



CORONAVIRUS > EXPANDED COVERAGE IN TODAY'S EDITION | VISIT OUR SITE FOR UPDATES

Stuck at home? How to keep it manageable

Catching up: A look at the week's developments A6 | Financial relief is on the way A8



BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

SUNDAY, April 5, 2020

HeraldCourier.com

148th Year | \$3.00

Southwest Virginia-Northeast Tennessee | The Birthplace of Country Music® | 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service | 2018 Scripps Howard Award for Community Journalism

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

STAYING HOME?

» We want to hear from you. If you are having to stay home due to a closure related to the coronavirus, we want to hear your story. Send us your photos, videos and more about how you are coping in the face of a new reality to citydesk@bristolnews.com.

INSIDE

- » Coronavirus limits bring new religious freedom tension **A3**
- » Competing for supplies **A3**
- » With changes coming so fast, 'it feels like a free fall' **A6**
- » Place of order, comfort and joy: how to manage **A7**
- » Financial relief on the way **A8**
- » Opinion: Social distancing not threat to religious liberty **A10**
- » Pandemic hurting abilities to face natural disasters **A12**
- » Police push stay-at-home orders, not conducting stops **B1**
- » Mental health, substance use care still available **B1**
- » SCSO to help high-risk residents during pandemic **B4**
- » State unemployment systems tested by surge of applicants **B5**
- » Health care jobs in jeopardy **B5**
- » Local papers face crisis **B5**
- » Virtual green flag set to fall at BMS **C1**
- » Appy season in question **C1**
- » Glade Spring designer working on homemade masks **D1**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- » U.S. death toll tops 8,400.
- » 3,656 dead in New York state.
- » Queen to address the UK.
- » ICU patients decrease for first time in Italy, which still has world's highest toll at 15,362.
- » China sending 1,000 ventilators to New York.
- » Funeral homes restricting number of mourners at services.
- » More than 233,000 people have recovered from the virus.

COVID-19

LOCATION	#CASES	#DEATHS
Worldwide	1,100,000+	63,000+
United States	300,000+	8,400+
Virginia	2,407	52
Tennessee	3,321	43

SOURCES: WHO, CDC, Virginia and Tennessee Departments of Health, AP

BOUNTY HUNTERS



Fugitive recovery agents Derek Bishop and Jon Reed escort a captured fugitive after finding him hiding in a closet inside a Kingsport, Tennessee, apartment. Bounty hunters track down and arrest bail jumpers.

'YOU WON'T GET AWAY'

When criminals skip bail, bounty hunters get the call

EDITOR'S NOTE

» This is the first story in a two-part series about bail bonding and bounty hunting. **Coming Monday:** On the job with bounty hunters.

BY SARAH WADE
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

It was just before noon on a gray, sodden Tuesday in March, and the little cul-de-sac in Church Hill would have been quiet if not for one house.

"Open up! Bail bondsmen!" shouted Jon Reed, pounding the front door of a brick-and-wood two-story. From the fenced-in backyard, two fat guard dogs bellowed incessantly at Reed and the three other men positioned around the perimeter.

Reed waited a little before the

See **BOUNTY**, Page A4



Kingsport, Tennessee-based bail bondsman Allyn Hood starts his work day early, working out a list of people who have skipped out on their bail bonds and are wanted.



ONLINE

Listen to our On the Record podcast about bounty hunters at HeraldCourier.com. Also, find a gallery of photos with this story on our website.

Trump: 'There will be a lot of death'

'Toughest' weeks ahead, president warns about virus

BY KEVIN FREKING
and COLLEEN LONG

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump warned Saturday that the country could be headed into its "toughest" weeks yet as the coronavirus death toll mounts, but at the same time he expressed growing impatience with social distancing guidelines and said he's eager to get the country reopened and its stalled economy back on track.

"There will be a lot of death, unfortunately," Trump said in a somber start to his daily briefing on the pandemic. "There will be death."

Joining Trump were Vice President Mike Pence, virus task force coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx, and Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government's foremost infection disease expert. Each stood far apart from one another on the small stage.

