day it is becoming apparent the COVID-19 pandemic is going to make that goal difficult to achieve. Despite the best intentions of conference leaders, the possibility exists of college football being played in SEC country before it begins in Pac-12 territory — or something else entirely.

"I can't say enough about the extent to which they're working closely together, spending time together, communicating with each other," Notre Dame athletic director Jack Swarbrick said. "And I think that's the most important thing. It gives us a chance to come up with an overarching policy and an ability to start together.

"Having said that, I think we all recognize that there is a significant chance that that may not be possible," he said.

The coronavirus is affecting different regions of the country in different ways, prompting a wide range of responses to fight the spread and revive economies.

Some state such as Georgia and Florida have already begun to re-open businesses. Others such as California and Washington are going more slowly. Where that leaves them all four months from now is hard to predict and the uncertainty is reflected across college sports.

College sports leaders have repeatedly said there can be no college sports without campuses being open to students. And those decisions will be made with guidance from state and local public health and government officials.

The NCAA football oversight committee has agreed on a six-week plan for teams to prepare to start the season. Teams would ideally be on campus by mid-July for the season to start on time.

See FOOTBALL | Page 6B

Regional MMA fighters face hazy professional future in cage

By Dan Gelston
AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Kyle Daukaus could use a job. The Philadelphia native seeks manual labor work to earn money while on a break from the kind of profession not often noted on LinkedIn: the undefeated middleweight champion of regional MMA promotion Cage Fury Fighting Championships.

"As far as fighting," Daukaus said, "I can't do anything."

Outside of UFC, the mixed martial arts world has largely shut down, leaving thousands of prospects like the 27-year-old Daukaus out of work and with little idea when the cage door will open again.

There's nowhere to fight -- the regional scene has vanished during the coronavirus pandemic -- and their gyms are shuttered. So Daukaus does what he can, taking to a nearby park for sprints on empty parking lots and pounding pads with his brother in the garage of his Philly home. Far from the millions top MMA fighters earn with each massive pay-per-view fight, Daukaus is paid by CFFC almost on commission -- the more tickets he sells to friends and family for one of his fight nights, the more cash he can earn.

And in this climate, there's nothing to sell.

Cage Fury has postponed its scheduled cards, as have most of the larger MMA promotions such as Bellator, One Championship and the Professional Fighters League.

The promotional drought has left fighters scurrying for a nibble of whatever open preliminary bouts might be available on a UFC card.

Hector Castro, a fight manager with Empire Sports Management, said UFC has tightened the ship on which outliers are offered deals. But his phone is buzzing from the pleas of his stable of roughly 20 fighters who crave a fight with any promotion.

See MMA | Page 6B



PHOTO BY MATT SLOCUM | AP PHOTO

Fighter Kyle Daukaus, right, trains with his brother, Chris Daukaus, in their garage, Saturday, May 2, 2020, in Philadelphia.

Community fishing's a popular outlet during pandemic

By John Marshall
Associated Press

CHANDLER, Ariz. (AP) — Tim Wirtz Jr. slowly spun the reel, tracking the retrieval of a plastic worm, when two shapes moved into his peripheral vision. The teen's eyes gleamed as he peered through the crystal clear water at a pair of beefy rainbow trout cruising parallel to the shore.

Wirtz sped his spin, moved around a strand of trees and gently flicked the lure just beyond the lunkers, hoping to entice a strike.

No luck. The trout, familiar perhaps with the fishermen and their assortment of faux fish and frogs, swam right past the imitation earthworm with barely a glance.

A fishing failure — comes with the territory — but Wirtz didn't seem to mind. At a time when millions are locked in their homes trying not to go stir crazy, he was out enjoying the weather, the water and flipping lures at Veteran's Oasis Park — all while following social distancing guidelines.



PHOTO BY JOHN MARSHALL | AP PHOTO

In this April 30, 2020 photo, a fisherman watches his line from the shade at Veterans Oasis Park in Chandler, Ariz.

"It's a good way to get out in the fresh air and he can still distance pretty easily," said Wirtz's father, Tim.

The coronavirus pandemic has pressed much of the nation — the world for that matter — into their homes, the only escapes the occasional trip to the grocery store, doctor offices and to the outdoors for exercise.

A trip to the neighborhood lake with pole and tackle box in hand has become a popular get-out-of-the-house destination and distraction.

Countless federal, state and county waters have been deemed off-limits, but many community lakes are open and still being stocked. The lure has been too much to resist for fishermen and families.

"Based on visual observations, we've definitely seen a lot of anglers out," said Steve Gurtin, community fishing program manager for Arizona Game and Fish. "We don't have quantitative data, but we're seeing a lot more people trying to get outdoors."

The appeal is clear.

Except for big, ocean-going charter boats or crowded shorelines for salmon or steelhead, fishing is mostly a solitary or small-group pursuit. Anglers tend to be respectful, skipping stretches of streams or fishing holes when someone is already casting there.

See FISHING | Page 6B

SPORTS CALENDAR

Thursday
ON AIR
KBO BASEBALL
4:30 a.m. ESPN2 — NC at Samsung
4:30 a.m. (Friday) ESPN2 — KIA at Samsung
NHL HOCKEY
4 p.m. NBCSN — NHL 20: Player Gaming Challenge

SEC schools expect campuses to be open in the fall

By John Zenor
AP Sports

All but one of the 14 schools in the Southeastern Conference have indicated they plan to reopen their campuses for the fall semester, a step widely believed to be needed to resume football and other sports.

South Carolina and Tennessee on Wednesday became the latest schools in the nation's top football conference to announce their plans, joining Alabama, LSU and others.

Vanderbilt hasn't announced its plans for the fall. Every other school has been more vocal in their intentions to reopen their buildings while students and faculty participate for now in remote learning through the summer because of the coronavirus pandemic.

South Carolina President Bob Caslen said the Columbia campus "will resume in-person instruction in mid-August."

"We will follow clear public health protocols, including social distancing within classrooms, lecture halls, meeting rooms and sports venues, with strong encouragement of proper social distancing off campus," he said.

