

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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USS Roosevelt prepares to return to sea

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

After spending six weeks sidelined in Guam to battle a coronavirus outbreak on board, the USS Theodore Roosevelt took a step toward re-deploying over the weekend, the Navy said Monday.

Sailors aboard the aircraft carrier on Sunday began an at-sea simulation called a “fast cruise” while moored at Naval Base Guam, according to a statement. During a fast cruise — typically one of the final steps before a Navy vessel deploys — crews “simulate normal underway conditions while testing the critical systems required to sustain the ship during its upcoming underway operations,” the statement said.

“Fast cruise is a major milestone for the ship and for the crew,” Roosevelt commander Capt. Carlos Sardiello said in the statement. “Our Sailors have tested all of the ship’s systems individually, but this is our opportunity to integrate all of that together and show that Theodore Roosevelt is ready and able to go back to sea.”

The carrier had been deployed to the Western Pacific when it diverted to Guam on March 26 after several of its sailors tested positive for the coronavirus. Since then,

more than 1,150 Roosevelt sailors have tested positive, one of whom died, according to the Navy.

As many as 13 sailors from the Roosevelt have tested positive for the virus a second time, according to The Associated Press. Those sailors and a number of others who had contact with them were removed from the ship.

Most of the 4,800-person crew disembarked and were isolated last month as the carrier was sanitized. The Navy began moving sailors back aboard the Roosevelt on April 29 after all crew members were tested for the virus.

As of Sunday, 2,900 sailors had returned to the carrier, according to Monday’s statement.

During the fast cruise, sailors will also be “implementing new measures to protect the crew from possible exposure to the novel coronavirus,” the statement said. For the past month, sailors have been wearing masks and maintaining social distance.

“Safely navigating an aircraft carrier is a complex process that involves teams of Sailors throughout the ship,” Roosevelt navigation officer Cmdr. Christopher Brown said in the statement. “We are setting the normal underway watches and

running through various navigation scenarios so that the bridge watch teams can learn how to effectively communicate with one another while still protecting themselves and each other.”

After the fast cruise, the Roosevelt will begin underway training and carrier qualifications “to support the air wing’s return to operational readiness.”

Not all Roosevelt sailors will attend, though. Those who are not required for the underway training will remain pierside to support sailors still in quarantine and isolation, the Navy said.

After the air wing conducts its carrier qualification flights, the remainder of the crew will re-embark, according to Monday’s statement.

The ship will not wait for all crew members to clear quarantine before returning to sea, Sardiello told CBS News on May 5. Those who remain in isolation at the point of re-deployment will stay behind.

Sardiello took over for Capt. Brett Crozier when then-acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly removed him as commander after a letter he wrote pleading for help for his crew was leaked to the San Francisco Chronicle and picked up by worldwide media.

FBI: Pensacola base shooter has link to al-Qaida

Associated Press

The gunman in a deadly rampage late last year at a military base in Florida communicated with al-Qaida operatives about the attacks in the months leading up to it, U.S. officials said Monday as they laid out new details of a shooting that killed three American sailors.

The FBI learned of the contacts between Mohammed Saeed Alshamrani and operatives of al-Qaida after breaking the encryption on cellphones that had previously been locked and that the shooter, a Saudi Air Force officer, had tried to destroy before being killed by

law enforcement.

“We now have a clearer understanding of Alshamrani’s associations in the years, months and days leading up to his attack,” Attorney General William Barr said at a news conference in which he sharply chastised Apple for not providing help in unlocking the phones.

Once unlocked by the FBI, the phones revealed contact between Alshamrani and “dangerous” operatives from al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP, and also showed how he had been radicalized overseas for at least the last five years, officials said. He

also was meticulous in his planning, including saving a will on his phone that sought to explain himself — the same document AQAP later released in taking responsibility for the attack.

“It is certainly more than just inspired,” FBI Director Chris Wray said of Alshamrani’s contacts with al-Qaida. “We know, for example, that he was sharing plans and tactics with them. We know that he was coordinating with them and providing an opportunity for them to take credit for the attack.”

Alshamrani was killed by a sheriff’s deputy during the Dec. 6 rampage at a classroom

building at Pensacola Naval Air Station. He had been undergoing flight training at Pensacola, where members of foreign militaries routinely receive instruction. In addition to the three sailors who died, eight other people were injured.

Law enforcement officials left no doubt that Alshamrani was motivated by jihadi ideology, saying he visited a New York City memorial to the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend and posted anti-American and anti-Israeli messages on social media just two hours before the shooting.

Firm: Early vaccine results promising

Associated Press

An experimental vaccine against the coronavirus showed encouraging results in very early testing, triggering hoped-for immune responses in eight healthy, middle-aged volunteers, its maker announced Monday.

Study volunteers given either a low or medium dose of the vaccine by Cambridge, Mass.-based Moderna Inc. had antibodies similar to those seen in people who have recovered from COVID-19.