Trump added a twist on his familiar push for a drug that hasn't been clearly shown to work to stop the virus — he said he may start taking it as a preventative measure after consulting with his doctor, even though there's no evidence to show it works for that, either.

The president initially had suggested the country could reopen by Easter but pulled back seeing projections of a staggering death toll even if restrictive measures remain in place. But just days after

See **TRUMP**, Page A12

Churches to use new outreach tactics to celebrate Easter

BY TIM HAYES
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

The meaning and significance of Easter hasn't changed for Keith Williams, but how the 45-year-old pastor of CrossPointe Church in Bristol, Tennessee, will spend next weekend's holiday will be much different than in the past.

First, Saturday's Easter Eggstravaganza that his church has organized for more than a dozen years will not be held. The event at Twin City Drive-In usually featured more than 1,500 eggs for kids to hunt, and prizes such as bi-



ONLINE

How will your Easter be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? Take our poll at HeraldCourier.com.

cycles, scooters and fishing poles were given away.

Secondly, Sunday's Easter services were expected to draw such a large crowd that festivities were going to be moved to one of the auditoriums at the Marquee-12 Cinemas for the second

See **EASTER**, Page A11



Cross Pointe Church Pastor Keith Williams preaches to his congregation via online video due to the pandemic.

INSIDE: BUSINESS B5 | CLASSIFIED E1-4 | COMICS INSERT | DEATHS B2-3 | OPINION A10 | TELEVISION B6

We welcome and are scheduling appointments for **Dr. Joshua Busscher, Cornea Specialist** in August 2019

JOHNSON CITY EYE CLINIC

Johnson City • Bristol
423.929.2111
www.johnsoncityeye.com

Bounty

From Page A1

next round of shouting and door-thumping.

“Let’s go, open the door, or we’ll kick it in! Quit being a baby!” he yelled.

“You hit it like a little girl,” said Allyn Hood, Reed’s towering boss, from behind him.

Hood walked to the door and hammered it so hard it shook.

“Last chance,” he hollered.

More waiting. As the dogs continued their baying, Hood unlatched the chain from the storm door, propped it open with a lawn chair and nodded to Reed.

The man nudged the welcome mat aside with his boot. He backed up from the main door and steadied himself like a soccer player taking a penalty kick. Then he charged, striking just below the doorknob with his right foot.

Anyone watching the group might have mistaken them for law enforcement. While Hood and one of the other men, Jeremy Judd, wore plain clothes, Reed and the fourth, Derek Bishop, carried guns in their belts and wore bulletproof vests with “FUGITIVE RECOVERY AGENT” stamped across the back. But “fugitive recovery agent” isn’t a synonym for “police officer” or “sheriff”: It means “bounty hunter.”

Hood is the owner of A-Hood Bonding, a Kingsport-based company that bails more than 2,000 defendants out of the region’s packed jails each year. When those defendants miss their court hearings, which happens frequently, the bail bondsman and his employees — including Reed, Judd and Bishop — hunt them down and turn them in.

Sometimes, Hood said, bounty hunting takes him across the country. But he said it often means simply hopping in his car and cruising some of the poorer neighborhoods in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. That’s where many of his company’s clients live, including the target occupant of the Church Hill house. It’s also where Hood is from: He grew up in the low-income sections of Kingsport and his employees now trawl for bail jumpers, defendants on bail who skip or miss their court hearings.

Knowing those communities well, how their residents live, think and struggle, seems to be at least one of the reasons Hood has forged one of the region’s biggest bonding companies. The sheer abundance of potential clients seems to be another. There’s always a stream of newcomers. But Hood said quite a few of his clients are repeat customers. “The majority of them are the ones [for whom] it’s just a continuous cycle,” Hood said. “In and out of jail is a way of life for them.”

Each time they return, he adds their new charges to their folders, which he takes with him when he’s “out hunting,” as he calls it.

