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U.S. schools go back and forth on in-person learning

By LISA MARIE PANE
Associated Press

New York City reopened classrooms to many of its youngest students Monday in what has become a frustrating, stop-and-start process in many school systems around the U.S. because of the alarming surge in the coronavirus.

The nation's largest school district, with 1 million students, had shut down in-person learning just two weeks ago but decided to bring back preschoolers and elementary school children after parents pushed for it and the mayor concluded it was safe to do so with beefed-up testing.

In contrast, school systems in Detroit, Boston, Indianapolis, Philadelphia and suburban Minneapolis in re-

cent weeks abandoned in-person classes or dropped plans to bring students back because of soaring infections.

The retreat in some places and the push forward in others are happening as the virus comes back with a vengeance across much of the U.S., with deaths per day averaging over 2,200 — about the same level seen during the very deadliest stretch of the outbreak, last spring in the New York City area.

Newly cases are averaging close to 200,000 a day, the highest level on record, and the number of Americans now in the hospital has reached all-time highs at over 100,000.

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Students enter P.S. 134 Henrietta Szold Elementary School, Monday, Dec. 7, 2020, in New York. Associated Press



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Continued from Front

The virus is blamed for more than 280,000 deaths and over 14.8 million confirmed infections in the U.S., with the crisis widely expected to worsen in the coming weeks because of Americans' disregard of warnings to stay home and avoid others over Thanksgiving. Health officials say the virus does not appear to be spreading rapidly in classrooms themselves, perhaps because children may be less likely to spread or contract the virus. Instead, many cases among youngsters and educators have been traced to activities outside school.

Still, the infections have alarmed parents and educators, and the illnesses and quarantines among teachers and other employees have left some schools short of adult supervision.

At the same time, parents and others have complained that children are not getting a good education at home in front of a computer. And the switch to remote learning has caused hardship for many families by forcing parents to watch over their children instead of going to work. In South Carolina, where COVID-19 cases have spiked to levels higher than those seen when the state was one of the nation's hot spots over the summer, school districts are consid-



A parent, center, completes a form granting permission for random COVID-19 testing for students as he arrives with his daughter, left, at P.S. 134 Henrietta Szold Elementary School, Monday, Dec. 7, 2020, in New York.

Associated Press

ering cutting back on how much time students spend in the classroom. More than 2,450 new COVID-19 cases have been reported in South Carolina in each of the past three days.

A teacher group there is asking districts to go back to all-virtual teaching until the spike can be flattened, citing not just health concerns but a shortage of adults to keep students safe.

The plea was given more emotional weight after the death on Nov. 11 of

50-year-old Staci Blakely, a third grade teacher in Lexington.

At least four school districts in South Carolina have returned to all-virtual learning. The largest so far, Orangeburg County, sent its 12,000 students home to learn, starting Monday, until at least the end of Christmas break. Nearly a quarter of the state's districts are teaching in person every day.

In New York, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced just last month that school build-

ings would close after the city crossed a threshold of 3% in the share of coronavirus tests coming back positive for the virus. The rate is now 5%, according to the city, but de Blasio said new testing protocols made it safe to reopen classrooms, in part because few infections have been linked to transmission inside schools. About 190,000 students are eligible to return. Middle schools and high schools will remain all-remote at least until after the holiday break.

"This is a good day for New York City, even against a tough backdrop," de Blasio said Monday.

Miriam Petrovitch was among staffers welcoming children back at an elementary school on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

"We miss them dearly," Petrovitch, who works as a parent coordinator, said at a union news conference. "There's no school without children."

After closing schools in March, New York became one of the first large U.S. cities to reopen classrooms in September, but the majority of parents chose online-only learning for their children. Other parents chose a hybrid in which students were in their classrooms only a few days a week.

Since the beginning of the New York City school year, more than 1,740 students and 2,240 staff in the public system have gotten the virus, according to city statistics.

It's been a struggle for American schoolchildren for the entire year — academically, psychologically and physically.

School districts across the country, both big and small, have reported an increase in the number of students failing classes. Students for whom English is not their native language, students with disabilities and poor children are suffering the most. □

Pearl Harbor dead remembered in ceremony shrunk by pandemic



A U.S. Navy sailor plays taps in front of the USS Missouri during a ceremony to mark the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Monday, Dec. 7, 2020, in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Associated Press

By AUDREY McAVOY HONOLULU (AP) — U.S. servicemen and women and National Park Service

officials gathered at Pearl Harbor on Monday to remember those killed in the attack — but elderly survi-

vors stayed home to pay their respects from afar to avoid health risks from the coronavirus pandemic.

The USS Arizona battleship bell rang at 7:55 a.m., the minute the attack began 79 years ago, to start a moment of silence. F-22 jets then flew overhead in missing man formation.

The Arizona today lies at the bottom of the harbor, where it sank shortly being hit by two bombs. The battleship lost 1,177 sailors and Marines, including more than 900 who remain entombed on board.

The U.S. military streamed the ceremony live online for survivors and others unable to attend in person.

"I think what we see today here is the resolve, despite a pandemic, for us to be able to pay our respects, to thank the greatest generation," said Adm. John Aquilino, the commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, said in his keynote address. "It also is a reminder to all that nothing will stop us."

Marines performing a rifle salute wore black masks during the ceremony, which featured a smaller crowd than in typical years.

Aquilino highlighted the story of Doris Miller, a mess attendant on board the USS West Virginia, who carried wounded shipmates to safety and manned a

50-caliber gun returning fire until he ran out of ammunition.

He continued to pull wounded sailors to safety even after an order to abandon ship. The Navy awarded Miller the Navy Cross for his heroism in 1942. Earlier this year, the Navy named its newest aircraft carrier after him.

"Today, a grateful nation reflects upon those who went above and beyond. We honor their service. We remember their sacrifice, and we pledge to continue striving for a better and safer world," Aquilino said. Altogether more than 2,300 U.S. troops died in the attack. □

Pandemic pushes newly hungry Americans to crowded food lines

By SHARON COHEN
AP National Writer

The deadly pandemic that tore through the nation's heartland struck just as Aaron Crawford was in a moment of crisis. He was looking for work, his wife needed surgery, then the virus started eating away at her paycheck.

The Crawfords had no savings, mounting bills and a growing dread: What if they ran out of food? The couple had two boys, 5 and 10, and boxes of macaroni and cheese from the dollar store could go only so far.

A 37-year-old Navy vet, Crawford saw himself as self-reliant. Asking for food made him uncomfortable. "I felt like I was a failure," he says. "It's this whole stigma... this mindset that you're this guy who can't provide for his family, that you're a deadbeat."

Hunger is a harsh reality in the richest country in the world, even during times of prosperity. Now, with staggering job losses and business closings, millions of Americans are worried about empty refrigerators and barren cupboards.

Feeding America, the nation's largest anti-hunger organization, has never handed out so much food so fast — 4.2 billion meals from March through October. The organization has seen a 60 percent average increase in food bank users during the pandemic; about 4 in 10 are first-timers. An Associated Press analysis of Feeding America data from 181 food banks in its network found the organization has distributed nearly 57 percent more food in the third quarter of the year, compared with the same period in 2019.

Those fighting hunger say they've never seen anything like this in America, even during the Great Recession of 2007-2009.

Across the country, cars line up for miles to wait for food handouts, each driver waiting hours for a box or bag of food. In New York, and other large cities, people stand, waiting for blocks on end.



Aaron Crawford, his wife Sheyla and their sons, Sornic, left, and Gabriel, stand for a photograph outside their Apple Valley, Minn., home on Saturday, Nov. 21, 2020.

Associated Press

Shortly before Thanksgiving, Norman Butler and his girlfriend, Cheryl, arrived at 3 a.m. at a drive-through food bank in a suburban New Orleans sports stadium. They joined a pre-dawn procession of mothers with their kids, the elderly and folks like him — unemployed workers.