Tennessee President Randy Boyd said the university plans to "bring students back for an on-campus experience this fall."

Reopening campuses is seen as a mandatory step before sports can resume. The commissioners of the nation's major college football leagues have stressed that college sports cannot return from the shutdown until campuses have reopened.

Dr. Brian Hainline, the NCAA's chief medical officer, has also said widespread testing for the coronavirus will be crucial to having college sports in the fall, especially contact sports such as football and basketball.

At LSU, home to the national champion Tigers, LSU Interim President Tom Galligan told The Daily Reveille newspaper there are definite plans to return to campus this fall — even if details about football remain unclear.

"It may be a little different in some ways, but I think it's important to play the season, and I hope we do so," Galligan said.

The season begins Aug. 29, though SEC schools don't begin play until the following week.

SEC officials continue to strike an optimistic tone along with their member schools.

"Our current focus is on preparing to play the 2020 football season as scheduled," the league said in a statement Wednesday. "If it is determined that we must pivot to another solution in the interest of public health, we'll do so at the appropriate time."

Auburn is planning to reopen the campus but said in a statement the university will announce its detailed plans no later than early July.

German soccer's Bundesliga given OK to resume in May

By Ciarán Fahey
AP Sports Writer



PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOHN | AP PHOTO

German Chancellor Angela Merkel waits for the beginning of a press conference in Berlin, Germany, Wednesday, May 6, 2020 after an online meeting of Merkel and the German state governors on the loosening of the restrictions to reduce the spread of the new coronavirus.

BERLIN (AP) — The Bundesliga can resume playing this month, ending a two-month suspension caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced a loosening of a range of containment measures after meeting with the country's 16 state governors on Wednesday. Pressure to relax the rules had been growing as the rate of daily infections in the country has dropped.

Soccer in the top two divisions will resume without spectators and with a range of other conditions designed to prevent another outbreak, including the continuous monitoring and testing of players. Teams will also have to spend time in quarantine before games can restart.

"Today's decision is good news for the Bundesliga and second division," German soccer league president Christian Seibert said. "It comes with great responsibility for the clubs and their employees to implement the medical and organizational requirements in a disciplined manner.

"Games without spectators are not ideal for anyone. In a crisis threatening the very existence of some clubs, however, it is the only way to keep the leagues in their current form."

Spanish league president Javier Tebas also welcomed the decision, saying he hoped La Liga could follow suit.

"This is good news for European football and for the return to the new normal after this crisis," Tebas said.

However, there were some dissidents.

Karl Lauterbach, the Social Democratic Party's health expert, slammed the decision as "disappointing and wrong," saying it was driven by commercial interests.

"The hygiene concept does not work and the signal is fatal," Lauterbach said, saying it was wrong to suggest young athletes are not at risk from the virus.

The decision to allow play to resume came despite three positive tests for the virus at Cologne last weekend. The league said there were 10 positive cases from all 36 clubs in the top two divisions.

Hertha Berlin forward Salomon Kalou also broadcast a livestream showing social distancing measures being flouted at the club on Monday.

Bavaria governor Markus Söder called it a "spectacular own-goal" on Wednesday.

"I can only appeal for players who behave unreasonably to face consequences," Söder said.

Hertha has suspended Kalou and blamed the player for the mishap, but there were also infringements that were the club's responsibility, such as closed doors between rooms.

The initial plan was for teams to spend two weeks in quarantine before games could resume, but a compromise was reached on shorter training camps with the players undergoing regular tests.

"With regular tests, it's a different situation to when somebody is just tested at the beginning and end of the quarantine. That's the background," Merkel said of the change.

While the league and clubs had been pressuring the government for permission to resume, other prominent athletes criticized what they saw as favoritism in soccer.

"If it really comes to it, then the state will be selling the health of the people and people who are suffering to soccer. It's perverse," javelin thrower Johannes Vetter said.

Sprint canoeist Ronald Rauhe told the Märkische Allgemeine newspaper that soccer "seems to have a different priority in Germany to schools and kindergartens, as I'm finding out as a father."

Olympic rowing champion Karl Schulze called for everyone to be treated the same.

"Either everyone takes part in sport again or no one at all," Schulze said.

The earliest the leagues can resume is the weekend of May 16. Soccer authorities are to hold a general meeting with the clubs via video link on Thursday to discuss how to proceed.

The Bundesliga was suspended with nine rounds remaining on March 13. The clubs committed to finishing the season by the end of June.

Four MLS teams allow individual workouts, more to follow

By Tim Booth and Anne M. Peterson
AP Sports Writers



Inter Miami MLS soccer team goalkeeper Luis Robles practices at the team's training facility in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Wednesday, May 6, 2020.
PHOTO BY JOE CAVARETTA | SOUTH FLORIDA SUN-SENTINEL VIA AP

Four Major League Soccer teams took the first small step toward returning to play Wednesday by allowing players to use team training fields for individual workouts.

Sporting Kansas City, Atlanta United, Orlando City and Inter Miami let players in for vigorously controlled voluntary workouts on the first day they were permitted by the league.

Nashville, Real Salt Lake, LAFC, Houston and Portland are among the league's 26 teams that plan to start Thursday, with more lined up next week.

In Orlando, the entire roster showed up.

"Of course it's the first step but we have a long way," said Orlando City midfielder Mauricio Pereyra. "This is the beginning. We are training alone, and then we will have small groups and then we hope soon we can train with the full group."

Other North American sports are poised to follow MLS. The NBA is opening facilities for small groups Friday in places where local restrictions are eased. NASCAR is bringing back live racing at Darlington Raceway on May 17 without fans in attendance. UFC will host the first of three shows without fans in Jacksonville, Florida, starting Saturday. The National Women's Soccer League has also started to allow individual workouts.

MLS suspended the season because of the coronavirus pandemic on March 12, closing all team facilities but asking players to remain in market with their teams. A league-wide moratorium on group and team training remains in effect through May 15 and it's unclear when the season might resume.

When MLS announced Friday that individual workouts would be allowed, it required teams to get league approval before starting. Many haven't completed the process yet. Numerous other teams are in areas still under stay-at-home orders to limit the spread of COVID-19, or are awaiting approval from local health authorities before moving forward with their plans.