The subject’s file was in the pile on Hood’s dashboard that Tuesday morning; the 60-year-old had a \$750 bond for several driving violations. The men brought him out in handcuffs, protesting that he hadn’t heard them. His door had flown open to Reed’s kick. According to a police officer one of the bondsmen knew, this wasn’t the first time it had been forced open.

Bail bond and bounty hunting 101

Bounty hunting might sound like a throwback from a bygone era, the stuff of vintage Hollywood westerns and crime thrillers. It isn’t. While those who do it today tend to refer to themselves as “bail enforcement agents” or “fugitive recovery agents,” the practice of tracking down and arresting bail jumpers is legal (with varying restrictions) in all but four U.S. states.

Research on the industry is scant, and statistics are practically nonexistent. The commercial bail industry that bounty hunters depend on for work



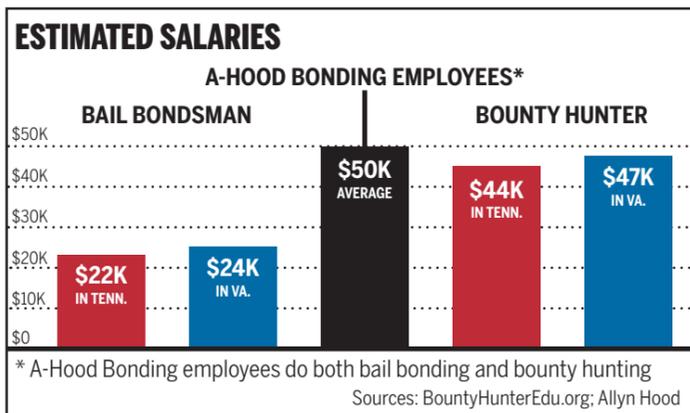
ANDRE TEAGUE/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Bail bondsman Allyn Hood (center), owner of A-Hood Bonding, looks into a garage being used as a domicile as recovery agents Jon Reed (left) and Derek Bishop look on while trying to find a bail skip who had moved from this last known address in Kingsport, Tennessee.



ANDRE TEAGUE/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

A makeshift toilet and cooking pit at a garage without electricity or water being used as a residence in Kingsport where a bail skip was living.



GRAPHIC BY SANDY ROSS/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

FAST FACT
 » Commercial bail bond companies handle the bulk of all cash bail in the U.S. The only other country with such a large commercial bail bond industry is the Philippines. Source: Politifact

“The majority of them are the ones [for whom] it’s just a continuous cycle. In and out of jail is a way of life for them.”

— Allyn Hood, the owner of A-Hood Bonding, talking about his bail bond clients

isn’t much better. In a 2012 report, though, a criminal justice reform group called the Justice Policy Institute estimated that there were roughly 15,000 bail bond agents across the country. The same report estimated that their industry annually netted \$2 billion in profits.

That doesn’t translate to big bucks for the average bail bondsman or bounty hunter. (“Bondsman” is used for both genders. And yes, there are women in the industry. BountyHunterEdu.org, a resource site for the industry, estimates

FAST FACT
 » Bounty hunting is legal in all but four U.S. states (Kentucky, Illinois, Oregon and Wisconsin). Source: BountyHunterEdu.org

the middle, your court will likely set some type of bail for you. (Setting bail for a defendant means temporarily releasing them with some sort of formal assurance that they’ll show up later for their hearing.) Of the several kinds of bail the court can use, the most common is cash: an amount you must pay the court to get out of jail before your hearing. People who can’t pay often wind up turning to the most abundant option in Sullivan County: commercial bail bond companies.

“The [jails] have got the list of all the bondsmen around, and you can call whoever,” Hood said.

In Tennessee, the established fee for bail bond companies is 10 percent of the total. So if your bond for that DUI charge is \$1,500, you’d owe the bonding company \$150, plus a flat \$25 processing fee and a flat \$12 state tax. Your total get-out-of-jail bill would be \$187. Virginia rates are a little more variable: Bail bondsmen must charge between a 10%-15% fee. That would mean somewhere between \$150 to \$225 for your \$1,500 bond, along with any “reasonable” administrative fees your bondsman tacks on.