Before the pandemic, Butler, 53, worked as an airport shuttle and limousine driver, a valet and hotel doorman. Since March when the normally bustling streets turned silent, jobs have been scarce in the city.

"A lot of people are in limbo," he says. "The main thing we need is to get back to work."

For communities of color, the pandemic has been a compound disaster with Blacks and Latinos reeling from disproportionately high rates of deaths, infections — and joblessness.

Unemployment surged among Latinos to 18.9 percent this spring, higher than any other racial and ethnic group, according to federal statistics. Though it has since fallen, many are still struggling.

More than 1 in 5 Black and Latino adults with children said as of July 2020 they sometimes or often did not have enough to eat, according to a September report commissioned by the Food Research & Action Center.

That was double the rate of white and Asian households. It also found that women, households with children and people of color are at greatest risk of hunger.

Abigail Leocadio, 34, who was brought to the U.S. from Mexico by her family when she was 7, works as a phlebotomist in a local lab. Her husband, a restaurant

cook, was unemployed for months during the outbreak.

Leocadio's income — barely more than the \$11 state minimum wage — wasn't enough to cover their expenses. They pay \$500 a month to rent a lot for their two-bedroom trailer, and as much as \$450 in monthly electric bills and internet service so their four kids, 9

to 15, can attend class remotely.

"It has been hard feeding all the kiddos daily," Leocadio said outside the trailer after a recent delivery from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Phoenix, Arizona. The family recently received two boxes from the charity, including canned tomatoes, dried beans, rice, breakfast cereal and the kids' undisputed favorite: specialty Oreo cookies. The food, she says, provides less than half of what her family eats in four weeks, but reduces their monthly bill to about \$250.

While food banks have become critical during the pandemic, they're just one path for combating hunger. For every meal from a food bank, a federal program called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or food stamps — provides nine.

Anti-hunger groups have lobbied Congress for a 15 percent increase in maximum food stamp benefits. A similar measure went a long way in digging the nation out of the Great Recession. □

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California unveils smartphone virus tool as cases surge

By **AMY TAXIN and ADAM BEAM**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)

— California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Monday announced a voluntary smartphone tool to alert people of possible coronavirus exposure as cases surge higher, new restrictions are imposed and many people said they won't heed the pleas to stay home.

The tool — which has been used on a pilot basis on some state university campuses — doesn't track people's identities or locations but uses Bluetooth wireless signals to detect when two phones are within 6 feet (1.8 meters) of each other for at least 15 minutes, officials said.

California's 40 million residents can opt in to the system starting on Thursday. When someone who has activated the technology tests positive for the virus, that person will receive a verification code from state health officials that can be used to send an anonymous alert to other users who may have been exposed over the past 14 days.

"The more people that participate in it, the more that opt in, the more effective this program can



Customers wait for their take out order at Fatburger in the Sherman Oaks section of Los Angeles on Sunday Dec. 6, 2020.

Associated Press

be," Newsom told reporters. "We are hoping there will be enough to make this meaningful."

Sixteen other states, plus Guam and Washington, D.C., have already made available the system co-created by Apple and Google, though most residents of those places aren't using it. The tool has been used on a pilot basis on University of California campuses, where 250,000 people opted in for notification of virus exposure.

The technology comes as coronavirus cases are exploding in California and more than 80 percent of the state's residents are under orders not to leave their homes for at least the next three weeks except for essential purposes.

Over the past two weeks, California has reported a quarter of a million positive virus cases. The 7-day average for new virus cases on Monday neared 22,000, a 50 percent increase over the prior week, state data

shows.

More than 10,000 people were hospitalized in California Monday with COVID-19, including more than 2,300 in intensive care, Newsom said.

Newsom's administration issued the stay-at-home rules shuttering restaurant dining, salons and playgrounds in Southern California and a large swath of the state's Central Valley agricultural region after more than 85% of beds in intensive care units were

occupied in those regions. Five San Francisco Bay Area counties voluntarily joined the rules, saying they didn't want to wait until their ICU capacity dropped too low to take action. Those restrictions will last until Jan. 4, a week longer than the state's timeline.

Ten months into the pandemic, most of the state is now back to where it started with the stay-at-home rules.

But unlike in March, when the pandemic was in its infancy and California was the first state to impose such rules, fewer people are likely to obey them.

Some business owners said they would keep their doors open and several law enforcement agencies have said they have no plans to enforce the rules and are counting on people to voluntarily wear masks and practice physical distancing to protect themselves and their families. □

Californians will be able to activate the new "exposure notification" tool in their iPhone settings or on Android phones by downloading the CA Notify app from the Google Play store. Many residents will get a notification Thursday inviting them to participate. □

Taylor's family praises Virginia ban on no-knock warrants

By **DENISE LAVOIE**

AP Legal Affairs Writer

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) —

Two of Breonna Taylor's aunts watched Monday as Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam ceremoniously

signed a statewide ban against the use of no-knock search warrants, a law named after Taylor, a Kentucky woman who was fatally shot when Louisville police broke down her

door in the middle of the night.

"Breonna's Law" is the first such law enacted by a state since Taylor was killed in March, Northam said. Two other states — Oregon and Florida — already had similar bans, while several municipalities, including Louisville, have banned the practice since Taylor was killed.

Taylor's death, along with the killing of George Floyd while in police custody in Minneapolis and the killings of other Black people sparked massive protests around the country against police brutality and systemic racism. During a special legislative session, Virginia lawmakers passed a host of police and crimi-

nal justice reforms, including a ban on the use of chokeholds, a requirement that officers intervene to stop the use of excessive force by another officer, and changes that make it easier to decertify officers who commit misconduct. "We're here today because when the country saw what happened in March, people said that's wrong, you need to do something," Gov. Northam said of Taylor's killing.

The Taylor family's attorney, Ben Crump, thanked Northam and the lead sponsors of the legislation — Sen. Mamie Locke and Del. Lashrecse Aird for "helping to make a more just society, a more just America, one where Bre-

onna Taylor gets to sleep in peace without the police busting in her door."

Taylor's aunt, Bianca Austin, said no-knock warrants are "detrimental and destructive to Black lives."

"Thank you for listening to our voices," Austin said.

"We hope this encourages other states to get on board" in banning no-knock warrants, she said.

The law, which goes into effect in March, prohibits police from going into a home without first announcing themselves. It also requires that search warrants be served only during daylight hours unless police can show a magistrate or a judge good cause as to why the warrant needs to be served at night. □



Tamika Palmer, Breonna Taylor's mother, in white beside Attorney Ben Crump, left, speak in Louisville, Ky., after settlement was announced.

Associated Press

U.K. readies for 'V-Day,' its 1st shots in war on coronavirus

LONDON (AP) — It's been dubbed "V-Day" in Britain -- recalling the D-Day landings in France that marked the start of the final push in World War II to defeat Nazi Germany.

A week after the U.K. became the first Western country to authorize widespread use of a vaccine against COVID-19, it is preparing to administer its first shots on Tuesday in its war on the virus.

Those 800,000 doses will first go to people over 80 who are either hospitalized or already have outpatient appointments scheduled, along with nursing home workers.

In other words, the National Health Service is saying to the waiting public, in effect: Don't call us, we'll call you. Only those who have been contacted by the NHS to arrange an appointment will be getting the jab.

Most people will have to wait until next year before there is enough vaccine on hand to expand the program.

"I don't think people should expect anything over the next few days because the reality is ... that for the vast, vast, vast majority of people this will be done in January, February, March," said Chris Hopson, chief executive of NHS Providers. "And the one thing that



Nurses at the Royal Free Hospital, London, simulate the administration of the Pfizer vaccine to support staff training ahead of the rollout, in London, Friday Dec. 4, 2020.