In the next phase of the study, led by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, researchers will try to determine which dose is best for a definitive experiment that they

aim to start in July.

In all, 45 people have received one or two shots of the vaccine, which was being tested at three different doses. The kind of detailed antibody results needed to assess responses are only available on eight volunteers so far.

The vaccine seems safe, the company said, but much more extensive testing is needed to see if it remains so. A high dose version is being dropped after spurring some short-term side effects.

The results have not been published and are only from the first of three stages of testing that vaccines and drugs normally undergo. U.S. government officials have launched a project called "Operation Warp

Speed" to develop a vaccine and hopefully have 300 million doses by January.

Worldwide, about a dozen vaccine candidates are in the first stages of testing or nearing it. Health officials have said that if all goes well, studies of a potential vaccine might wrap up by very late this year or early next year.

More than 4.7 million infections and 315,000 deaths from the coronavirus have been confirmed worldwide since it emerged in China late last year. There are no specific approved treatments, although several are being used on an emergency basis after showing some promise in preliminary testing.

Europe reopens widely; China to give \$2B to fight

Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece — Europe reopened more widely on Monday, allowing people into the Acropolis in Athens, high-fashion boutiques in Italy, museums in Belgium, golf courses in Ireland and beer gardens in Bavaria. China announced it will give \$2 billion to the fight against the coronavirus.

As nations carved out a new normal amid the pandemic, Chinese President Xi Jinping told the World Health Organization's annual meeting that the money will be paid out over two years to help respond to COVID-19, which has killed hundreds of thousands and devastated national economies. He said the funds will especially support efforts in developing countries.

Xi's address came amid sharp tensions between Beijing and President Donald Trump, who has suspended U.S. funding to WHO and accused it of failing to stop the virus from spreading when it first surfaced in China.

WHO announced it will evaluate the response to the outbreak "at the earliest appropriate moment," after a

watchdog body found possible shortcomings in the U.N. agency's handling of the crisis.

Germany and France jointly proposed a \$543 billion recovery fund to boost European economies hit by the pandemic.

New infections and deaths have slowed considerably in Europe, where some countries started easing lockdowns a month ago. Many nations are preparing to open their borders next month, trying to sketch out the rules for a highly unusual summer tourist season.

Greece reopened the Acropolis and other ancient sites, along with high schools, shopping malls and mainland travel.

In Belgium, more students returned to school, hairdressers began clipping locks again, and museums and zoos reopened, all with strict reservation systems to avoid overcrowding.

Moscow health officials said 77 people died of the virus in the Russian capital in the past 24 hours, the highest daily total so far. With over 290,000 infections, Russia is second only to the U.S. in the number of cases, but international health officials question Russia's low official death toll of about 2,700.

US Army holds back as Italy eases restrictions

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — Italians resumed visiting hair salons and having drinks out with friends Monday.

But soldiers with U.S. Army Garrison Italy still aren't allowed to do those things, following updated orders meant to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Army officials are moving cautiously as Italy lifts restrictions ordered months ago, when it became the European epicenter of the virus.

"We're going to be very, very careful and deliberate," Maj. Gen. Roger Cloutier said Friday at the garrison's virtual town hall, its 12th in as many weeks since the viral pandemic began. "We are cautiously optimistic but we have to maintain our discipline as we move forward."

The Italian government Monday also announced that self-declaration travel forms are no longer required for regional travel and is expected June 3 to allow travel throughout the country.

Cloutier, commander of U.S. Army Africa, has repeatedly said that he might apply more stringent measures than the

Italians, whose lockdown was among Europe's most severe, in order to protect the force, slow the spread of the virus and maintain readiness. He issued a general order late last week that does that.

Troops who live in the barracks and have been restricted to post since early March are still generally restricted to post under the order.

During the duty week, they can leave only to travel to another post, get gas or for medical reasons. On weekends, they can leave to exercise or get takeout food. But they're prohibited from riding in personally owned cars or taking public transit, and they must be back at their posts by 8 p.m.

Cloutier said at the town hall meeting that he'll reduce restrictions only when the data, which he said would include more expansive testing, indicates that it can be done without risking a new infection spike. History shows pandemics often have second and third waves of infection, he said.

Rules and restrictions vary between regions and services in Italy, which also hosts Aviano Air Base in the northeast and a large U.S. Navy base in Naples.

US Forces Korea set to lift most anti-virus restrictions

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. military said Monday it will lower its health risk level to moderate and lift most anti-coronavirus restrictions for bases except those in the Seoul area beginning Wednesday, citing “favorable” conditions in South Korea.

However, U.S. Forces Korea said bars, clubs and other adults-only establishments will remain off-limits on the peninsula following a recent outbreak in the popular Itaewon district.

USFK implemented the higher alert level, known as HPCON-Charlie, in late February as the coronavirus began to ravage South Korea, which for weeks had the highest number of cases outside China, where the virus first appeared late last year.

South Korea reported 15 new coronavirus cases on Monday, and the Itaewon outbreak appeared to ebb following a massive testing and tracing campaign. USFK has reported 28 cases of the virus, including four active-duty service members, but most have recovered.