As long as you show up to court when required, whoever posted your bail bond — whether it was you or a family member or a bail bond company — recovers the full amount from the court. In that case, Hood said, “you usually never hear from your bondsman again.”

Bounty hunters enter the picture when a defendant misses their court date and the bail bond company can’t immediately find them. In Tennessee, bondsmen have at least six months to locate and return bail jumpers to court before they wind up having to pay the full bond amount. Some hire independent bounty hunters to go after their clients. Others, such as Hood, do the hunting themselves. Hood said it’s simply less risky.

“In Tennessee, to be a legal

How Much Do Bail Bond Companies Charge?

For a \$1,500 bond for a DUI charge:

» In Tennessee: 10% of the bond amount + \$25 flat processing fee + \$12 flat tax = \$187

» In Virginia: 10 – 15% of the bond amount + any administrative fees the bondsman decides to add = at least \$150 to \$225, maybe more with administrative fees

Source for TN info: Interview with Allyn Hood and United Bonding Company; Source for VA info: Code of Virginia

bounty hunter, you’ve got to go to an eight-hour class once a year. There’s no test or nothin’,” Hood said. “You just pay your \$225 and sit there for eight hours and get your certificate. So there’s a lot of people that says they’re bounty hunters, they’ve got that piece of paper, but it takes a lot more than that. You’ve gotta have good people skills.”

The bar isn’t much higher for bail bondsmen in Tennessee. Anyone who wants to become one simply has to apply for a license through the Department of Commerce and Insurance, pass a criminal background check (no convicted felons allowed) and file a petition with the local court.

The only other requirement is eight hours of training each year from the Tennessee Association of Professional Bail Agents. That, and having an insurance company’s support or your own property — either cash or real estate — to back the bonds. Hood said he prefers the latter. By using his own real estate as collateral, he doesn’t have to give a portion of his profits to the insurance companies many other bondsmen use.

“You’ve got more liability,” he said of his method. “But it makes you want to try harder.”

Hood stressed that the real challenge for bail bondsmen isn’t becoming one: It’s staying one.

“A bondsman, to do good, you’ve gotta have good clerical skills, good organizational skills. You’ve gotta be an actor.”

By “actor,” he meant one who persuades. Someone good at getting people to open up, to reveal whatever they’re hiding, to come out from wherever they’re hiding. Good at knowing when to be polite and when to intimidate, good at oiling the truth with the occasional lie. “Good at gettin’ information on people,” as Hood summed it up.

It was clear that he was describing himself.

Allyn Hood

The first thing you notice about Allyn Hood is his size. To say that he’s a big man would be inadequate. To say that he’s 6 feet, 4 inches tall, weighs 300 pounds and carries his abundance of muscle and paunch on size 14 feet would be technically true.

Scale works best, though: Put

Hunter

From Page A4

Hood in a doorway and look how close his balding head comes to the top. Watch him squeeze into his teal Honda CR-V and notice how tiny the car suddenly looks. Hood's hands are the biggest shock: In addition to being plain huge, they are as meaty and hard and square as boxing gloves. "I'm actually the biggest baby ever born in Kingsport," said Hood, who is 64 and speaks in a quiet, sandpapery monotone. "I weighed 13 pounds, 14 ounces. I was a surprise to everybody."

Hood's mother had him between marriages; he never met his father. He said his size was a mystery until six years ago, when DNA testing helped him find out his father's identity. (Spoiler: Same physique.) Hood spent his childhood in various working-class sections of Kingsport, moving around a lot "the way poor families did back then," he said.

He took up wrestling in high school before dropping out to join the Army at 17. After three years of service, he came home and got his bachelor's degree in criminal justice from East Tennessee State University. He worked construction a while, then earned a master's degree in teaching and taught at several area high schools. On the side, for a while, Hood was also a fighter in Toughman Contests — amateur boxing matches that had few rules, he said, apart from no biting and no groin kicks.