Associated Press

we don't want people to get anxious about or concerned about is 'Where's my letter?' in December." Public health officials around the globe are watching Britain's rollout as they prepare for the unprecedented task of rapidly vaccinating billions of people to end the pandemic that has killed more than 1.5 million worldwide. While the U.K. has a well-developed infrastructure for delivering vaccines, it is geared to vaccinating groups such as school chil-

dren or pregnant women, not the entire population. The U.K. is getting a head start on the project after British regulators on Dec. 2 gave emergency authorization to the vaccine produced by U.S. drugmaker Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech. U.S. and European Union authorities are also reviewing the vaccine, alongside rival products developed by U.S. biotechnology company Moderna, and a collaboration between Oxford University and drugmaker AstraZen-

eca. On Saturday, Russia began vaccinating thousands of doctors, teachers and others at dozens of centers in Moscow with its Sputnik V vaccine. That program is being viewed differently because Russia authorized use of Sputnik V last summer after it was tested in only a few dozen people. But the vaccine can't arrive soon enough for the U.K., which has more than 61,000 COVID-19 related deaths — more than any other country has report-

ed in Europe. The U.K. has more than 1.7 million cases. The first shipments of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine were delivered to a selected group of U.K. hospitals on Sunday.

The 800,000 doses are only a fraction of what is needed. The government is targeting more than 25 million people, or about 40% of the population, in the first phase of its vaccination program, which gives first priority to those who are at the highest risk from the disease.

After those over 80 and nursing home workers, the program will be expanded as the supply increases, with the vaccine offered roughly on the basis of age groups, starting with the oldest people.

Buckingham Palace refused to comment on reports that Queen Elizabeth II, 94, and her 99-year-old husband, Prince Philip, would be vaccinated and the action publicized in an effort to show that there was nothing to fear from the jab.

"Our goal is totally to protect every member of the population, Her Majesty, of course, as well," Dr. June Raine, chief executive of Britain's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, told the BBC on Sunday. □

Trudeau: Canada to get Pfizer vaccine by end of this year

By **ROB GILLIES**

Associated Press



A sign regarding mask use to help curb the spread of COVID-19 hangs outside a business in Vancouver, British Columbia, Sunday, Dec. 6, 2020.

Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Monday Canada will get up to 249,000 doses of the vaccine developed by American drugmaker Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech before the end of December.

The vaccine is expected to be approved by Health Canada as soon as Thursday.

Trudeau had come under criticism from opposition parties for saying Canadians won't be among the first to get a vaccine against COVID-19 because the first doses will likely go to citizens of the countries they are made

in. Canada doesn't have mass vaccine-production facilities.

Trudeau said Canada recently amended the contract with Pfizer so that it would deliver up to 249,000 doses this month. That will mean about 124,500 of the highest risk Canadians will get vaccinated at first as two doses are required per person a few weeks apart.

"We are now contracted to receive up to 249,000 of our initial doses of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine in the month of December," Trudeau said. "Pending Health Canada approval, the first shipment of doses is tracking for de-

livery next week."

Canada has contracts with six other vaccine makers as well.

Trudeau said 14 distribution centers will be located in large Canadian cities initially. There will be one in each province and two each in Canada's four largest provinces.

He said millions of more doses will be on the way.

"It has been a difficult year, and we are not out of this crisis yet," Trudeau said. "But now, vaccines are coming."

Seniors and workers in long-term care homes are among those expected to get the vaccine first. □



In this file photo dated Sunday, June 2, 2019, Spain's former King Juan Carlos waves at the bullring in Aranjuez, Spain.

Associated Press

Spain: Ex-King Juan Carlos I won't get special treatment

MADRID (AP) — A Spanish government official said Monday that Juan Carlos I deserves no special treatment by the legal system, amid reports the former monarch is preparing to admit alleged undeclared income. National newspapers El País and El Mundo cited unidentified sources in their reports that the former king, who in August went to live abroad amid a financial scandal, wants to confess to non-payment of taxes. El País said the undeclared income amounts to more than 500,000 euros

(\$605,000). Under Spanish law, confessing to undeclared income and paying the outstanding taxes allows offenders to avoid being charged with a crime. The former monarch's legal team didn't immediately reply to requests for comment. After he left Spain, Juan Carlos went to stay in the United Arab Emirates, but it is not clear whether he is still there. Transport Minister José Luis Ábalos said in an interview Monday with public broadcaster RTVE that "everybody is equal before the law, for better or for worse."

Hundreds ill, 1 dead due to unidentified illness in India

NEW DELHI (AP) — At least one person has died and 200 others have been hospitalized due to an unidentified illness in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, reports said Monday. The illness was detected Saturday evening in Eluru, an ancient city famous for its hand-woven products. Since then, patients have experienced symptoms ranging from nausea and anxiety to loss of consciousness, doctors said. A 45-year-old man who was hospitalized with symptoms similar to epilepsy and

nausea died Sunday evening, the Press Trust of India news agency reported. Officials are trying to determine the cause of the illness. So far, water samples from impacted areas haven't shown any signs of contamination, and the chief minister's office said people not linked to the municipal water supply have also fallen ill. The patients are of different ages and have tested negative for COVID-19 and other viral diseases such as dengue, chikungunya or herpes. □



In this Sunday, Dec. 6, 2020 file photo, Romanian Prime Minister Ludovic Orban and head of the ruling National Liberal party adjusts his mask after exit polls in the country's parliamentary elections were announced, in Bucharest, Romania.

Associated Press

Romania's center-right prime minister resigns after election

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Romania's center-right prime minister resigned Monday after a general election in which voters delivered nominal victory to the left-leaning, populist opposition party. With 95% of votes counted in Sunday's election, Ludovic Orban's National Liberals have been defeated by the populist Social Democrat Party. However the Social Democrats appear unlikely to emerge on top in what promises to be prolonged post-election wrangling to form a new coalition government. With most ballots counted, the populist, corruption-prone and fiscally reckless Social Democrat Party (PSD) had around 30% of the vote, with Orban's reformist center-right National Liberal Party trailing them by about 5%. The progressive USR-Plus alliance, which has pledged not to be part of any Social Democrat-led government, won about 15% of the vote. Only two other parties crossed the 5% threshold to enter Parliament: the far-right AUR alliance, whose vocal opposition to coronavirus restrictions resonated with close to 9% percent of voters, and the UDMR party that represents the country's Hungarian minor-

ity, which won around 6%. Earlier Monday, Orban said that coalition talks with the Social Democrats were out of the question but did not provide a clear explanation for how his party hoped to reach a new governing majority in the 465-seat bicameral parliament. "I want to be very clear, we will never negotiate with the PSD, we will not let the PSD harm Romania," Orban said. The AUR alliance was established just a year ago under the leadership that militates against same-sex marriages and was supportive of Orthodox Church clerics who defied pandemic restrictions in Romania to hold religious ceremonies. But it did surprisingly well among Romania's expats, having taken the lead in Italy and coming in second in Spain and France. Some 4 million Romanians who live abroad, mostly in Western Europe, have traditionally voted for reform-oriented parties that seek to ally the county with the European Union mainstream, but the pandemic has apparently upended traditional allegiances. The National Liberals have controlled Romania's minority government since October 2019 when the So-

cial Democrats lost a confidence vote in the parliament after a chaotic tenure that had seen it run through three prime ministers and dozens of ministers in the space of just three years. The Social Democratic-led government had drawn heavy criticism from the EU for its interference with the judiciary and a cascade of corruption scandals involving prominent members. But it defied pre-election polls to become the nominal winner of Sunday's vote with unfeasible promises to preserve Romania's welfare state model and after the minority National Liberals government faced strong criticism for its handling of the pandemic. Romania was plagued by widespread poverty even before the pandemic, with over 25% of the population of 19 million living on less than \$5.50 a day. The pandemic has exacerbated structural problems, including the near-collapse of the public health care system. Only 33% of potential Romanian voters went to the polls Sunday, compared with nearly 39.5 percent in 2016. Observers blamed the historically low turnout on voters' fears of infection, but also on general disillusionment with Romania's political class. □

Yemen 'on edge of precipice' as UNICEF launches aid appeal

By JOSEF FEDERMAN

JERUSALEM (AP) — Yemen is "on the edge of a precipice" after years of civil war, a senior U.N. official has warned on Monday, with millions of children suffering from malnutrition and facing the risk of famine.

