

SPLICE OF LIFE Grafting tomatoes well worth the effort, gardeners say **A8**



LOOKING AHEAD Pitt takes positives into offseason **B4**

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CORONAVIRUS: POLITICS, SPORTS, EVERYDAY LIFE UPENDED

SPORTS WORLD COMES TO A STANDSTILL

NHL, MLB suspend games as NCAA cancels March Madness

TRIBUNE-REVIEW

At a little after 4 p.m. Thursday, fourth-string catcher Andrew Susac took a called third strike, recording the final out of a 7-5 Pittsburgh Pirates loss to the Toronto Blue Jays in a spring training game in Bradenton, Fla.
That was the end of Pittsburgh sports for the foreseeable future.
Following the lead of the NBA, which

suspended its season Wednesday, teams and leagues nationwide announced Thursday widespread cancellations and postponements because of coronavirus concerns.
Major League Baseball halted spring training and announced the start of its regular season will be delayed at least two weeks. The Pirates' opener was scheduled for March 26 in Tampa, Fla.
The NHL suspended its regular season indefinitely, saying it still intends to award the Stanley Cup and that play will resume "as soon as it is appropriate and prudent."

The Penguins returned home from Columbus, Ohio, where they were scheduled to play in an empty arena Wednesday night.
The NCAA, meanwhile, canceled its men's and women's basketball tournaments.
That ended the season of Robert Morris' men's team, which made the field for the first time in five years by winning its conference tournament Tuesday.
At the high school level, the PIAA postponed its ongoing basketball tournaments and swimming championships for at least two weeks.



Creighton and St. John's play in a nearly empty Madison Square Garden before the game was canceled at half-time.

AP

SPORTS inside

- » The A-K Cager Classic basketball tourney is called off. **B1**
- » March Madness takes on a whole new meaning, says columnist Kevin Gorman. **B1**
- » It's mixed emotions for area swimmers as the PIAA championships are cut short. **B2**
- » The PIAA suspends the basketball tournament and will reassess in two weeks. **B3**

When fear spreads, toilet paper is first to go

'Panic-buying' natural reaction, psychologist says as shelves go bare

BY MEGAN GUZA

As the novel coronavirus shuts down schools, sporting events and concerts, locals were stocking up Thursday on essentials — especially toilet paper.

There were a few stray items in the toilet paper section at the Walmart near Pittsburgh Mills mall, and even those disappeared by late morning. The shelves where disinfectant wipes and cleaning sprays would normally be were similarly bare.

Many shoppers came through the aisles and shook their heads at the empty, overturned Charmin boxes.

Judy Parry of Lower Burrell wasn't buying it, literally or figuratively.

"It's a bunch of crap," she said of the covid-19 panic. "I needed toilet paper, so I'm buying some. I wish people would stop hyping (the virus panic). More people get hit by cars."

Signs hung on the shelf in place of disinfectant wipes: "Due to supply and demand

PANIC · A5



COURTESY OF KEIGHTLEY AMEN

Shelves of cleaning products at Target in Monroeville were picked clean Thursday morning.



LOUIS B. RUEDIGER | TRIBUNE-REVIEW

EVERYONE'S ON BOARD WITH SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

W.L. Roenigk employee Bill Ross sprays a school bus with disinfectant Thursday at the company's Buffalo Township garage after dropping off students for the day. The company said buses and vans are being sprayed on a regular basis, with special attention paid to vehicles that transported anyone with flu-like symptoms or a cough. The company said it has supplied drivers with disinfectant wipes to wipe down commonly touched areas such as handrails and door handles, and drivers are to wash their hands before and after each run.

More coronavirus coverage inside and online at TribLIVE.com

» The Catholic Church suspends the obligation to attend Sunday Mass. **A5**

» Gamblers keep rolling the dice as casinos monitor the situation but operate as usual. **A5**



» Media report facts; we don't over hype the situation, says the Trib's community engagement editor. **A6**

» The stock market has its worst day since the Black Monday crash of 1987. **B6**

Uncertainty grows as nations fight spread

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Sweeping travel bans cascaded around the globe Thursday, walling off countries and even entire continents, keeping people inside their homes and slowing the engines of commerce to stem the coronavirus pandemic. Markets collapsed worldwide with the growing realization that there would be no fast end to the uncertainty.

The escalating crisis sent U.S. stocks to their worst losses since the Black Monday crash of 1987, extending a sell-off

that wiped out most of Wall Street's big run-up since President Trump's inauguration.

After weeks downplaying the virus, Trump's announcement of strict rules barring most Europeans from entry came as a shock across the Atlantic. Within hours, even the European Union's passport-free travel came into question, with guards in places that had been without borders for more than a decade and airports shut down.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson called the pandemic

CORONAVIRUS · A5



AP

Paramedics carry a hazardous medical waste box as patients lie on camping beds in an emergency structure at the Brescia hospital in northern Italy.

Officials discuss testing backlog

For now, Allegheny County residents must go to ER if they suspect covid-19 illness

BY MEGAN GUZA

There is a bottleneck in testing Allegheny County residents for the novel coronavirus because of strict guidelines, Allegheny County health officials said Thursday, at the same time working to quell panic among the public.

There are still no known cases of covid-19 in the county, officials said, noting that because of precautionary requirements, emergency rooms are the only places where testing for the virus can take place.

"We're not at the point now that we're testing anybody with a fever and a cough," said Dr. Kristen Mertz, an epidemiologist with the Allegheny County Health Department. She described the situation as a "slight bottleneck."

"At present, we don't think there is a reason (to test everyone)," she continued. "We don't have a known transmission in the county."

Those taking samples to test for the virus must wear fitted face masks, face shields, gloves and gowns, Mertz said.

Because of the limited number of medical professionals who can

"We're not at the point now that we're testing anybody with a fever and a cough. ... We don't have a known transmission in the county."

DR. KRISTEN MERTZ
EPIDEMIOLOGIST WITH THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

TESTING · A5

INSIDE

THE VALLEY

Plum shooting

» A 24-year-old man was shot Thursday morning as he was leaving the Plum Park Apartments complex, Plum police Chief Larry Conley said. **A3**



HOME & GARDEN

Nectar know-how

» Want to fill your yard with bee-friendly perennials? Columnist Jessica Walliser will point you in the right direction. **A8**



WORLD

Retaliation

» U.S. military leaders launch an airstrike against Iran-backed Shia militia in Iraq they believe were responsible for a rocket attack that killed two Americans. **B7**

NEW OBITUARIES, A4

Constance R. Humphries, 94, Tarentum
Norma J. (Hansen) Pettigrew

LATE DEATH

Yvonne G. Ross, 81, Sarver. Redmond Funeral Home Inc., Freeport. 724-295-4500.

WEATHER 57 · 30

Spotty a.m. showers; clear and colder tonight
Details, **A2**



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