Hood's entry to the bail bonding industry happened in the early '90s, when a longtime friend got in trouble and wound up in jail with a steep bond. The friend found a bonding company that would cover half of it. By then, Hood had started buying local properties on the cheap — a habit he says has since led him to amass around 200 different land parcels in the area, which he estimates are worth between \$8 million and \$10 million. His friend asked if he could spare some real estate for the other half of the bond. He agreed.

"So I went up there [to the court], waiting for him to come out, and I'm just sitting there talking to the bondsman, and the bondsman says, 'Heck, with all your collateral, you ought to start your own bonding company,'" Hood recalled. "He started telling me about a bonding company, how it works and everything."

Hood liked his teaching work, but bail bonding sounded like a nice side gig. He took it up in February 1994. But that summer, Hood said, he made more money than he'd made during the whole academic year. Eventually, teaching became the side gig. Then it stopped altogether.

Hood has now been in the bail bonding industry for 26 years. He estimates that in that time, he's bonded 25,000-30,000 people of every stripe — teachers, priests, drug addicts, police officers. Once, an entire family. Various times, members of his own rough-and-tumble family.

Hood said that he's on good terms with many of his clients and works to be flexible with those who can't pay him the full bonding fee up front. As of March, he said, about a fourth of his customers were on payment plans.



ANDRE TEAGUE/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Bail bondsman Allyn Hood views documents as he and recovery agent Derek Bishop try to find a bail skip who had moved from their last known address.

“Allyn Hood’s reputation is: You won’t get away. No matter where you go, he will find you and it doesn’t matter what dollar amount, he’s still going to make it a point to get you.”

— Jeremy Judd, an employee at A-Hood Bonding

FAST FACT

» Statistics on the bail bond and bounty hunting industries are scarce. But a 2012 Justice Policy Institute reported estimated that there were roughly 15,000 bail bond agents across the country and that the bail bond industry annually netted \$2 billion in profits.
Source: Justice Policy Institute

"Awesome with working on payment," one client posted to one of A-Hood's Facebook pages.

"You are a very respectful man you got my son out of jail for me and I'm forever so thankful to you your such amazing friend to everyone," a woman posted to Hood's personal Facebook page recently. Others seem to give the bondsman a wide berth. According to Jeremy Judd, one of Hood's own employees, "In the jails, he's loved or hated."

During the early March interview in his wood-paneled office, Hood said he's careful to stay inside the lines of Tennessee's bail bond laws. Beyond that, he doesn't seem bothered by what people think about him. He knows his size can be a useful intimidation tool and even seems to enjoy some of the colorful

stories he said defendants sometimes tell about him.

"I had this kid one time," Hood said of a client who'd skipped court. "We picked him up at Lee Apartments. He was hiding under a bed. We took him up to jail, no problems at all. And he was talking about how nice we was. He said, 'I'm glad you wasn't that Hood guy.' I said, 'Why, what's wrong with him?' He said, 'I heard he's mean. He picked up a guy one time, he hit him in the head with a hatchet. You've gotta watch out for him.' And he was talking to me," he said, grinning a little.

Pressed for more detail about his reputation among defendants, Hood swiveled in his desk chair toward Judd, away from the window displaying a life-size cut-out of President Trump.

"What's my reputation, Jeremy?" he asked.

"Allyn Hood's reputation is: You won't get away. No matter where you go, he will find you, and it doesn't matter what dollar amount, he's still going to make a point to get you," Judd said.

swade@bristolnews.com
276-645-2511
Twitter: @swadely



ANDRE TEAGUE/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Derek Bishop looks at prescription pill bottles to gather information on associates of a wanted bail skip. Building a case file of known associates can make finding the fugitive easier.



A senior lifestyle designed for your peace of mind.

Our senior living community provides the level of support, comfort and life-enhancing activities our residents deserve, at prices that can help you spend less time worrying, and more time smiling.