Ted Chaiban sounded the alarm about the worsening humanitarian situation as the United Nations Children's Fund launched an appeal for a record \$2.5 billion in emergency funds from global donors.

As UNICEF's director for the Middle East and North Africa, Chaiban oversees an effort to assist children and families in a region hit hard by conflict, natural disaster and the coronavirus crisis. With some 39 million children in need of assistance, the Middle East alone accounts for 40% of the agency's \$6 billion global appeal.

"The largest humanitarian emergencies in the world are in this region," Chaiban said in an interview with The Associated Press. He spoke from Amman, Jordan.

The region includes some of the world's most pressing humanitarian disasters — from Yemen, where years of conflict have left it on the brink of famine, to Sudan, which is coping with floods and an influx of refugees from Ethiopia as it emerges from years of civil strife.

Lebanon, meanwhile, is dealing with political paralysis, an unprecedented economic crisis and a large population of Palestinian and Syrian refugees as it tries to recover from a massive blast in its capital of Beirut in August. Syria continues to struggle with a civil war, now in its tenth year, which has displaced millions of people internally and scattered millions more as refugees.

Yemen, which plunged into chaos and civil war after Iranian-backed Houthi



In this Nov. 23, 2019 file photo, a malnourished newborn baby lies in an incubator at Al-Sabeen hospital in Sanaa, Yemen.

rebels captured the capital in 2014, may be the most challenging area for UNICEF. The agency estimates that virtually all of Yemen's 12 million children require some sort of assistance. This can include food aid, health services, clean water, schooling and cash grants to help the poorest families scrape by.

"We are raising the alarm because we are on the edge of a precipice in Yemen," Chaiban said, with some 2 million children "acutely malnourished" and 5 million people on the brink of famine.

He said efforts by the U.N. and non-governmental organizations are keeping the country afloat.

"If that falls apart, then it all falls apart," he warned. "There's a train coming down the track. You know what the consequences of not acting is."

Education is the biggest component of the appeal, at \$874 million, or more than a third of all spending. Chaiban said the already challenging task of educating children in war

and disaster zones has become even more difficult due to the coronavirus. He estimated that 40% of the students UNICEF serves do not have sufficient access to internet or computers to allow remote learning.

UNICEF has been working with governments and telecom companies and other partners to find "blended" solutions that include some in-person learning, putting content online and giving children increased access to technology.

Adding to the challenges is the coronavirus pandemic, which has stretched overwhelmed national health care systems and strained education systems.

Roughly \$500 million, or one-fifth of the total appeal, is aimed at helping the region's countries cope with COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus. Much of that money will be spent to ensure that children can continue to study. Supporting health and clean-water programs are also critical. Chaiban said UNICEF is working closely with Covax, an ambitious global project to procure and safely deliver vaccines to the world's poorest people. The agency is promoting educational campaigns so people understand the vaccination process for themselves

and their children.

He said that one of the region's few bright spots is Sudan, which is emerging from years of internal conflict and is attempting to transition to democracy. The country still faces great challenges, from floods to the arrival of over 40,000

Ethiopian refugees to lingering hostilities.

But Chaiban described Sudan as a "place of hope" and said the world should invest in its health and education systems and promote reconciliation there.

"We really have an opportunity to move beyond what has been the traditional narrative in Sudan," he said. "These kinds of opportunities in the Middle East and North Africa ... do not happen very often."

Last year, UNICEF appealed for some \$2 billion in emergency assistance for the Mideast but only was able to raise about half of that. It runs operations in other troubled places such as Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Jordan and the Palestinian territories.

With the global economy in recession and governments scrambling to take care of their own populations, the agency faces an even more daunting challenge this year. But Chaiban said the cost of inaction will be even higher.

"If we are able to continue with the response. We can avoid the worst," he said. □

Associated Press

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LOCAL



Restaurant Las Ramblas at La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino: Small details, big impact: dining in elegance on Eagle Beach boardwalk

EAGLE BEACH — How about dining under the stars, on a terrace right across from the boardwalk of one of the best beaches in the world, indulging in food from an all-praised chef while live guitar music completes for a stunningly romantic night? "Here you have the once-of-a-lifetime experience of a multi-color sunset right in front of you." Food and Beverage director Pierre Kock invites you to Las Ramblas restaurant at Eagle Beach for a meal to remember. Only on Aruba.

Walking along Eagle Beach looking out to the amazing Caribbean Sea, there is a moment that makes your head turn. That moment happens when you hear the guitar strumming of Ernesto Ferro. As you get closer, the smell of rosemary and thyme on the grill hits you. A higher terrace with a stylish staircase strikes your fancy. You wonder... And then, you're tempted to discover more.

Two mosaic columns with fire bowls decorate the entrance staircase and guests sitting in comfortable chairs enjoy the culinary delights of chef Sonny Partodikromo. "Las Ramblas is part of La Cabana, the resort is well-known for its trained staff, the strong connection with guests and the support to our community," states Kock. Without wanting to sound blasé, we may say that La Cabana is the epitome of the 'One Happy Island' concept for years already, to locals and visitors.

Your private venue for Christmas

Restaurant Las Ramblas is an excellent venue for your private event, reception, Christmas dinner ... you name it. Imagine you invite your employees, your family, your friends to the best terrace in town overlooking the blue and admiring the amazing sunset while indulging in culinary pleasures. Call them to have your private VIP terrace reserved!

The Taste of Spain in the Dutch Caribbean

Las Ramblas' name refers to the famous boulevard in Barcelona, Spain. The menu offers Spanish small dishes called tapas, but they also give you

fresh seafood choices and savory steaks. All prepared on a charcoal grill. This is the best place on the island to taste sangria and try delicious paella!

Chef Sonny makes a perfect partner with Chef Willy Guerrero. Where Chef Sonny is creative and a playful with flavorings, chef Guerrero focuses on the principal of 'make everything from scratch'. "There is this great dynamics between old school and modern cuisine that impresses our guests, together with their three cooks they make magic," says Kock. For the wine-pairing, the restaurant works with wine specialty companies, such as Divino and Arion. "All ingredients for an unforgettable night are present."

The devil is in the details

Las Ramblas understands very well that standing out is important on an island where there are many restaurant offerings. The concept is therefore carried out up to the details surprising you from the moment you walk the stairs until the end of the night under the stars. The music is high-quality as Ferro is not your average guitarist, he

built his name. The seats are very comfortable and the welcome by restaurant manager Lino van der Biezen and his staff is a step further. The illuminated menu is real thoughtful, the table is dressed up with colored, glass candle holders that match the mosaic entrance columns and there are plants that add to the ambiance. It is just down to the last detail.

Close to community

Kock: "We are very close to our community and I have chosen to work with the local hotel and restaurant students to organize their internships here. This is what La Cabana is all about: supporting community and pleasing visitors. It works both ways, we mentor the youth and we pamper the guests."

Las Ramblas is open from Tuesday to Saturday between 5.30pm and 10pm. For reservations please call or WhatsApp: (297) 737-9068 or call (297) 520-1100. Facebook: Las Ramblas Aruba. □



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My Aruba story ... memories of a loyal follower

Aruba Today welcomes readers to participate in our newspaper. Now that we are open to visitors again after the three months of lockdown we are all ears to know about you. How do you feel to be back or maybe this is your first time in Aruba? Let us know! Send us a picture and tell us about your experience because we love to share this with

our readers.