Sporting Kansas City advocated for giving players individual access to private team facilities for safety reasons. They could get recognized and approached in public parks and other fields are not well-groomed and could cause injury.

"This is individual workouts with private field access only. If you think of it that way, you're thinking of it based on putting the player safety first," Sporting coach Peter Vermes said. "And again, this is a much safer environment than the alternatives they have."

FC Dallas defender Ryan Hollingshead welcomed the opportunity to play on maintained fields. Dallas is expected to start the workouts Monday.

"We have been playing on terrible park fields and trying to find a place that has at least some sort of surface to play soccer on. But these fields are rock hard, they're so bouncy. It's almost impossible to do any of the drills that we're trying to do on these fields," he said.

Some teams simply can't open up for workouts just yet. In Seattle, which was hit hard by the coronavirus, stay-at-home orders are in place until May 31. Many other states and cities also have similar orders in place.

"I think it'd be good for the guys, they run around on the grass. I'm sure that they are going to want to do something," Sounders coach Brian Schmetzer said. "Now the flip side of that is that if we start now but games are still down on the horizon, well guys are going to be tired of dribbling around cones for an hour a day. That's not much fun for them either. So we're trying to keep both of those mindsets in our thoughts of how we roll out this training and what do we do and more importantly, what are we allowed to do at the appropriate moments."


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HOROSCOPES

By Jacqueline Bigar

A baby born today has a Sun in Taurus and a Moon in Scorpio.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Thursday, May 7, 2020:

Aesthetic and devoted you loves beauty, so this year will be a challenge, although you will succeed in having a luxurious lifestyle. You will enjoy all that you have rather than lament what you lack. If single, you will have limited social contact and prefer the comfort and security of your own home. If attached, you take your relationship very seriously and do not beat around the bush. Your partner reciprocates. AQUARIUS can get a bit silly.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★ Money matters will certainly be on your mind, and you rethink financial commitments and investment strategies. Be careful of going overboard financially when passion conquers common sense. Disagreements over spending are likely, and romantic pressures lead to crises. Tonight: No online shopping.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★ Expect partners to be particularly irritable. Arguments might be easily provoked by nagging and could deteriorate into sarcastic mudslinging. However, a compassionate outlook may lead to creative problem-solving ... and a call to a marriage counselor. Tonight: By yourself.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ Skip domestic decision-making, as any decision made will be subject to change. Besides this, you will find that you do not have all the facts. Today favors entertaining at home as well as interior decorating, which can be done in a unique style. Tonight: Celebrate.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ Crab is the birth sign of more millionaires than any in the zodiac. Dedicated effort allows you to join their ranks in years to come. Today you encounter a rare opportunity to right past mistakes regarding poor financial decisions. You are elated. Tonight: As you like.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ There is nothing small or petty about the way you usually decorate or entertain, Leo, and especially not today. Your mood is high and, in keeping with your already expansive nature, rather overindulgent. Enjoy while you can. It's been a while. Tonight: A fantastic dinner.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★ Today brings financial assistance or ideas from another. There will be a great deal of commotion and many short outings. Remain focused, as there are distractions. Strive to be clear in your communications. Transportation issues might need attention. Tonight: Slow down.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★ Finances are volatile this year. Develop an awareness of shifting economic conditions in the world around you. This will be key to achieving greater security. Check in on an elderly relative who just wants to talk. Tonight: Listen to a friend's qualms.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Your professional sphere is widening. There is opportunity, but many demands are placed on you. It is easy to feel overwhelmed. You might have to choose between business and a relationship. This starts a significant period of self-discovery. Tonight: Spend time with a child.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Today finds the lone wolf part of your nature surfacing. Spend part of today in solitude. A dream or deep meditation can provide meaningful guidance as well as a brilliant -- and profitable -- idea. Tonight: Listen to someone you see every day for a suggestion.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan 19)

★★★★★ Friends suggest new goals and projects. Membership in an organization might prove invaluable. Today shows those who genuinely like you offering practical support. More tranquility than you have experienced in many months will be present. Tonight: Get a good night's sleep.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★ A job or project might be ending. Do not try to struggle against the inevitable. If one door closes, another will open. Your memory and learning ability will be in top form. Tonight: Take the night off and have a soothing herbal bath.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Emails and conversations lead to really important learning experiences. Ambitions will stir and your path will be especially important to you. Your flair for relating with all types of people leads to a worthwhile opportunity. Tonight: Follow through on exploring offers that come your way.

BORN TODAY

Poet Robert Browning (1812), composer Johannes Brahms (1833), actor Gary Cooper (1901)



PHOTO BY NICK WASS | AP PHOTO

In this May 18, 2019, file photo, jockey John Velazquez tumbles to the track after falling off Bodexpress (9) as the field breaks from the starting gate in the 144th Preakness Stakes horse race at Pimlico race course in Baltimore.

AP Source: 3 dates still possible for rescheduled Preakness

By Stephen Whyno
AP Sports Writer

The Preakness Stakes could still be run on one of three dates this summer or fall.

The Maryland Jockey Club and NBC Sports have set aside three possible dates, a person with knowledge of negotiations said. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Wednesday because no decision has been made among the dates.

The NBC affiliate in Baltimore reported the Preakness will be run Oct. 3. The person tells The AP that is one of the three possible dates, along with one each in July and August.

State and local authorities, racing officials and TV executives are expected to make the determination based on the health and safety situation as it develops.

Maryland Jockey Club president Sal Sinatra says officials are still working with NBC Sports on rescheduling the race, which would have been run May 16. That date was scratched by Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan in March because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Stronach Group — which owns Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore — said in a statement, "There is no definitive date set and we continue to explore options" for the Preakness.

The Kentucky Derby has been rescheduled from May 2 to Sept. 5. The Belmont Stakes, scheduled for June 6, like the Preakness doesn't have a new date yet.

Spokesman Pat McKenna said the New York Racing Association "is in the process of working with state and local officials to safely resume live racing at Belmont Park. A determination about the timing of the 2020 Belmont Stakes will be made only after we have clarity on the opening of the Belmont spring/summer meet."