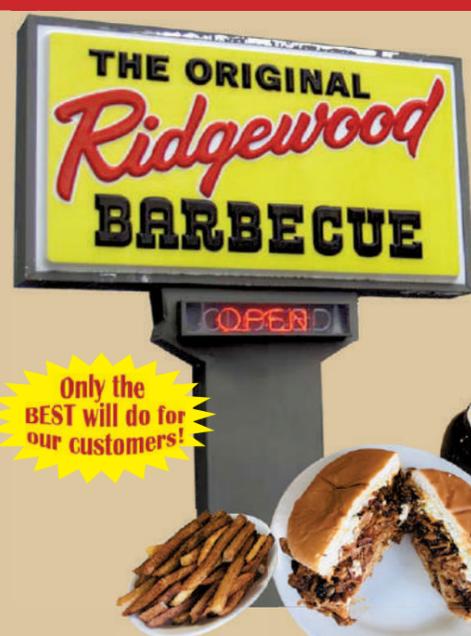
- Customized care plans
- Assistance with daily activities
- Restaurant-style dining
- Social & personalized activities
- And more!

ELMCROFT[™]
OF BRISTOL
BY ECLIPSE SENIOR LIVING

Assisted Living | Memory Care
826 Meadow View Rd
Bristol, TN 37620
423.301.5178
elmcroft.com/bristol

Schedule your virtual tour today!
Call **423.301.5178** or visit elmcroft.com.

Carrying on the Tradition of Hickory Smoked BBQ



Only the BEST will do for our customers!

423-538-7543
900 Elizabethton Hwy, Bluff City, TN 37618
Mon-Thur 11am-7:30 pm • Fri & Sat 11am -2:30 pm & 4:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Closed, Larry Proffitt says, "On The Lord's Day."

WILLIAM BYRON WINS NASCAR RACE AT VIRTUAL BRISTOL MOTOR SPEEDWAY » B1



BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

MONDAY, April 6, 2020

HeraldCourier.com

148th Year | \$2.00

Southwest Virginia-Northeast Tennessee | The Birthplace of Country Music® | 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service | 2018 Scripps Howard Award for Community Journalism

COVID-19

PANDEMIC

STAYING HOME?
» We want to hear from you. If you are having to stay home due to a closure related to the coronavirus, we want to hear your story. Send us your photos, videos and more about how you are coping in the face of a new reality to citydesk@bristolnews.com.

ONLINE
» How will your Easter be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? Take our poll at [HeraldCourier.com](https://www.bristolherald.com).

INSIDE
» Washington County choir teacher performs songs online for hand-washing **A3**
» Va. task force, IRS warning of scams involving checks **A3**
» Forest Service expands national forest closures **A3**
» Tiger at NYC's Bronx Zoo tests positive for coronavirus **A6**
» Defense secretary defends firing of Navy ship captain **A6**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS
» Top doctor in U.S. warns that this could be "the hardest and saddest week" of Americans' lives
» UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson hospitalized with virus
» Europe sees more signs of hope as Italy's virus curve falls
» Defense secretary defends firing of Navy ship captain
» Palm Sunday services scaled back across US, world
» Kentucky churches defy virus orders, hold in-person services
» Ex-NFL kicker, Saints hero Tom Dempsey dies from coronavirus
» Tiger at NYC's Bronx Zoo tests positive for coronavirus
» 10th anniversary event for West Virginia mine disaster canceled
» Death toll reaches 20 at Richmond long-term care center

COVID-19

LOCATION	#CASES	#DEATHS
Worldwide	1,200,000+	69,000+
United States	300,000+	9,000+
Virginia	2,637	51
Tennessee	3,633	44

SOURCES: WHO, CDC, Virginia and Tennessee Departments of Health, AP

BOUNTY HUNTERS



Bail bondsmen and fugitive recovery agents cover the front door and side of a home as Allyn Hood looks to bring in a skip. Hood is the owner of the bail bond company A-Hood Bonding.

ON THE JOB WITH BOUNTY HUNTERS

A detailed look at a day in the life of A-Hood Bonding owner, employees

EDITOR'S NOTE
» This is the second story in a two-part series about bail bonding and bounty hunting. For the first story, go to [HeraldCourier.com](https://www.bristolherald.com).