What do you do?

It's easy. Mail us your vacation picture(s) together with your Aruba story (Email: news@arubatoday.com) and we will publish this in our newspaper. This for sure is a great vacation memory to take home with you.



Pic taken before Scott bleached his beard

Scott L. from the US has a thing with Santa Claus and also with helping kids. He is kick starting a campaign with a simple goal: to have a portion of all sales using Santa Claus go towards helping sick kids. Currently, he is riding around this island on a bike dressed like Santa Claus (real beard), and he plans on doing over 1,000 miles. "I do feel my work could benefit the people of Aruba, mostly because this is where I discovered the true meaning of Santa. If the people of Aruba could have this conversation about a better way to use the image of Santa, it might force other countries to do the same." For years he wanted to share his work with people on the island. The first thing he did when Scott got home from Aruba in December 2007 was writing down his Aruba experiences and how that helped changing the way he saw Santa. Stay tuned for some more stories about Santa Scott.

Happy HO HO HOLIDAYS,



Taken before Scott came to Aruba. The couple in the pic just got engaged at the Tree, and wanted a pic with Santa to celebrate the moment.



Article by Etnia Nativa

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Etnia Nativa is close to high rise Hotels



Aruba in December

Episode LXXXII- 82

ORANJESTAD — Every year December dresses Aruba in lights that shine everywhere and best expressed by the well-known Sero Preto or Black Hill, light decorated houses in San Nicolas. However Pasco or Christmas was not always celebrated this way on the island. Long before the introduction of electricity, there were customs and traditions that made the people of Aruba looking forward to "Pasco di Nacimiento".

Weeks before Christmas, Arubans began cleaning and painting their houses. An ancient custom was also to tie three aloe leaves with a bright red ribbon and hang this charm on doors, doorways and windows to welcome the good spirits of peace and harmony into each home. Typical dishes were enjoyed as a family: Christmas ham, ayaca, goat stew, stuffed turkey and oliebolle (a Dutch tradition). They drank chuculati di pinda, which is hot milk sugar and mixed with grinded peanuts. The woman drank cream punch and the men had their rum or a native alcoholic beverage made out of agave called Cucuy. A liquor distilled from the fermented juices of the head, body or leaves of Agave cocui ("green agave"), which used to be artisan and produced locally. Nowadays it is still being produced in the Venezuelan regions of Falcón and Lara. With a taste similar to other agave-based liquors such as tequila and mezcal, it is known as the Tequila of the Caquetios in Venezuela.

Families went to the Aurora Mass to demonstrate their Christian faith. It is called 'Aurora' because it is celebrated at the dawn of the new day. The cradle of Aruba's Christianity is found at the north coast of the island. This little chapel, named Alto Vista, has a lot of history that attracts many tourists year around and for the Aruban population it's a place for veneration where they find peace and tranquility for their



Artwork by Etnia Nativa "Natives approaching at Alto Vista Chapel"

restless spirit. There are many stories related to the small chapel and the great Christian faith of the native Amerindians, such as one from 1760 mentioned in the books of the Alto Vista Chapel referred to Antonio Gregorio, an elderly neighbor of the place, very devout but at that time seriously ill, who before upon dying wanted to receive the holy sacrament given by catholic priest.

Antonio's wish seemed very difficult to

fulfill since at that time there was no priest in Alto Vista. Neighbors, friends and relatives of Antonio gathered to pray in the chapel. Now after eight days of prayer, to everyone's surprise arrived an old Alto Vista neighbor who was returning from the mainland, Venezuela and was coming in the company of a priest, Father Maximiliano, which came to see the sick man and to give him the sacred oils on Christmas Eve before the elderly man passed away.

Meanwhile, the Prosecutor's Office raised two flags on the flagstone on top of the hill to announce to the inhabitants of Alto Vista that something extraordinary was happening and people began to arrive from all sides for the occasion. The priest greeted everyone with great cordiality, speaking of the importance of confession to receive the Holy Eucharist (Communion). At midnight, Father Maximiliano gave his first mass "Misa di Aurora". □



Cas di lus- Sero Preto- San Nicolas

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Survey: Business economists see full recovery by end of 2021

By **STAN CHOE**

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. economy's growth is likely slowing as 2020 comes to a close, but a growing number of economists expect it to claw back to its pre-pandemic strength by the second half of next year as vaccines for the coronavirus become widely distributed.

That's the view from the latest survey of the National Association for Business Economics. It found that 73% of surveyed forecasters say the economy will return to its pre-pandemic level by late 2021. That reflects greater optimism than the forecasters had expressed a couple months ago, when just 38% of them said they thought a full recovery could occur before 2022.

Economists have been saying for months that only when vaccines are widely available to control or defeat the virus will the economy be able to sustain any meaningful recovery from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Hopes that one or more coronavirus vaccines will roll out soon are helping drive expectations higher, said the survey's chair, Holly Wade.

"NABE panelists have become more optimistic, on balance," Wade said, "with



A man pushes carts as a hiring sign shows at a Jewel Osco grocery store in Deerfield, Ill., Thursday, April 23, 2020.

nearly one-third revising their outlook higher based on recent news of effective vaccines."

Pharmaceutical companies are asking U.S. regulators to allow the use of their vaccine candidates after reporting encouraging data from clinical trials. The hope is that a wide rollout would mean fewer restrictions on businesses next year and more confidence among shoppers and companies to spend more.

In the meantime, the economy is struggling to gain traction. Measures of con-

sumer confidence, which is critical to spending and growth, remain well below their pre-pandemic levels.

On Friday, the government reported that employers sharply scaled back their hiring in November, adding 245,000 jobs — the fewest since April and the fifth straight monthly slowdown. The report provided the latest evidence that the job market and economy are faltering in the face of a virus that has been shattering daily records for confirmed infections.

In the near term, economic

activity is likely to slow further, with health officials warning against all but essential travel and states and cities limiting gatherings, restricting restaurant dining and reducing the hours and capacity of bars, stores and other businesses. But if the NABE's forecasts are right, a full recovery could be reached by late next year. If so, it would mark a remarkably quick rebound for the economy after its breathtaking plummet during the spring. When the coronavirus was first spreading and gover-

nors around the country ordered businesses to shut down, the U.S. economy shrank by a punishing annualized rate of 31.4% from April through June.

During the summer, as stay-at-home orders were relaxed, the economy exploded higher off that very weak base and grew at an annualized rate of 33.1%. Now that the easiest gains have been made, the economists surveyed by NABE say the economy likely has been growing at an annualized rate of 4.1% during the last three months of 2020. They expect growth to further slow to an annualized rate of 2.9% during the first three months of 2021.

The main concern going forward, of course, remains the pandemic. Even if a vaccine is approved quickly, it would be scarce at first, and most people wouldn't be able to get one for a while. In the meantime, soaring COVID-19 numbers are forcing governments around the world to reimpose varying degrees of restrictions on businesses.

Slightly more than a quarter of forecasters surveyed by NABE, 27%, said the biggest risk facing the economy is inaction by Washington to offer more financial aid. The only risk cited more often was the pandemic itself, at 57%. □

Associated Press

Mastercard, Visa investigate Pornhub business relationship

The Associated Press

Credit card giants Visa and Mastercard said Sunday that they are investigating their business relationship with Pornhub after a prominent newspaper columnist alleged that the pornographic website shows videos of rape and underage sex.

Nicholas Kristof, opinion columnist at The New York Times, wrote Friday that Pornhub carries rape scenes, revenge pornography and other examples of explicit video taken without consent of the participants. In a statement to The Associated Press on Sunday, Pornhub said it is "irrespon-

sible and flagrantly untrue" to suggest that it allows images of the sexual abuse of children on its site. Pornhub added that it employs moderators to screen every upload and that it removes illegal material.