The timing of the Preakness could have ripple effects on the Triple Crown and the Breeders' Cup, which is set for Nov. 6-7 at Keeneland in Lexington, Kentucky. It's possible the Triple Crown races could be run out of order and at different distances depending on the calendar.

Regardless of when the Preakness is held, the infield is expected to be closed. Track officials decided on April 3 to cancel Infieldfest, where tens of thousand fans gather to drink beer, socialize, attend free concerts and bet on races.

The infield usually makes up the lion's share of attendance at the race, which last year drew 131,256 fans and took in a track-record handle of $99,852,653.

AP Sports Writer David Ginsburg in Baltimore contributed to this report.

Auditor: Favre received welfare money for no-show speeches

By Emily Wagster Pettus
Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — A nonprofit group caught up in an embezzlement scheme in Mississippi used federal welfare money to pay former NFL quarterback Brett Favre $1.1 million for multiple speaking engagements but Favre did not show up for the events, the state auditor said Monday.

Details about payments to Favre are included in an audit of the Mississippi Department of Human Services. State Auditor Shad White said his employees identified $94 million in questionable spending by the agency, including payments for sports activities with no clear connection to helping needy people in one of the poorest states of the U.S.

The audit was released months after a former Human Services director and five other people were indicted on state charges of embezzling about $4 million. They have pleaded not guilty and are awaiting trial in what White has called one of Mississippi's largest public corruption cases in decades.

"If there was a way to misspend money, it seems DHS leadership or their grantees thought of it and tried it," White said Monday.

White said the Human Services audit "shows the most egregious misspending my staff have seen in their careers."

Payments to Favre were made by Mississippi Community Education Center, a group that had contracts with the Department of Human Services to spend money through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. The audit says Favre Enterprises was paid $500,000 in December 2017 and $600,000 in June 2018, and he was supposed to make speeches for at least three events. The auditor's report says that "upon a cursory review of those dates, auditors were able to determine that the individual contracted did not speak nor was he present for those events."

Favre, who lives in Mississippi, faces no criminal charges. The audit report lists the payments to him as "questioned" costs, which White said means "auditors either saw clear misspending or could not verify the money had been lawfully spent." The Associated Press on Monday sent questions to Favre by text message and left a message for him with his longtime agent Bus Cook, and Favre did not immediately respond.

John Davis was director of the Department of Human Services from January 2016 until July 2019, appointed by then-Gov. Phil Bryant — a Republican who also appointed White to office when a previous auditor stepped down. Davis was one of the people indicted; another was Nancy New, who was director of the Mississippi Community Education Center. Davis, New and the others indicted have pleaded not guilty and are awaiting trial.

The auditor's report said that Department of Human Services leaders, particularly Davis, "participated in a widespread and pervasive conspiracy to circumvent internal controls, state law, and federal regulations" to direct grant money to certain people and groups. Davis instructed two groups that received grants, the Mississippi Community Education Center and Family Resource Center of North Mississippi, to spend money with certain other people or groups, the auditor's report said.

White said the those two nonprofit groups received more than $98 million in Department of Human Services grants during the three years that ended June 30. Most of the money came from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

White said the audit will be sent to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and federal officials will decide whether to sanction the state for misspending, White said.

The audit said the Mississippi Community Education Center awarded contracts for services to Davis' relatives, including to a company owned by his brother-in-law and his nephew. It said that Family Resource Center used welfare money to buy one vehicle for more than $50,000 and another for nearly $28,000. White said the Department of Human Services should take the vehicles because they were bought with public money.

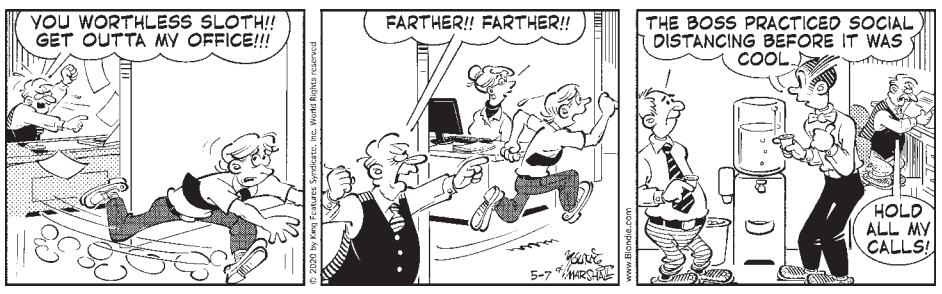
The audit said the Mississippi Center for Community Education spent $1.3 million to a group called Victory Sports Foundation to conduct three 12-week fitness boot camps. White said some participants paid but were not screened for eligibility for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. The audit said state legislators and other elected officials took the fitness classes for free. White said Monday that the nonprofit group is responsible for the questioned spending, not the participants.

Associated Press sports writer Arne Stapleton contributed to this report from Aurora, Colorado.

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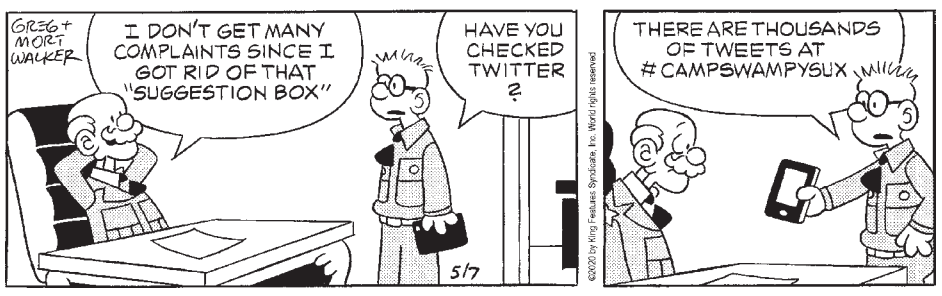
BLONDIE