BY SARAH WADE
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER
Allyn Hood, the owner of the bail bond company A-Hood Bonding, does his own bounty hunting — tracking down pretrial defendants who paid his company to bail them out of jail and missed their court dates. Hood estimates that he and his employees used to spend only about 10% of their time bounty hunting. But that number has increased dramatically in the past few years, he said.

"Half of our work time is spent looking for people," Hood said of

See **BOUNTY**, Page A4



Fugitive recovery agent Jon Reed leads a captured bail skip out of his home and to a waiting vehicle for transport back to jail.

ONLINE
Listen to our On the Record podcast about bounty hunters at [HeraldCourier.com](https://www.bristolherald.com). Also, find a gallery of photos with this story on our website.

COVID-19

Surgeon general issues warning

Adams: This week to be 'hardest, saddest' of Americans' lives

BY WILL WEISSERT
and **KEVIN FREKING**
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — America's surgeon general raised the specter of the gravest attacks against the nation in modern times to steel an anxious country Sunday for the impending and immeasurable sorrow he said would touch untold numbers of families in the age of the coronavirus. The government's top infectious disease expert urged vigilant preparation for a virus that is unlikely to be wiped out entirely in the short term and may emerge again in a new season.

The blunt assessments show just how much has changed in the weeks since President Donald Trump's predictions that the virus would soon pass and his suggestions that much of the economy could be up and running by Easter, April 12. But they also point to the suffering and sacrifice ahead until the pandemic begins to abate.

The nation's top doctor, Surgeon General Jerome Adams, said Americans should brace for levels of tragedy reminiscent of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

The number of people infected in the U.S. has exceeded 300,000, with the death toll climbing past 9,000. Nearly 4,200 of those deaths are in the state of

See **WARNING**, Page A4

Palm Sunday services held without public

BY FRANCES D'EMILIO
The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis celebrated Palm Sunday Mass in the shelter of St. Peter's Basilica without the public because of the coronavirus pandemic, while parish priests elsewhere in Rome took to church rooftops and bell towers to lead services so at least some faithful could follow the familiar ritual.

Looking pensive and sounding subdued, Francis led the first of several solemn Holy Week ceremonies that will shut

out rank-and-file faithful from attending, as Italy's rigid lockdown measures forbid public gatherings.

Normally, tens of thousands of Romans, tourists and pilgrims, clutching olive tree branches or palm fronds, would have flocked to an outdoor Mass led by the pontiff. Instead, Francis celebrated Mass inside St. Peter's Basilica, which seemed even more cavernous than usual because it was so empty.

See **SERVICES**, Page A5



Pope Francis holds a palm branch as he celebrates Palm Sunday Mass behind closed doors in St. Peter's Basilica during the lockdown aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19.

INSIDE: CLASSIFIED B7-8 | COMICS B5 | DEATHS A4 | OPINION A7 | TELEVISION B6



FOREST HILLS MEMORY GARDENS

19415 LEE HIGHWAY - ABINGDON, VA • (276) 623-2717 • [foresthillsonline.com](https://www.foresthillsonline.com)

Complete Cremation Memorialization ONLY **\$1275.00** + Tax! (Includes Columbarium Niche, Bronze Plaque, and Vase)

-All other Cremation Memorialization **20% off**

-All Burial Spaces **\$850.00**

20% off all Burial Vaults and Opening & Closings

Pre-need sales only. Limited time.

Obituaries

A4

MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2020 ♦ BRISTOL HERALD COURIER ♦ HeraldCourier.com

Today's deaths

Hazel Gibbs, 94
Dallas Eugene Rasnick

Information and wording for obituaries are provided by funeral homes and are published as paid notices. Obituaries also appear online at www.HeraldCourier.com. Obituaries must be submitted by 3 p.m. for publication in the following morning's newspaper.