The online payment service PayPal last year stopped processing payments to Pornhub, which is owned by the pornography conglomerate MindGeek. The columnist called out other card issuers for working with the site. In response to Kristof's story, Visa and Mastercard said they're investigating the matter.

"We are aware of the allegations, and we are ac-

tively engaging with the relevant financial institutions to investigate, in addition to engaging directly with the site's parent company, MindGeek," Visa said Sunday.

Visa added that if Pornhub is violating the law or bank policies, then the website will be prohibited from accepting Visa payments. Meanwhile, Mastercard promised "immediate action" if the allegations are substantiated.

"We are investigating the allegations raised in the New York Times and are working with MindGeek's bank to understand this situation," Mastercard said in



This Aug. 11, 2019 file photo shows Visa credit cards in New Orleans.

Associated Press

a statement. American Express said company policy prohibits

the Amex card from being used on "digital adult content websites." □

Why are some scientists turning away from brain scans?

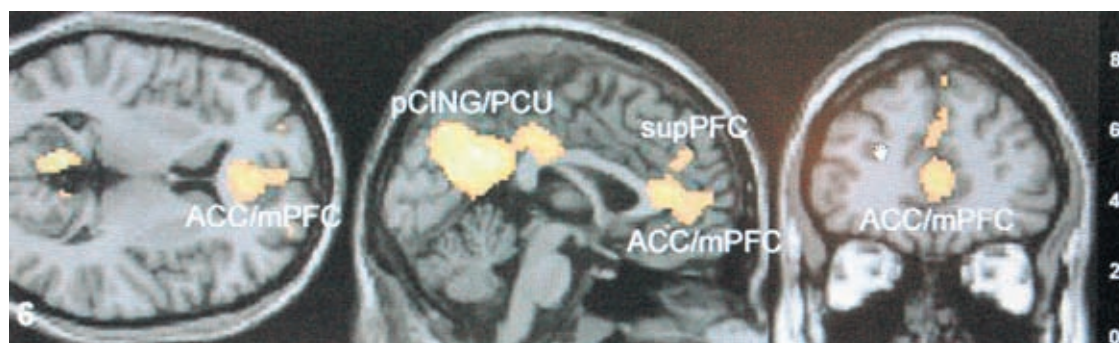
NEW YORK (AP) — Brain scans offer a tantalizing glimpse into the mind's mysteries, promising an almost X-ray-like vision into how we feel pain, interpret faces and wiggle fingers.

Studies of brain images have suggested that Republicans and Democrats have visibly different thinking, that overweight adults have stronger responses to pictures of food and that it's possible to predict a sober person's likelihood of relapse.

But such buzzy findings are coming under growing scrutiny as scientists grapple with the fact that some brain scan research doesn't seem to hold up.

Such studies have been criticized for relying on too few subjects and for incorrectly analyzing or interpreting data. Researchers have also realized a person's brain scan results can differ from day to day — even under identical conditions — casting a doubt on how to document consistent patterns.

With so many questions being raised, some researchers are acknowledging the scans' limitations and working to overcome them or simply turning to other tests. Earlier this year, Duke University researcher Annchen Knodt's lab published the latest paper challenging the reliability of common



This Jan. 30, 2006 file photo shows a functional magnetic resonance imaging scan on a computer screen at an Emory University lab in Atlanta.

Associated Press

brain scan projects, based on about 60 studies of the past decade including her own.

"We found this poor result across the board," Knodt said. "We're basically discrediting much of the work we've done."

WATCHING BRAINS 'LIGHT UP'

The research being re-examined relies on a technique called functional magnetic resonance imaging, or fMRI.

Using large magnets, the scans detect where oxygenated blood rushes to when someone does an activity — such as memorizing a list of words or touching fingertips together — allowing scientists to indirectly measure brain activity.

When the technology debuted in the early 1990s, it opened a seemingly revolutionary window into the human brain.

Other previous imaging techniques tracked brain

activity through electrodes placed on the skull or radioactive tracers injected into the bloodstream. In comparison, fMRI seemed like a fast, high-resolution and non-invasive alternative.

A flurry of papers and press coverage followed the technique's invention, pointing to parts of the brain that "light up" when we fall in love, feel pain, gamble or make difficult decisions. But as years passed, troubling evidence began to surface that challenged some of those findings.

"It's a very powerful thing to show a picture of the brain. It lends itself to abuse, in some ways," said Damian Stanley, a brain scientist at Adelphi University. "People eat them up, things get overblown. Somewhere in there, we lost the nuance."

QUESTIONS EMERGE

In 2009, a group of scientists investigated papers that had linked individual

differences in brain activity to various personality types. They found many used a type of analysis that reported only the strongest correlations, leading to potentially coincidental conclusions. A "disturbingly large" amount of fMRI research on emotion and personality relied on these "seriously defective research methods," the group wrote.

Later that year, another pair of researchers demonstrated that the raw results of imaging scans — without the proper statistical corrections — could detect brain activity in a dead Atlantic salmon. Four years ago, another group of scientists claimed a different common statistical error had led thousands of fMRI projects astray. This year, Stanford University researchers described what happened when they gave the same fMRI data to 70 groups of independent neuroscientists. No two

teams used the same analysis methods and, overall, the researchers did not always come to the same conclusions about what the data demonstrated about brain activity. "In the end, we probably jumped on the fMRI bandwagon a little too fast. It's reached the threshold of concern for a lot of us," said Duke neuroscientist Anita Disney.

THE NEXT BIG THING

With doubts growing, many labs have become more cautious about what imaging techniques to use in efforts to unravel the average brain's 110,000 miles (177,000 kilometers) of nerve fibers. Yale University researcher Joy Hirsch, for example, wants to understand "the social brain" — what happens when people talk, touch or make eye contact. She's opted out of fMRI, since it can only be used on a single person who must remain perfectly still for imagining inside a large scanner.

Instead, Hirsch uses an alternative technology that bounces laser lights off of a fiber optic cable-laced skullcap into the brain to detect blood flow. The technique, functional near infrared spectroscopy, allows her subjects to move freely during scanning and permits her to study live social interactions between several people. □

SpaceX capsules parked side-by-side at station for 1st time



In this image taken from NASA TV the Dragon cargo capsule docks at the International Space Station, Monday, Dec. 7, 2020, alongside a Dragon crew capsule that carried up astronauts three weeks ago.

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A SpaceX supply ship bearing Christmas

goodies arrived at the International Space Station on Monday, parking

alongside another Dragon capsule that carried up astronauts three weeks ago. It's the first time Elon Musk's company has two Dragons at the orbiting lab, filling both available slots.

Unlike SpaceX's previous cargo carriers, which had to be plucked from orbit by the space station's robot arm, this larger and updated model docked all by itself a day after rocketing into orbit from NASA's Kennedy Space Center. This unusually large shipment — exceeding 6,400 pounds (2,900 kilograms) — includes experiments, equipment, Christmas

presents and the makings for a holiday feast for the seven station astronauts.

The crew monitored all the action as the capsule pulled up and docked at the station more than 260 miles (420 kilometers) above the Indian Ocean. The two Dragon parking spots are just 15 feet (4.5 meters) or so apart.

NASA astronaut Kate Rubins offered "a huge congratulations" to SpaceX and everyone else involved.

"It's pretty amazing to think that less than a month ago you docked four crew members," radioed Ru-

bins, a microbiologist and one of four Americans on board. "And now you're bringing a vehicle full of world class science for us to execute."

The crew also includes two Russians and one Japanese.

SpaceX redesigned its cargo ships to be as big as its spacious crew capsules in order to pack more in.

The cargo Dragon will remain at the space station for a month, before parachuting into the Atlantic with science samples and discarded gear. The crew Dragon will stay up until spring. □

Fauci's plea 'Wear a mask' tops list of 2020 notable quotes

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP) — A plea from Dr. Anthony Fauci for people to "wear a mask" to slow the spread of the coronavirus tops a Yale Law School librarian's list of the most notable quotes of 2020.