BY DEAN YOUNG AND JOHN MARSHALL



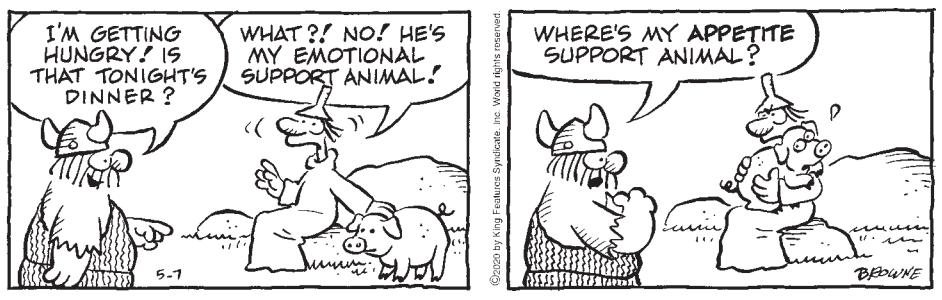
BEETLE BAILEY

BY MORT, GREG AND BRIAN WALKER



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

BY CHRIS BROWNE



ZITS

BY JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



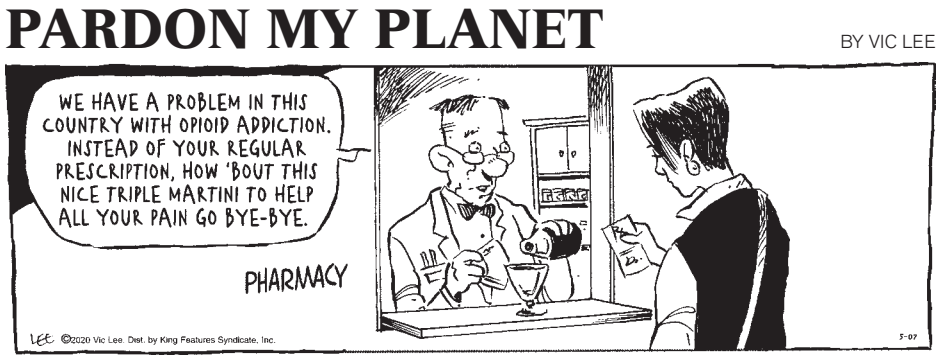
HI AND LOIS

WRITTEN BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER; DRAWN BY CHANCE BROWNE



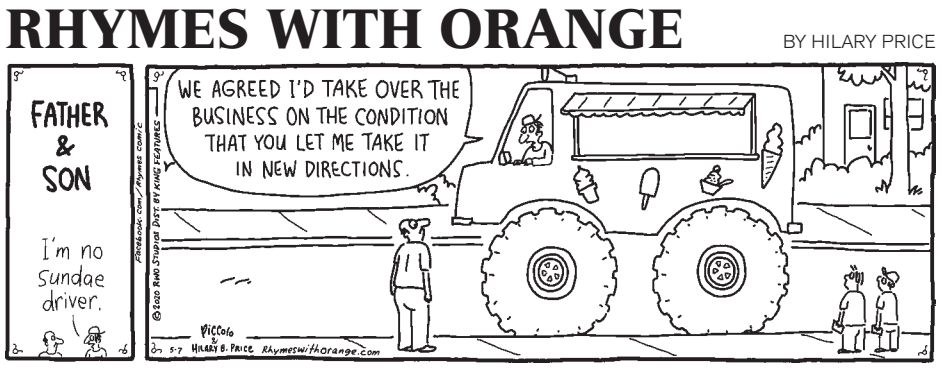
PARDON MY PLANET

BY VIC LEE



RHYMES WITH ORANGE

BY HILARY PRICE



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

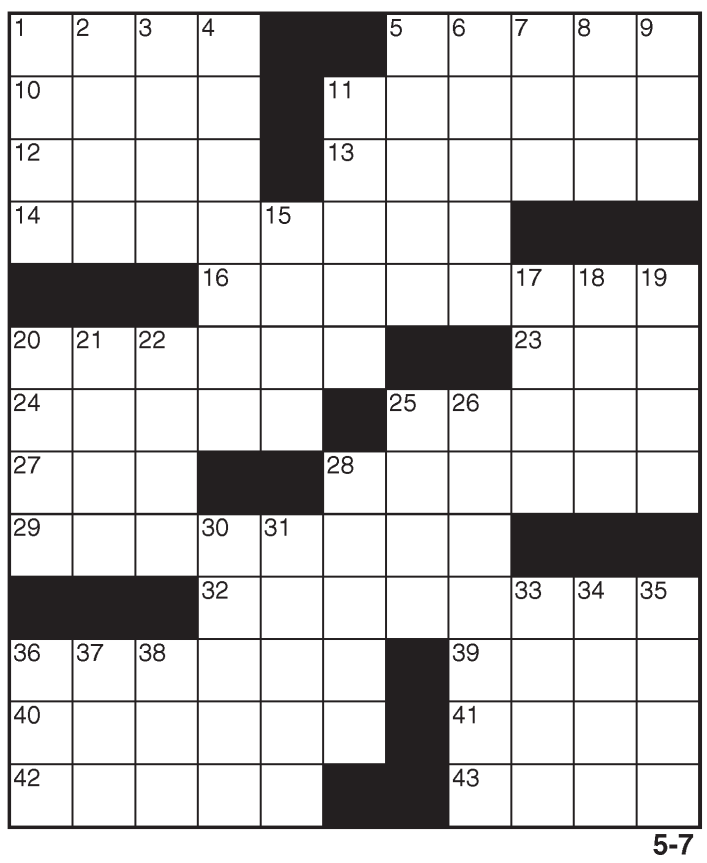
1 Loudly lament
5 Scottish lord
10 Mystique
11 Makes blank
12 Sports figure
13 Feels the absence of
14 Trap to catch computer hackers
16 Less than wonderful
20 Meager
23 Stunned wonder
24 Practical
25 "Tomorrow" singer
27 Sturdy wood
28 Sights
29 "Uh-uh"
32 Spot on a shirt
36 Polite word
39 Mediocre
40 China collection
41 Ship storage
42 Yertle's creator
43 Yankee great, familiarly