“Based on South Korea’s current COVID-19 conditions remaining favorable to their newly implemented social dis-

tancing and preventive measures, USFK decided to lower its current health protection condition from ‘Charlie’ to ‘Bravo’ effective Wednesday, May 20 at 6 a.m. for areas except Area II (+),” USFK said in a press release.

USFK spokesman Col. Lee Peters said that means Yongsan Garrison in Seoul and the nearby K-16 base remain under HPCON Charlie.

Yongsan, which is in the process of being permanently closed but still has a population of about 2,000, sits on the edge of Itaewon.

Nonessential travel to bases in the Seoul area was banned until further notice, but personnel from Yongsan and K-16 were authorized to go to other bases for approved activities, USFK said.

The public health emergency, which gives USFK commander Gen. Robert Abrams expanded authorities to enforce the anti-coronavirus regulations, also was to remain in effect through Saturday when it is due to expire.

Abrams will decide whether to let it lapse, renew it or terminate it before then, Peters said.

The decision will allow people in approved areas to dine out at restaurants, shop and conduct outdoor activities in local com-

munities “while maintaining social awareness and wearing a mask when 1-2 meters (3-7 feet) separation cannot be achieved,” USFK said.

It added that “all bars, clubs and establishments that restrict entrance to adults only are off-limits pen-wide to all USFK-affiliated personnel until further notice.”

USFK said that despite the recent outbreak it had assessed that South Korea’s current conditions favorable enough to lower its HPCON status to “moderate.”

South Korean officials “have done an exceptional job in effectively suppressing the spread of COVID-19,” Abrams said. “I have complete confidence that the recent outbreak will be quickly contained and suppressed due to their proactive and aggressive measures taken so far. Our combined efforts to effectively combat this virus have been outstanding and the time is right to lower our HPCON level.”

The command, which oversees some 28,500 service members on the divided peninsula, warned “it will immediately snap back to a heightened HPCON posture without hesitation if a resurgence of the threat appears outside our installation or within our formations.”

Priest uses squirt gun for Easter

Associated Press

DETROIT — A Roman Catholic priest in the Detroit area has taken aim at his parishioners in a bid to maintain social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic, using a squirt gun to shoot holy water.

Photos posted on social media by the St. Ambrose Church show the Rev. Tim Pelc shooting water into a car window as it stopped by the steps of the church on Easter. He wore a mask, face shield and rubber gloves as further precautions against spreading the coronavirus.

The photos of the priest at the church in Grosse Pointe Park have inspired memes online. One shows the 70-year-old priest amid the fires of hell directing the squirt gun at devil-like figures.

Pelc told BuzzFeed News for an article over the weekend that he was a little concerned about how the Vatican might react when the photos of him squirting holy water began circulating widely on the internet. But, he said, “I haven’t heard anything yet.”

The idea was to find a way to continue a tradition of blessing Easter baskets despite the pandemic. One photo shows Pelc standing behind a car with its hatchback door up, shooting water at a basket of flowers.

Italy, Vatican opens churches with prayer protocols

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Italy and the Vatican opened a new phase in the virus crisis Monday, with churches resuming public Masses after a sharp confrontation between the Italian church and state over limits on worshiping in the era of COVID-19.

Guards in hazmat suits took the temperature of the faithful entering St. Peter’s Basilica, where Pope Francis celebrated an early morning Mass for a handful of people in a side chapel to commemorate the centenary of the birth of St. John Paul II.

Across town, the Rev. Jose Maria Galvan snapped on a latex glove and face mask before distributing Communion to the dozen parishioners attending the 7:20 a.m. Mass at his Sant’Eugenio parish.

“Before I became a priest I was a surgeon, so for me gloves are normal,” he joked afterward. “I’m dexterous (with gloves) so the hosts don’t get away from me.”

It was all part of Italy’s next step in emerging from the West’s first coronavirus lockdown, with commercial shops and restaurants reopening and barbers going back to work for the first time since March 10.

But with several hundred new infections being recorded every day, the reopening is hardly a free-for-all, with strict virus-containing measures regulating everything from how you get your coffee to the way you pray.

The government has published 120 pages of detailed norms for the resumption of work, play, worship and commerce, with some of the most intricate protocols reserved for the resumption of public religious observance in the Roman Catholic country.

Puerto Rico to hold statehood referendum amid disillusion

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Gov. Wanda Vazquez announced Saturday that she will hold a nonbinding referendum in November to decide whether Puerto Rico should become a U.S. state, a move that comes amid growing disillusion with the island's U.S. territorial status.

For the first time in the island's history, the referendum will ask a single, simple question: Should Puerto Rico be immediately admitted as a U.S. state?