The list assembled by Fred Shapiro, an associate director at the library, is an annual update to "The Yale Book of Quotations," which was first published in 2006. Also on the list is "I can't

breathe," the plea George Floyd made repeatedly to police officers holding him down on a Minneapolis street corner.

Several quotes from the presidential campaign appear including Joe Biden telling a student: "You're a lying dog-faced pony sol-

dier."

Shapiro said he picks quotes that are not necessarily admirable or eloquent, but rather because they are famous or particularly revealing of the spirit of the times. □



In this June 23, 2020 file photo, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr. Anthony Fauci wears a face mask as he waits to testify before a House Committee on Energy and Commerce on the Trump administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

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Solution on Page 14

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The Dylan catalog, a 60-year rock 'n' roll odyssey, is sold

By DAVID BAUDER
Associated Press Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Bob Dylan has sold publishing rights to his catalog of more than 600 songs, one of the greatest treasures in popular music, to the Universal Music Publishing Group for an undisclosed sum. The catalog includes such modern standards as "Blowin' In The Wind," "Tangled Up in Blue," "Knockin' On Heaven's Door," and "Like a Rolling Stone," a body of work that may only be matched for its breadth and influence by the Beatles, whose songs were re-acquired by Paul McCartney in 2017. The songwriting legend earned an estimated \$300 million from the sale, according to The New York Times, which first reported it.



In this Jan. 12, 2012, file photo, Bob Dylan performs in Los Angeles. Universal Music Publishing Group is buying legendary singer Bob Dylan's entire catalog of songs.

Associated Press

Dylan, 79, topped the Rolling Stone list of the 100 Greatest Songwriters of All Time in 2015 and the song "Like A Rolling Stone" was named by the magazine as the best ever written. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016, the only songwriter to receive the award. "Brilliant and moving, inspiring and beautiful, insightful and provocative, his songs are timeless — whether

they were written more than half a century ago or yesterday," said Sir Lucian Grainge, CEO of Universal Music Group, in a prepared statement Monday. To give some indication of its value, Stevie Nicks recently sold an 80% stake in her music to the publisher and talent management company Primary Wave for a reported \$100 million. In cultural terms, Dylan's

catalog is "quite literally priceless," said Anthony DeCurtis, a veteran music writer and contributing editor at Rolling Stone. "It has been 60 years and it's still going strong," DeCurtis said. "There's no reason to believe there's going to be any diminishment in its significance." Song publishing has become an even more valuable asset in recent months,

seen as a reliable long-term source of income in an industry where streaming has taken control and the live concert business has at least temporarily collapsed due to the coronavirus pandemic, said Alan Light, a veteran music writer who hosts his own SiriusXM show. Companies like Universal compete with newer outfits like Primary Wave and Merck Mercuriadis' Hipgno-

sis Song Fund to control the use of songs for advertising and placement in movies, television shows or video games. While songwriters like Paul Simon, Joni Mitchell and Neil Young all have valuable catalogs, their work can't match Dylan for its volume and significance, Light said. Dylan's songs have been recorded more than 6,000 times, by various artists from dozens of countries, cultures and music genres. Notable releases include the Byrds' chart-topping version of "Mr. Tambourine Man," Jimi Hendrix's reworking of "All Along the Watchtower" and Adele's cover of "Make You Feel My Love." The deal does not include rights to Dylan's own recordings of his material. So, if Universal is approached to use Dylan's recording of "Lay Lady Lay," for example, it would have to be cleared by the artist. Dylan first entered the public consciousness as part of New York City's Greenwich Village folk scene during the early 1960s. Influenced by the bluesman Robert Johnson and folk singer, songwriter Woody Guthrie, he added a lyrical depth to his music. □

Audible enlists Waithe, Gladwell to help find new talent



This combination photo shows Lena Waithe, left, and Malcolm Gladwell, who will join several influencers on an advisory board for Audible to help discover new talent.

Associated Press

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr.
AP Entertainment Writer
LOS ANGELES (AP) — Lena Waithe and Malcolm Gladwell will join several

influencers on an advisory board for Audible to help discover new talent. The online audiobook and podcast platform an-

nounced Monday the formation of the Emerging Voices Advisory Board. The diverse board of esteemed artists, podcasters, producers and writers was created to help Audible experts define and "further the creative vision" of storytellers. The board will also help attract and develop projects from the "best emerging and established voice across the globe." Waithe is the creator of Showtime's "The Chi" and wrote the film "Queen & Slim" and has appeared in "Master of None," "Ready Player One" and "Westworld." Gladwell is the best-selling author of "The Tipping Point" and "Outliers." "There's nothing I love more than amplifying new and exciting voices," Waithe

said in a statement. "I'm so grateful to Audible for giving us the space to do that." Other board members will include former New York Magazine editor-in-chief Adam Moss, Grammy-winning songwriter-producer T Bone Burnett and Marshall Lewy, the chief content officer at Wondery. On Monday, Audible also announced the launch of the Audible Podcast Development Program. The program will identify, develop and create opportunities for the next generation of audio-driven storytellers. Selected participants will have the opportunity to work alongside Audible experts to receive editorial, production and financial support. Original podcasts

for Audible listeners are expected to begin releasing in summer 2021. Rachel Ghiazza, the EVP and Head of U.S. Content at Audible, said the company will offer its own resources through the program to "voices that need to be heard and to podcasters aspiring to make cultural and artistic impact." □

SOLUTION SUDOKU

Difficulty Level: ★★

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Puzzle on Page 13

AP source: Jets fire Gregg Williams after call costs 1st win

NEW YORK (AP) — Gregg Williams' curious call cost the New York Jets their first win -- and the defensive coordinator his job.

A person with direct knowledge of the decision told The Associated Press on Monday that the Jets fired Williams, whose stunning play call Sunday against the Las Vegas Raiders was highly criticized by fans, media and even his own players.

The still-winless Jets were seconds away from their first victory until Williams inexplicably called for an all-out blitz against Las Vegas. Derek Carr heaved a perfectly placed 46-yard touchdown pass to Henry Ruggs III — who was in man-to-man, or Cover Zero, coverage with rookie cornerback Lamar Jackson — with 5 seconds left to lift the Raiders to a 31-28 victory.

It left the Jets players, who only moments earlier were celebrating what appeared to be a win, in shock on the sideline. Team captain Marcus Maye took an uncharacteristic swipe at Williams after the game, saying that the defense should have been in a better call in that situation.



In this June 4, 2019, file photo, New York Jets defensive coordinator Gregg Williams looks on as his players run drills at the team's NFL football training facility in Florham Park, N.J.

Associated Press

It all ended up costing Williams his job.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity Monday because the team hadn't announced the move.

The 62-year-old Williams had been the Jets' defensive coordinator the past two seasons under Adam Gase. He has had several stops through the NFL during a 30-year career, including with New Orleans, where he was suspended

a year by the league for his role in the Saints' bounty scandal.

It wasn't immediately clear who would take over calling the defense for the Jets, who are 0-12 and are four losses from joining the 2008 Detroit Lions and 2017 Cleveland Browns — where Williams was the defensive coordinator — as the NFL's only 0-16 teams. The no-nonsense Williams has made a career of being an aggressive play caller

on defense, but the Jets have struggled this year while ranking 29th in total defense and 30th in scoring defense. Williams had to deal with star safety Jamal Adams being traded to Seattle during the summer, linebacker C.J. Mosley opting out because of COVID-19 concerns, and linebacker Avery Williamson dealt to Pittsburgh in the middle of the season.

There were several injuries to contend with, and other

veterans such as cornerback Pierre Desir and Quincy Wilson not playing well. But the Jets' defense had mostly done its job Sunday, including a fourth-down stop with 1:37 left. But after the offense went three-and-out with a chance to seal it, the defense took the field again — and Williams' call cost New York.