DOWN

1 Scrub
2 Sedan or compact
3 Persia, today
4 Prints, in cop jargon
5 Small singing groups
6 Must
7 Braying beast
8 Originally called
9 Snaky shape
11 Vacant
15 Days gone by
17 Put up
18 Tot's scrape
19 Casual tops
20 Sound of disappearing
21 Miles off
22 1987 Suzanne Vega hit
25 In a frenzy
26 Boris's partner
28 Bay
30 Bridge utterance
31 Rx amounts
33 Cabinet part
34 Ibsen's home
35 Chuck of "Meet the Press"
36 Score amts.
37 Spike of film
38 Water, in the Seine

S	H	E	D	■	■	P	E	G	S
M	A	N	O	R	■	R	A	N	A	T
A	L	O	N	E	■	I	N	D	I	A
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S	I	E	V	E	■	D	A	L	E	S
K	N	E	E	■	■	L	E	S	S	■

Yesterday's answer



5-7

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT & RICK KIRKMAN



THE LOCKHORNS

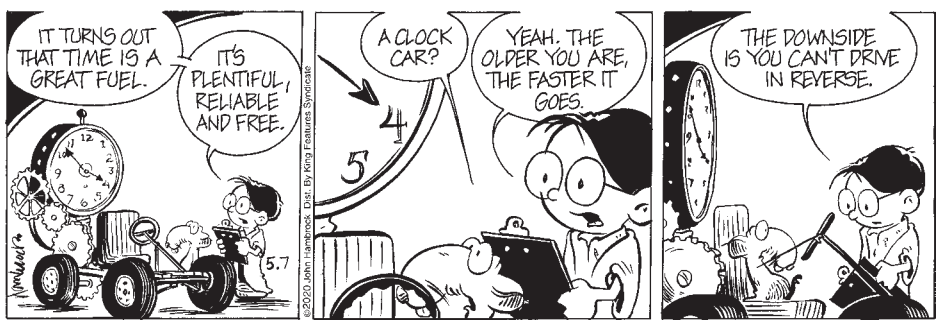
BY BUNNY HOEST & JOHN REINER



"YOUR TIRES ARE WEARING THIN . . . THAT FLAT CAME FROM A BEE STING."

THE BRILLIANT MIND OF EDISON LEE

BY JOHN HAMBROCK



DUSTIN

BY STEVE KELLEY & JEFF PARKER



SUDOKU

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

	6		8	2			1	
7			1			9		8
					9		7	
1	9					3		
8								6
		2					9	4
	8		7					
9		6			4			7
	2			9	8		4	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 5/07

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Answer to previous puzzle

9	7	1	2	3	5	8	4	6
3	2	4	1	6	8	9	7	5
6	5	8	7	9	4	1	3	2
8	6	9	3	5	7	2	1	4
7	4	3	8	1	2	5	6	9
2	1	5	9	4	6	7	8	3
5	9	6	4	8	1	3	2	7
1	3	7	6	2	9	4	5	8
4	8	2	5	7	3	6	9	1

Difficulty Level ★★★ 5/06

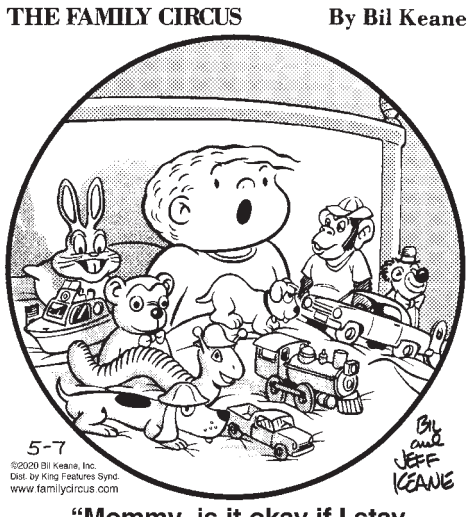
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DENNIS THE MENACE BY HANK KETCHAM



"DON'T WORRY, I'VE BROKEN A LOT BETTER STUFF THAN THIS."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



"Mommy, is it okay if I stay in THIS crowd?"

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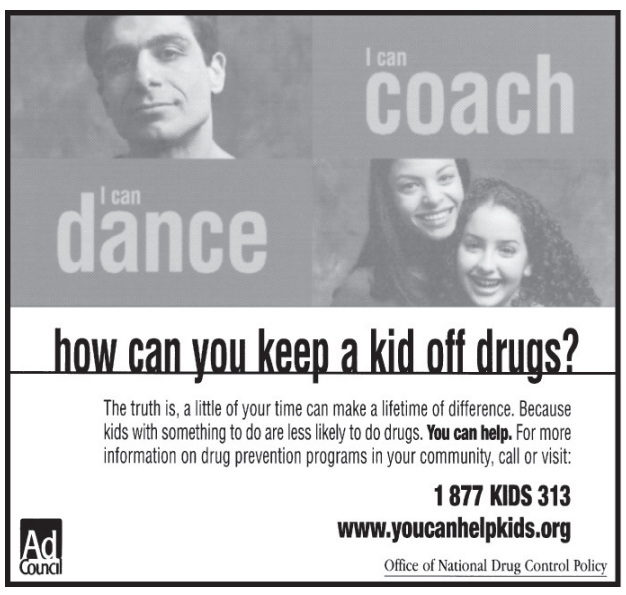
IN THE 18TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT,
PETTIS COUNTY, MISSOURI
Judge or Division: PROBATE
Case Number: 20PT-PR00040
In the Estate of
ALAN DEAN BOHON,
Deceased.
Notice of Letters of Administration Granted