It's an answer that requires approval from Congress and a question that outraged the island's small group of independence supporters and members of the main opposition Popular Democratic Party, which supports the status quo. But it's a gamble that members of the governor's pro-statehood party are confident will pay off given that Puerto Rico has struggled to obtain federal funds for hurricanes Irma and Maria, a string of recent strong earthquakes and the coronavirus pandemic amid growing complaints that the island does not receive fair and equal treatment.

"Everything important in life carries some risk," said former Puerto Rico Gov. Carlos Romero Barcelo, a member of the Progressive New Party.

Previous referendums have presented voters with more than one question or various options, including independence or upholding the current territorial status, but none have been so direct as the one scheduled to be held during the Nov. 3 general elections.

"Our people will have the opportunity once and for all to define our future," Vazquez said. "It's never too late to be treated as equals."

Congress would have to accept the referendum results for it to move forward, and it has never acted on the island's previous five referendums. Statehood would award Puerto Rico two senators and five representatives, but it's unlikely that a Republican-controlled Congress would acknowledge the referendum because Puerto Rico tends to favor Democrats.

Roberto Prats, a former Puerto Rico senator and member of the Popular Democratic Party, said in a phone interview that the upcoming referendum will be an exercise in futility like the five previous ones.

"The only thing they've done is take away credibility from the statehood movement," he said, adding that Puerto Rico has eroded the federal government's trust with its decades of corruption and mismanagement.

Taliban car bomb at Afghan intel base kills at least 9

BY J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — At least nine people died and 40 were wounded in a Taliban attack on a government base Monday, which the insurgents said that they launched in response to President Ashraf Ghani's order for troops to go back on the offensive against them.

Taliban fighters blew up a stolen Humvee at around 5 a.m. inside the main compound of a base in Ghazni used by the country's intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security, said Wahidullah Jumazada, a spokesman for the provincial governor.

The explosion shattered windows more than a mile away in the city of Ghazni, about 100 miles southwest of Kabul, Jumazada said.

The Taliban said on Twitter that they carried out the attack in response to Ghani's "war declaration" — a reference to his order last week for the military to resume offensive operations against the militant group.

In a separate attack in Kabul, at least two people were wounded when a magnetic bomb blew up a vehicle.

None of the militant groups active in the capital immediately claimed responsibility for the mid-afternoon attack, which happened about two miles north of the U.S. Embassy. The attack followed an assassination attempt by men on a motorcycle against a

defense official Saturday in Kabul, which killed one Afghan soldier.

In giving the order to attack the Taliban, Ghani cited a sharp rise in attacks against Afghan forces and an increase in violence around the country since the U.S. signed a deal with the insurgents in late February.

The deal was supposed to lead to a negotiated end to Afghanistan's latest war and to the full withdrawal of American and international troops by next year. But in the nearly two months since it was signed, the Taliban have launched more than 3,700 attacks while government forces have conducted almost 1,600 defensive operations, the Afghan Ministry of Interior said last week.

Ghani's order came the day dozens died, including mothers and their newborns, in an attack on a maternity ward in Kabul. Dozens more died in an attack at the funeral in Nangarhar province for a pro-government warlord. The Taliban denied having anything to do with the attack on the maternity ward. The U.S. has blamed it and the assault in Nangarhar on Islamic State.

Afghan forces have killed at least 249 Taliban fighters since the order to resume the offensive was given, while the militant group has killed nearly 300 people, National Security Council spokesman Javid Faisal said Sunday on Twitter.

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.

Iranian tankers head to Venezuela as part of wider deal for foes of US

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Five Iranian tankers likely carrying at least \$45.5 million worth of gasoline and similar products are now sailing to Venezuela, part of a wider deal between the two U.S.-sanctioned nations amid heightened tensions between Tehran and Washington.

The tankers' voyage come after Venezuela's socialist leader Nicolas Maduro already turned to Iran for help in flying in chemicals needed at an aging refinery amid a gasoline shortage, a symptom of the wider economic and political chaos gripping Latin America's one-time largest oil producer.

For Iran, the tankers represent a way to bring money into its cash-starved Shiite theocracy and put its own pressure on the U.S., which under President Donald

Trump has pursued maximalist campaigns against both nations.

But the strategy invites the chance of a renewed confrontation between the Islamic Republic and America both in the Persian Gulf, which saw a series of escalating incidents often involving the oil industry last year, and wider afield.

"This is like a new one for everyone," said Capt. Ranjith Raja, an analyst who tracks oil shipments by sea at the data firm Refinitiv, of the gasoline shipments. "We haven't seen anything like this before."

Since a pressure campaign on Iranian vessels began, notably with the temporary seizure of an Iranian tanker last year by Gibraltar, the country's ships have been unable to fly flags of convenience of other nations, a common practice in international shipping.

Shooting case impeded by delays, police ties

Associated Press

ATLANTA — There was an abundance of evidence when officers arrived at the scene on a February afternoon in coastal Georgia: A man, apparently unarmed, lying on the street, soaked in blood. The suspected shooter, a shotgun, eyewitnesses. And video of the incident.