While it was a suspect decision by Williams, it wasn't totally out of character. He has been known for taking risks on defense, daring offenses to beat his blitzes in key moments. This time, though, it had dire consequences for a team that was so close to finally getting a victory.

"We just played the call that the coaches called," Maye said after the game. "We've got to execute, but you've got to help us out at the same time and be in a better call at that spot."

Williams is the first coach on Gase's staff to be fired, but likely won't be the last. The Jets are expected to also fire Gase after this season, setting up what should be a busy offseason that will include a coaching search and likely having the No. 1 overall pick in the NFL draft in April. □

Breakdancing gets Olympic status to debut at Paris in 2024

By **GRAHAM DUNBAR**
AP Sports Writer

GENEVA (AP) — Breakdancing became an official Olympic sport on Monday.

The International Olympic Committee's pursuit of urban events to lure a younger audience saw street dance battles officially added to the medal events program at the 2024 Paris Games.

Also confirmed for Paris by the IOC executive board were skateboarding, sport climbing, and surfing. Those three sports will make their Olympic debuts at the Tokyo Games which were postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic by one year to open on July 23, 2021.

Alongside the additions, the IOC made subtrac-

tions: The slate of 329 medal events in Paris is 10 fewer than in Tokyo, and the athlete quota in 2024 of 10,500 is around 600 less than next year.

Two sports with troubled governing bodies — boxing and weightlifting — saw the biggest cuts to the number of athletes they can have in Paris.

Weightlifting should have 120 athletes in Paris, which is less than half of its total at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

The sport could be dropped entirely due to its historic doping problems and IOC concerns over the pace and depth of reform at the International Weightlifting Federation.

The IOC stressed its future priorities for Paris, and beyond to the 2028 Los Ange-

les Games, by claiming it will hit a long-term target of equal participation by men and women athletes, and more urbanized events.

With Paris organizers needing time to prepare their project, the IOC kept to its pre-pandemic schedule to confirm the 2024 sports lineup this month even before some are tested in Tokyo.

Breakdancing will be called breaking at the Olympics, as it was in the 1970s by hip-hop pioneers in the United States.

It was proposed by Paris organizers almost two years ago after positive trials at the 2018 Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires. Breaking passed further stages of approval in 2019 from separate decisions by the IOC board and full membership.



In this Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2020 file photo, Carlos Cruz, a breakdancer, practices at a kiosk in Alameda park after being closed off to the public for nearly five months due to the new coronavirus pandemic, in Mexico City.

Associated Press

In Paris, breaking has been given a prestige downtown venue, joining sport climbing and 3-on-3 basketball at Place de la Concorde. Surfing will be held more

than 15,000 kilometers (9,000 miles) away in the Pacific Ocean off the beaches of Tahiti, as the IOC already agreed in March. □

On Football: The Bad, The Worse, and the Truly Ugly

By **BARRY WILNER**
AP Pro Football Writer

For those teams pleading "Cut us a break" in this weird and unprecedentedly unpredictable year, that was a fair ask. Until now.

At this point of the NFL season, as we head into the final quarter of the schedule, the mea culpas have run their course. There's simply too much bad, worse and truly ugly football to excuse any longer.

Certainly the winless, hapless and possibly hopeless Jets punctuated that on Sunday with their latest debacle. The Jaguars perhaps made what's left of their believers hold the faith into overtime before folding. The Chargers didn't even get out of the first period in their worst performance since, well, maybe when they called Balboa Stadium home.

Philly has flopped (phlopped?) so badly there are calls for coach Doug Pederson's job; hey, Eagles fans, the guy won the Super Bowl three seasons backs. But yes, that offense is unsightly.

Even some of the mediocrities, and there are many in 2020, can be downright hideous. See Chicago's six-game slide that, by all indications, could reach 10. It's loss Sunday was to the Lions, who spoiled many a



New York Jets' Marcus Maye leaves the field with a towel over his head after an NFL football game against the Las Vegas Raiders, Sunday, Dec. 6, 2020, in East Rutherford, N.J.

Associated Press

Thanksgiving meal in Detroit by their performance on the holiday.

Two more tailenders, Dallas and Washington, still haven't played their Week 13 games. The unattractiveness just might be enhanced by the end of the Cowboys' visit to Baltimore on Tuesday night.

Chargers coach Anthony Lynn summed up the ugliness after a 45-0 no-show against New England.

"That was one of the worst football games I've ever been a part of in my 30 years in the National Foot-

ball League as a player and a coach. That was unacceptable and embarrassing," Lynn said.

Sort of what America has seen from far too many teams, all of which deserved a pass because of the way the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted, well, everything. At this point, 12 games in, however, soccer's process of relegation for the worst offenders — exemplified by action Sunday — seems like a wise approach.

Start with the Jaguars, who deserve credit for extend-

ing to the limit many opponents, all of whom are better than they are. Yet every week — including the overtime defeat at Minnesota in which they blew a lead, made an impressive comeback, then committed the game-losing mistakes in OT — things go wrong. Jacksonville is 1-11, all of the losses coming since an opening victory.

"There's a point where there's no moral victories," veteran linebacker Joe Schobert said. "In football, you either win or you lost. It's not like, 'Oh, we lost by

two. We lost by three.' I think it just speaks to how hard everybody plays on this team and how hard everybody plays for each other, just with all the stuff we've been going through, and getting in these close games. But to be a good football team, you have to win those close games."

Or play close ones at least. The Chargers would seem to have enough talent (Joey Bosa, Keenan Allen, Austin Ekeler when healthy, rookie QB Justin Herbert and quite a few others) not to be 3-9. On Sunday, they made the so-so Patriots look like the prime Tom Brady version in a 45-0 fiasco.

Instead, the Chargers appear to be regressing. Lynn kept repeating "unacceptable." We concur.

Then there is incredible ineptitude, spelled J-E-T-S. On the brink of what pretty much everyone in the Big Apple believed was unreachable — a win — they reached truly ugly instead. Ultimate ugly.

After stopping Las Vegas deep in Jets territory, they needed a first down to end their team-record 11-game slide. Playing not to lose — hey, guys, it almost never works — they got ultra-conservative and had to punt after the Raiders' used their timeouts. □

Trump honors legendary Iowa wrestler Gable at White House



President Donald Trump awards the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor, to Olympic gold medalist and former University of Iowa wrestling coach Dan Gable in the Oval Office of the White House, Monday, Dec. 7, 2020, in Washington.

Associated Press

By **KEVIN FREKING**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump pre-

sented the nation's highest civilian honor to Dan Gable, a renowned wrestler and coach from Iowa who won a gold medal at the 1972 Summer Olympics.

"He's the greatest wrestler, probably ever," Trump said. "He's made our country very proud and he's a true GOAT."

Trump used an October campaign rally to announce the selection of Gable for the Presidential Medal of Freedom, bringing him on stage to the delight of the crowd as he sought to win over Iowa voters. The ceremony on Monday at the White House fulfills that commitment.

Gable is one of several sports figures to be presented the award during Trump's time in office. Gable was a champion wrestler at Iowa State University, compiling a 117-1 record and winning two NCAA titles.

During his six matches at the Munich Olympics, he went unscored upon.

Gable would go on to an incredibly successful coaching career at the University of Iowa, where his teams won 15 NCAA titles.

"No one has done more to promote wrestling in America than Dan Gable," Trump said.

Trump also used the cer-

emony to push his false narrative that he won the election, saying at one point: "I'm 2-0 and that's pretty good, too. But we'll see how that turns out."

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is awarded to people who have made exceptional contributions to the security or national interests of America, to its culture or to other significant endeavors.

Last week, Trump presented the medal to college football Hall of Famer and political ally Lou Holtz, whose 34-year coaching career included the 1988 national title at the University of Notre Dame. □