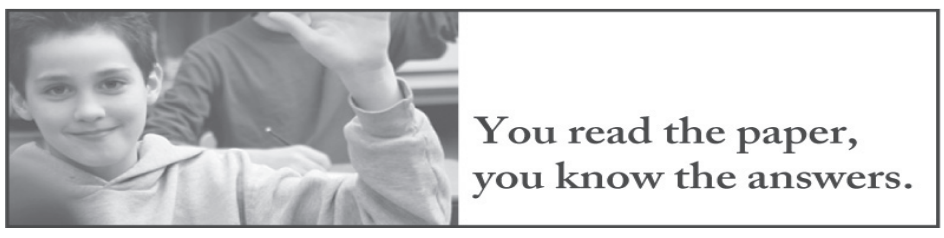
(Independent Administration)
To All Persons Interested in the Estate of ALAN DEAN BOHON, Decedent:
On 05-MAY-2020, the following individuals was appointed the personal representative of the estate of ALAN DEAN BOHON, decedent, by the Probate Division of the Circuit Court of Pettis County, Missouri. The personal representative's name and address is:
JULIE ANN FALL,
505 NE ADAMS DRIVE,
LEE'S SUMMIT, MO 64086
The personal representative may administer the estate independently without adjudication, order, or direction of the Probate Division of the Circuit Court, unless a petition for supervised administration is made to and granted by the court.
The personal representative's attorney's name, business address and phone number is:
JEFFERY THOMAS ADAMS,
206 SOUTH BAIRD,
P.O. BOX 226,
CLINTON, MO 64735-0226.
All creditors of said decedent are notified to file claims in court within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice or if a copy of this notice was mailed to, or served upon, such creditor by the personal representative, then within two months from the date it was mailed or served, whichever is later, or be forever barred to the fullest extent permissible by law. Such six-month period and such two-month period do not extend the limitation period that would bar claims one year after the decedent's death, as provided in Section 473.444, RSMo, or any other applicable limitation periods. Nothing in Section 473.033, RSMo, shall be construed to bar any action against a decedent's liability insurance carrier through a defendant ad litem pursuant to Section 537.021, RSMo.
Date of the decedent's death: 30-JAN-2020
Date of first publication: 07-MAY-2020
Susan Sadler,
Circuit Clerk
By: /s/Ali Ditzfeld,
Deputy Clerk
4x-5/7, 14, 21, 28, 2020

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DEMOCRAT FILE PHOTOS

Lady Cardinals senior Haley Mackey tags a runner during a May 9 game last season against Wellington-Napoleon in Lincoln.

Mackey

From Page 1B

Lincoln leaned on its team chemistry to endure two extra-inning contests at the state semifinals. Mackey scored the first run as the Lady Cardinals outlasted Potosi 2-1 before Lincoln snapped an eighth-inning tie with five runs in the championship game over Kennett.

"In the semifinals, when we were going into extra innings and everybody was so tired," Mackey said. "We just kept talking each other up in the dugout, cracking jokes, trying to keep that energy alive and going strong so we could get that win."

Losing a state title defense and a dugout of childhood friends, Mackey said she has accepted an initially shocking and still disappointing decision to cancel the spring season.

"Enjoy every single second that you can," Mackey said. "Because you just never know."

Alex Agueros can be reached at 660-826-1000, ext. 1483 or on Twitter @abagueros2.

Taiwan baseball league set to allow fans back in ballparks

By Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Fans will be allowed to enter baseball stadiums for games in Taiwan for the first time this season as part of a gradual easing of restrictions amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The China Professional Baseball League said up to 1,000 people would be permitted to enter ballparks from Friday after an agreement between the league and Taiwan's Central Epidemic Command Center.

Other baseball leagues around the world were still suspended last month when games began in Taiwan in empty stadiums. South Korea's league commenced this week, also without fans in the stands.

"One month has elapsed since the start of play on April 11. With the unity and cooperation of the government and the people, the epidemic in Taiwan has eased," the CPBL said on its official website. "Welcome back fans!"

The CPBL said it would continue to maintain high levels of epidemic prevention policies in order to "let baseball gradually return to Chinese life."

Taiwan's five-team Chinese Professional Baseball League has bee barring spectators over concerns of spreading the coronavirus in a crowded space. But Taiwan has relatively few cases of COVID-19, so the league decided last month it was safe to let in players, coaches, cheerleaders, costumed mascots, face mask-wearing batboys and the media.

To keep fans watching on their phones, PCs and TVs, the league encouraged teams to give their stadiums a realistic, lively feel. That's where the placards on the seats and cheerleaders come in. Online game commentary has been broadcast in English as well as Chinese this year in case fans overseas want to watch a live season.

In Taiwan's Taoyuan city, the Rakuten Monkeys charmed fans by placing 40 mannequins in the stands - to be sent to local clothing stores once their duties are done.

The Monkeys, last season's champions, deploy six robots to bang drums along with the cheerleaders.

MMA

From Page 1B

"Everybody wants to get in there," he said. "But the major issue is, they want to be smart about it. They understand this is how they make a living. But a lot of them also see the opportunity."

Daukaus is among the fighters looking to seize the moment. He fought on the UFC "Contender Series" and nearly scored a contract with the company. There's a chance he could earn another crack at UFC if he lands a spot on the next "Contender" if it goes through with a summer taping.

"He texts me almost every other day, 'Hey, tell (UFC) I'm ready,'" Castro said. "Tell the Bellator guys, 'Hey, I want this guy.' I'm like, listen, bro. It's quiet right now. There's nothing going on. Let's hope we can get back to work and these guys can make a living. The longer we go, the longer the line goes. You're only allowed 12 fights, 15 fights a card. You're at the bottom of the totem pole."

With no money stream, fighters are more willing than ever to gamble with their health and fight during the outbreak.

"Will they risk getting sick? I'm sure 90% would," Castro said. "The mentally strong are going to survive this."

Daukaus normally trained twice daily with jiu-jitsu sessions in the morning and practicing other mixed martial arts skills at night. He taught kickboxing classes at a Philly gym and worked out with a strength and conditioning coach in New Jersey. He now relies on weights in his basement and shadow boxing to stay fit, mixing in the occasional sparring sessions with his older brother, a fellow MMA fighter and Philadelphia police officer.

Daukaus was trained by former Bellator fighter Will Martinez, who opened his Brazilian jiu-jitsu school nearly 10 years ago in Philadelphia. He shut the doors in mid-March and his empty gym has become another casualty of the pandemic.

"Ten years may be going down the drain," Martinez said. "How many schools and places like us are in the same predicament? I can't really dwell on it. I've got to sit back and wait."