But no arrests were made in the death of Ahmaud Arbery, 25, for more than two months, not until after video of the shooting in Brunswick surfaced and stoked a national uproar over race relations.

Local prosecutors are now under investigation for their handling of the case. And a

newly appointed investigative agency and prosecutor must untangle the criminal investigation, build a case and make up for lost time.

Among the questions: Did shooting suspect Travis Michael and his father, Gregory, both white, get special treatment because the elder Michael had been a longtime investigator at the Brunswick Circuit District Attorney's office? Did investigators treat the shooting as a potential murder, or as a justifiable homicide? And might the outcome have been different if Arbery weren't black?

Law enforcement in Brunswick has a checkered history,

and over the past decade, police have faced numerous lawsuits and increasing scrutiny.

In 2010, two officers fired eight bullets into an unarmed woman's car after a chase, killing her. An investigation found that neither of the officers checked on her condition afterward — instead, their in-car cameras caught them comparing their shooting skills.

One of those officers later killed his estranged wife and her friend before dying in a standoff with police.

Just days after Arbery's killing, Glynn County Police Chief John Powell and three former high-ranking officers were indicted in what investigators

described as a cover-up of an officer's sexual relationship with an informant.

A November 2019 memo from the county manager described how Powell had "inherited a culture of cronyism, outdated policies, lack of appropriate training and loss of State certification."

The memo also described how supervisors had failed to document or investigate misconduct allegations and detailed a "culture of cover-ups, failure to supervise, abuse of power and lack of accountability within the Glynn County Police Department" before Powell arrived.

13 hurt, none killed in Louisiana shooting

Associated Press

BOGALUSA, La. — Thirteen people were shot Saturday as a large group gathered in a Louisiana city for an impromptu memorial service for a man whose body was found earlier this month, authorities said.

No one was killed, but one person was in critical condition after the 9:15 p.m. shooting in Bogalusa, police said.

The crowd was gathered in a vacant lot to remember Domi-

nique James, who was missing for several days before being found dead May 8 inside his vehicle in woods by officers in a helicopter, investigators said.

"The best we can tell is a car drove by, shots were fired and it was pure chaos from there," Bogalusa Police Maj. Troy Tervalon told The Associated Press.

Police haven't had a witness come forward to give them a better description of the shoot-

ing and have made no arrests, Tervalon said.

James' family had asked Bogalusa officials if they could have a regular memorial service for James, but were turned down because of stay-at-home orders with COVID-19, Tervalon said.

The gathering of at least 150 people Saturday night were mostly friends, Tervalon said.

The scene was so chaotic, with wounded people being

taken to several different hospitals, that investigators haven't been able to find and interview all the wounded people, Tervalon said.

James was last heard from heading to an unknown location to pick up an all-terrain vehicle on May 2, police said.

His death is considered a homicide, but Tervalon said that he didn't want to release any additional details. No arrests have been made in that case.

Canadian aerobatic jet crashes into house

Associated Press

KAMLOOPS, British Columbia — A Canadian aerobatic jet crashed into a British Columbia neighborhood during a flyover intended to boost morale during the coronavirus pandemic, killing one crew member, seriously injuring another and setting a house on fire. Video appeared to show the plane's crew ejecting.

The crash left debris scattered across the neighborhood in the city of Kamloops, 260

miles northeast of Vancouver, on Sunday.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau expressed that he was "deeply saddened" by the death of Capt. Jennifer Casey, who served as a spokesperson for the Snowbirds — Canada's equivalent of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds or U.S. Navy's Blue Angels — and the injuring of Capt. Richard MacDougall, one of the coordinators for the team and the pilot of the aircraft.

"For the past two weeks, the Snowbirds have been flying across the country to lift up Canadians during these difficult times," Trudeau said in a statement. "Their flyovers across the country put a smile on the faces of Canadians everywhere and make us proud."

Video posted to Twitter appears to show two Snowbirds taking off from Kamloops Airport. One of the aircraft subsequently climbed into the sky before rolling over and plung-

ing to the ground. The video appears to show at least one person ejecting from the plane before it disappeared behind a stand of trees as an explosion was heard.

"I saw what looked like a parachute about, say, 20 feet over the house, and it disappeared from sight, and the parachute hadn't fully deployed yet — it was still sort of straight up and down," said Kenny Hinds, who lives seven houses from the crash site.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Troopers help deliver woman's baby on road

NJ CRANBURY — Officials said two New Jersey state troopers helped deliver a baby girl for a Tennessee woman on the New Jersey Turnpike.

Col. Patrick Callahan, the state police superintendent, said that the Memphis woman was driving cross country with her husband when she went into labor.

The woman pulled over on the turnpike and called for help, and troopers Robert Murray and Pierre Noel from the Cranbury station arrived and delivered the baby girl with the help of Monroe Township emergency medical personnel, Callahan said.

Board approves park's geese charity harvest

IL URBANA—The Urbana Park District board has unanimously approved a plan for a charity harvest of geese at Crystal Lake to help bring the population from about 100 geese down to 10.

"We want some geese to remain," said Derek Liebert, the park district's superintendent of planning and operations. "Our goal is to manage them at a sustainable level."

Under the proposal, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Division will collect the geese and take them to a facility to be killed, where the meat will then be donated to a food bank, according to The News-Gazette.

Man brings smiles by gifting free Chick-fil-A

DE WILMINGTON — Mike Miller knows that for many right now, times are hard and bits of kindness

from strangers can mean the world.

The Wilmington native said that's why every Friday, at exactly 3:02 p.m. to commemorate the 302 area code, he tries to give back to his Delaware community with a small, but simple gesture: a free meal from Chick-fil-A.

The music promoter who lives in Atlanta but has come back to Wilmington due to the coronavirus pandemic, posts on Twitter and Instagram that he is giving two people meals from the restaurant.

He then takes all the people who reply and puts their Twitter and Instagram handles into a fishbowl and selects two for whom he provides meals.

State investigates after 3 invasive frogs found

HI WAILUKU — The Hawaii Department of Agriculture has launched an investigation to determine where three coqui frogs came from after they were captured in a hardware store in Maui.

Department spokeswoman Janelle Saneishi said the area was treated with citric acid and no plants were sold from the nursery area in the Home Depot store, the Maui News reported.

The source of the infestation has not yet been determined. The Agriculture Department is working to pinpoint which plants the frogs came to the store on, Saneishi said.

Arson charge filed in teepee burning

KS LAWRENCE — A Kansas man was charged in connection with a fire that damaged a ceremonial teepee at Haskell Indian Nations University.

Ryan Adam Sekayouma

Simpson, 32, of Lawrence, was charged with arson, a felony, and two counts of misdemeanor criminal trespassing, the Lawrence Journal-World reported.

The teepee, which was built to honor the 2020 graduating class at Haskell, was destroyed by fire at the school's campus in Lawrence.

A fundraiser to replace the teepee, worth an estimated \$2,500 to \$3,000, raised more than \$15,000.

First pygmy hippo born at zoo in 3 decades

CA SAN DIEGO — The San Diego Zoo has announced the first successful birth of an endangered pygmy hippopotamus at the zoo in more than three decades.

Mabel, a 4-year-old pygmy hippo at the zoo, gave birth to a 12-pound male calf. The zoo announced the birth in recognition of Endangered Species Day.

The calf, which has not been named, is meeting and surpassing milestones, including the ability to go underwater, the zoo said.

Coast Guard seeks new steward for lighthouse

MA BOSTON — Wanted: new steward for one of the nation's oldest lighthouses.

The U.S. Coast Guard announced it will begin the process to transfer control of Light Station Boston, commonly known as Boston Light, to another entity.

The decision will "ensure the future historic preservation and public access" to the facility, which is 304 years old and is considered the oldest staffed lighthouse in the country, according to the Coast Guard.

The original lighthouse was

built by the British in 1716 but was destroyed during the American Revolutionary War. It was rebuilt by Massachusetts after the war ended.

Man hit with broom, robbed of about \$5

MD ANNAPOLIS — A Maryland man was hit in the head with a broomstick then robbed of about \$5, police said.

Annapolis Police spokeswoman Patti Norris told the Capital Gazette the robbery happened after an unknown assailant approached the victim on the street.

Norris said the assailant asked the victim "for a dollar for the bus" before striking him with the broomstick and taking his money.

Woman charged with fire over missing towel

FL HAWTHORNE — A Florida woman set fire to a converted woodshed that another woman was living in following an argument over a missing towel, authorities said.

Robin Hamilton, 57, was arrested shortly after the fire behind a Hawthorne trailer home, the Gainesville Sun reported.

A woman told Alachua County deputies that she was renting the shed from Hamilton and living there with her two dogs. The woman said Hamilton had been drunk and threatened to "burn her out" because of a missing towel that had sentimental value to Hamilton.

About 20 minutes after the fight, the tenant said she smelled something burning and then saw smoke. The woman said she got out of the shed, but her puppy fled under the furniture and died in the fire.

From wire reports

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Harvick wins as NASCAR returns to racing

Associated Press

DARLINGTON, S.C. — This was a 400-mile drive unlike any other in modern day NASCAR.

The grandstands were empty. There wasn't a tailgate inside the track. Everyone wore face coverings — some with the team logos, others opting for plain disposable medical masks. It was nothing close to the corporate sponsorship, pomp and patriotic traveling circus that symbolizes NASCAR.

But when the engines fired at Darlington Raceway following a 10-week layoff during the coronavirus pandemic, it turned into a regular old race.

Kevin Harvick beat Alex Bowman to win NASCAR's first race back, a spectacle closely watched to see if the largest motorsports series in the U.S. could successfully return to the track.

"I just want to thank everybody from NASCAR and all the teams for letting us do what we do," Harvick said. "I didn't think it was going to be that different, then we won and it's dead silent out here. We miss the fans."