Martinez suspended the accounts of nearly 200 members and wonders how his 3,700-square-foot gym could survive even if it opens under a new era of social distancing.

"Mentally, physically, financially, emotionally, it's terrible," he said. "Jiu-jitsu is in a real terrible predicament because we're not like other gyms where people can keep social distancing and keep six feet apart because they have a 30,000-square-foot facility. We can't do that. So what do we do? There's no timeframe to our return."

Daukaus is 9-0 since he turned pro in 2017 and last fought in early February at a casino. He's generally paid when he weighs in and earns more if he wins his fight, dollar figures nudged higher if ticket sale incentives are met, and a drop in the spit bucket compared to the millions raked in by PPV stars Khabib Nurmagomedov or Conor McGregor.

"It's a big deal when I have fights here locally, which is good because I have a lot of people coming so I get that extra money," Daukaus said.

Daukaus is an independent contractor. Unlike pros in the NBA or NHL, two leagues interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic whose players are getting most or all of their regular-season paycheck, Daukaus doesn't receive a salary and lives at home with his mother, a nurse practitioner with Temple University Hospital.

"I hear about how bad it is at her work," Daukaus said. "But for me, it's very tough not having any income. I know that fighting as a profession is a struggle in the beginning, and I'm fine with struggling like that. But I'm not even guaranteed monthly payments from the gym right now. I'm doing as best as I can to spend as minimal an amount as possible."

Daukaus had hoped to fight again this month. Instead, he trains at home for a fight that might not happen this year.

"I don't have a Plan B," Daukaus said. "If the opportunity comes and I get a call, I'm going to take it."

Fishing

From Page 1B

Those 6-foot social-distancing guidelines? Already naturally in place.

"You don't want to be close," said Stephanie Vatalaro, senior vice president for marketing and communications for the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation. "You're going to tangle your lines, get your equipment mixed up. Fishing is a sport that lends itself to social distancing for sure."

The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation was created to grow boating and fishing, Its website, takemefishing.org, has seen a 15% increase in traffic over the past month, and organic online searches for fishing and how-to fish information have risen up to 350%.

Searches for fishing licenses are at the highest point in four years, and a recent Harris Poll showed 24% of people with children under 18 were considering fishing more during the pandemic.

The numbers don't show where people are fishing, but with so many other waters closed across the country, it stands to reason people are heading to community lakes to get their angle on.

RBFF's website has an interactive map showing what's open and what's not for every state during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We absolutely believe fishing, if you can do it right now, it's great for mental health, stress relief, connecting with your family, creating memories, but health and safety is No. 1," Vatalaro said. "One of the messages we'll hold onto is maybe find a place you haven't been to before, maybe close to home so you're not in the public."

In Arizona, Gurtin oversees a community fishing program of roughly four dozen lakes across the state, including more than 20 in the Phoenix area.

The stocking program was put on hold for a week in March when the COVID-19 outbreak ramped up. The stockings resumed after AZGFD learned most of its municipal partners were leaving parks open.

"Once we found most of our partners were closing indoor space, but not outdoor open space, we made the decision to continue to stock," Gurtin said. "We view it as an activity families can engage in while outdoors and maintaining distance from people."

Community fishing also has a more tangible benefit: With grocery shelves empty and some food supplies short, you might be able to catch dinner with your own two hands.

"The fish are safe to eat," Gurtin said. "They're the same fish that come from farms that would end up in a fish market, so we just put them in live and people can take advantage of that."

The (al)lure has been too good for many to pass up.

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Football

From Page 1B

Beyond that, the NCAA has little influence on the logistics of college football. The conferences are mostly in charge, with commissioners leading the way.

The commissioners of the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and Southeastern Conference say they have been in almost constant contact since the NCAA men's basketball tournament was canceled on March 12.

"Based on the very positive and close collaboration among the leaders in college football and discussions with schools, other leagues and the medical community, at this point in time we are planning to start the football season on time and together on a national basis," Pac-12 Commissioner Larry Scott said.

But can that plan hold?

An interview SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey did last week with a Jacksonville, Florida, radio station became a headline when he said: "There is room for different conferences to make different decisions." In an interview with the Big Ten network, Commissioner Kevin Warren suggested something similar.

In an interview with the AP on Tuesday, Sankey said the Power Five conferences are more connected than ever and noted the importance of non-conference football games scheduled this season such as Arkansas at Notre Dame, Colorado at Texas A&M and Southern California vs. Alabama in Arlington, Texas.



PHOTO BY DAVID ZALUBOWSKI | AP PHOTO

In this Sept. 7, 2019, file photo, Nebraska fans are shown in the first half of an NCAA college football game in Boulder, Colo.

"There is a motivation to remain connected," Sankey said.

He also said if a small number of schools cannot play it might not stop everyone else.

"What's the critical mass? I don't have that number. I don't think there is a need to predict that now. In fact, I don't even have to answer that now because we have an asset of time," Sankey said.

Notre Dame is a member of the ACC for most sports, but one of six independents in major college football. The Fighting Irish hold unique status, with their own multimillion-dollar television contract with NBC for football. Swarbrick is part of the College Football Playoff management committee along with the 10 Bowl Subdivision conference commissioners.

Swarbrick said a lack of uniformity could make it impossible to have a normal season.

"How many games do you need to have in a regular season to have a playoff?" he said. "What might a re-engineered schedule do to the postseason and the bowl games? What about records? What about Heisman trophies? Is a team whose schools decides it can't participate credited with a forfeit? I hope not."

If there is an abbreviated season that prioritizes conference play, independents such as BYU, Army and UMass could be scrambling to fill schedules. Notre Dame has a scheduling agreement with the ACC for five games per season; Swarbrick said he is confident the Fighting Irish would be fine.

Swarbrick said he has encouraged conferences to consider, if necessary, a scheduling model for a truncated season that allows teams to protect traditional non-conference rivalries like Florida-Florida State and Clemson-South Carolina.

"But I'm not concerned about our ability to have a challenging, robust schedule even in the conferences," he said.