It was a crucial gamble for NASCAR, which had to get back to the track to stave off financial ruin. With races on hold, no money was coming into the sport and the NASCAR business model can not sustain the lack of revenue.

NASCAR developed a health plan approved by officials in

South Carolina and North Carolina, and scheduled seven races in the next 11 days at two tracks. As other states began to open, the series added races to fill the calendar with 20 events across seven Southern states between now and June 21. There will be no spectators at least through that date.

This first event was called the "The Real Heroes 400" and dedicated to health care workers fighting the coronavirus pandemic. The names of health care workers across the country were substituted for the drivers' name above the door on each of the 40 cars.

Harvick's car honored Dr. Joshua Hughes, an emergency medicine physician in the Charlotte, N.C., area.

"Josh is one of my really good friends, I spend a lot of time talking to him through this pandemic and really have heard how those doctors are affected with everything they have going on with their personal life and whether they're sick, not sick, how they should treat people," Harvick said. "I'm just really honored and really thankful for all of our front-line workers, not only our doctors, but grocery stores, truck drivers, fire fighters, police departments — you name it."

"All of you front-line workers are the reason that we're here today and our country is actually still running."

The health care workers then virtually gave the command to start the engines.

Steve O'Donnell, executive vice president of NASCAR, was pleased with the collective effort from the industry.

"We didn't have to tell anyone or remind anyone to wear a mask," O'Donnell said. "It felt a little odd with the garage area because it was scaled down in terms of personnel, but all in all I think it went really well."

Teams were required to submit rosters in advance with only 16 members allotted per car. Names were on a list at a checkpoint at the end of a gravel road just off Harry Byrd Highway and everyone who passed through had their temperature checked and logged before they could enter.

NASCAR did not have to turn anyone away, and all 40 drivers were cleared to race. NASCAR has declined to do COVID-19 testing to ensure those tests go to those in need, but competitors are supposed to log who they come into contact with, not return to the race shop after being at the track and continue to follow CDC guidelines on social distancing.

Among those to make it inside were Ryan Newman, back for the first time since he suffered a head injury three months ago in a wreck on the final lap of the Daytona 500. Newman missed only three races because of

NASCAR's shutdown and finished 15th in his return.

Also in the field was Matt Kenseth, who at 48 was the oldest driver at Darlington and he raced for the first time since the 2018 season finale. Kenseth was brought out of retirement by Chip Ganassi when Kyle Larson was fired for using a racial slur during an iRacing event that kept NASCAR occupied when racing was on hold. Kenseth finished 10th.

Bowman, who signed a one-year contract extension with Hendrick Motorsports on Saturday, was second. Kurt Busch, winner of the closest finish in Darlington history, was third for Ganassi.

Chase Elliott gave Hendrick two cars in the top-four. Denny Hamlin was the highest-finishing Toyota driver at fifth for Joe Gibbs Racing, one spot ahead of teammate Martin Truex Jr.

It was the 50th career victory for Harvick, in a Ford for Stewart-Haas Racing. A previous winner at Darlington, Harvick led 159 of the 293 laps.

Harvick tied Hall of Famers Junior Johnson and Ned Jarrett for 12th on NASCAR's career wins list.

NASCAR's elite Cup Series next races Wednesday night at Darlington, which is hosting three events in four days before the sport shifts to Charlotte.

Premier League to allow non-contact training

Associated Press

MANCHESTER, England — After watching the Bundesliga resume, English Premier League clubs agreed Monday on the measures that will allow non-contact practice sessions to resume during the coronavirus pandemic.

The protocols for small group training — while maintaining social distancing — beginning Tuesday were approved unanimously in a vote by the clubs during a conference call after

the government eased lockdown restrictions in England last week.

Up to five players will be allowed to work together on a pitch, according to details released by Newcastle. The northeast club will operate a rotation that will ensure only 10 players maximum are at the training ground at any one time.

Teams have already started checking players and coaches for the coronavirus, with a total of 1,600 weekly tests anticipated

across the 20 clubs in England's top division.

With Britain suffering a worse coronavirus outbreak than Germany, the sports shutdown is yet to end and players would have to remain socially distant for now in training. But the Premier League has government backing to pursue restarting games in June if there is no new spike in COVID-19 cases.

Sunday should have been the last day of the season but, instead of Liverpool completing a

title triumph, coronavirus testing was taking place at clubs.

Up to 40 players and coaches at each club were due to be tested for the coronavirus across Sunday and Monday. A further wave of testing will take place across the 20 clubs later in the week in a bid to detect infections.

"A player has a quarter of a pitch to work within, so social distancing is not a problem," Newcastle manager Steve Bruce said.

California's 3 MWC teams could play

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The California State University system's plan for a mostly virtual fall semester due to the coronavirus pandemic doesn't necessarily close the door on football at its three schools that play in the far-flung Mountain West Conference.

San Diego State is looking at having football players return to campus no earlier than July 7 and is making plans to play the season as scheduled, athletic director John David Wicker said.

SDSU is proceeding because it envisions a fall schedule that includes a hybrid model of classes, in which some students will be on campus for in-person instruction such as labs while other classes will be held online.

NCAA President Mark Emmert said recently that campuses must be open "in one

fashion or another" in order to have sports this fall.

Wicker said SDSU had been planning for a hybrid model, no matter what, and feels that CSU Chancellor Timothy White's announcement was misconstrued by some people who thought fall sports would be canceled.

"We're going to have students on campus," Wicker said.

July 7 is the target date for bringing back football players because it is the start of the second summer session.

SDSU is scheduled to open the season at home against FCS Sacramento State on Sept. 5.

"We're going to plan that we are going to play our football opener as scheduled," Wicker said. "I don't think anyone will be able to answer that question with 100% certainty, but we're going to plan.

"Again, I think we're going to play our schedule. We have contracts. One of the hard things is, 41 states have an FBS

team in their state. Are all 41 states going to be in the same place Aug. 29 or Sept. 5? Those are the types of questions that will have to be addressed as we get closer to the season."

SDSU has assembled a task force to figure out how it could house and feed athletes while meeting all safety parameters, with the hope of having a plan by the end of this month.

The school also has begun looking at how it could safely host fans within social distancing guidelines, if fans will be allowed to attend games at 70,000-seat SDCCU Stadium. He mentioned the Miami Dolphins are making plans to allow perhaps 15,000 fans at 65,000-seat Hard Rock Stadium, if fans are allowed to attend NFL games.

Wicker doesn't know yet how many fans could be allowed. It could be a godsend that SDSU is still stuck playing in the decrepit stadium, which it plans

to replace with a 35,000-seat, \$310 million stadium by 2022.

"You won't hear me say often that SDCCU Stadium is a benefit to SDSU football, but with 70,000 seats and 100 suites, it could be beneficial for us," Wicker said. "We can spread people out that want to come to games. We have a big parking lot."

Wicker said every school in the country has to plan for what it thinks it can do in the fall.

"No one knows for sure what the fall will hold," Wicker said. "We have to make the best fact-based decisions we can. Every FBS school will have to try to figure out, 'When can I bring students back, when can we start training, when can we start contact, when can we actually play games, when can we have fans in the stadium?'"

The Mountain West includes 12 schools in eight states.

Rodgers: Packers' decision to draft Love shocked him

Associated Press

Packers star Aaron Rodgers acknowledges Green Bay drafting a quarterback in the first round surprised him and complicated his hopes of playing his entire career with the same team.

The Packers traded up four spots in the first round last month to take Utah State quarterback Jordan Love with the 26th overall pick. The move has raised speculation about Rodgers' long-term future in Green Bay, no matter how much team officials emphasized afterward that the two-time MVP remains the clear-cut starting quarterback for the foreseeable future.

"I think the general reaction at first was surprise, like many people," Rodgers said Friday in a conference call that marked his first public comments on the Packers' draft. "Obviously I'm not going to say that I was, you know, thrilled by the pick necessarily, but the organization is thinking not only about the present but about the future. And I respect that."

The 36-year-old Rodgers has been with the Packers since they selected him with the 24th overall selection in 2005. Former Packers quarterback Brett Favre predicted on "The Rich Eisen Show" earlier this

month that Rodgers would finish his career somewhere other than Green Bay.

Rodgers, who owns the best career passer rating in NFL history, has four years remaining on his contract after signing a four-year, \$134 million extension in August 2018 that included more than \$100 million in guaranteed money.

"There are some new factors that are out of my control," Rodgers said. "My sincere desire to start and finish with the same organization, just as it has with many other players over the years, may not be a reality at this point. As much as I understand the organization's future outlook and wanting to make sure they're thinking about the team now and down the line, and I respect that, at the same time I still believe in myself and have a strong desire to play into my 40s. I'm just not sure how that all works together at this point."

Packers coach Matt LaFleur says he understands Rodgers' reaction to the Love selection. When asked whether the Packers' draft choices might motivate Rodgers, LaFleur said the veteran quarterback doesn't need any extra incentive.

"He's one of the most competitive people I've been around," LaFleur said. "You can

see that competitiveness every time we step on the field. I don't think it's going to drive him any more than if we would have drafted somebody else. That's who he is. That's how he's wired. That's why he's achieved the things he's done throughout his career."

Rodgers also expressed confidence in his team's receiving corps after the Packers did not to draft any wideouts.

"For them to not pick a guy early on to me says they really like our guys and have faith in them. ... I feel really good about that group and obviously the front office did as well," Rodgers said.

Rodgers finished 12th in passer rating, but still threw 26 touchdown passes and only four interceptions. The Packers went 13-3, won the NFC North title, and lost to the San Francisco 49ers — their third NFC championship game defeat in the last six years.

Rodgers says he's always had good relationships with his backup quarterbacks and expects a similar dynamic with Love. He said he's had "some great conversations" with Love and noted they have something in common as players who weren't heavily recruited out of high school.