Hazel Gibbs

Hazel Gibbs, 94, of Bristol, Va., peacefully passed in her home surrounded by the love and support of her family. She was born in Clinchco, Va., to Fuller and Vera Ray. Hazel was a woman of strong will, honesty, and deep devotion to Jehovah God and her family. She is survived by her brother, Marcel Ray; three daughters, Frances Chery, Catherine McKnight

and Victoria McKnight; three sons, Ezekiel Gibbs Jr., James Gibbs and Tony Gibbs; as well as a plethora of grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

She was a lifetime associate member of the United Mines Workers of America.

The family thanks the medical staff on the 4th floor at Ballad Health for all their compassion while she was there. The family also thanks the medical staff at Caris Health Care for your compassion and kindness to our mother and her family during the last days of her life.

There will not be a funeral. Friends of the family who have called wanting to send flowers, please make a donation to: UMWA Miners Aid Fund, Attn: Bob Scaramozzino, 18354 Quantico Gateway Dr., Suite 200, Triangle VA 22171-1779.

Professional service provided by R.A.Clark Funeral Service Inc. (423)764-8584.



Dallas Eugene Rasnick

Dallas Eugene Rasnick departed this life on Friday, April 3, 2020.

He is survived by a special sister, Zella Rasnick Phillips.

A private graveside service will be conducted on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, at Morrell Cemetery in Bluff City, Tenn.

Professional service provided by R.A. Clark Funeral Service Inc., (423) 764-8584.



Logan Williams, 16

'The Flash' actor dies

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Actor Logan Williams, who appeared in CW's "The Flash" as the young Barry Allen, has died. He was 16.

Williams' agent, Michelle Gauvin, says he died Thursday. Gauvin did not give the cause of his death, but she said his sudden death comes as a "shock."

"The Flash" star Grant Gustin called the news "devastating."

Warning

From Page A1

New York, but a glimmer of hope there came on Sunday when Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo said his state registered a small dip in new fatalities over a 24-hour period. Still, Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said his state may run out of ventilators by week's end.

Former Vice President Joe Biden suggested his party's presidential nominating convention, already pushed from July into August because of the outbreak, may have to move fully online to avoid packing thousands of people into an arena in Milwaukee. Also, the Defense Department released new requirements that all individuals on its property "will wear cloth face coverings when they cannot maintain six feet of social distance in public areas or work centers."

The most dire warning, though, came from Adams, who noted it was Palm Sunday, which starts the Christian Holy Week that concludes with Easter Sunday.

"This is going to be the hardest and the saddest week of most Americans' lives, quite frankly," Adams said. "This is going to be our Pearl Harbor moment, our 9/11 moment, only it's not going to be localized. It's going to be happening all over the country. And

I want America to understand that."

For most people, the virus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said the toll in the coming week is "going to be shocking to some, but that's what is going to happen before it turns around, so just buckle down."

He also said the virus probably won't be wiped out entirely this year and that, unless the world gets it under control, it will "assume a seasonal nature."

"We need to be prepared that, since it unlikely will be completely eradicated from the planet, that as we get into next season, we may see the beginning of a resurgence," Fauci said. "That's the reason why we're pushing so hard in getting our preparedness much better than it was."

Trump has backed away from comments weeks earlier that large swaths of American life would resume by Easter. The president had no public events on his schedule Sunday after a series of two-hour daily briefings on the outbreak. However, the White

House updated the president's and vice president's schedules in the evening to show that a 7 p.m. news conference would take place after all.

"Talks & meetings today are proving promising, but a rough two weeks are coming up!" Trump tweeted.

Much of the country is under orders to stay home, and federal officials said they have seen signs that people are listening to the message about social distancing. A few states, however, have declined to issue such orders, and Adams was asked whether they should join the rest of the country.

"Ninety percent of Americans are doing their part, even in the states where they haven't had a shelter-in-place [order]," Adams said. "But if you can't give us 30 days, governors, give us, give us a week, give us what you can, so that we don't overwhelm our health care systems over this next week."

Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, who has not issued a stay-at-home order, said federal officials who have urged them are "just looking at the nation as a whole."

"But whenever you look at our state, I think Dr. Fauci would be very pleased with the fact that we are beating some of our other states in reducing the spread and the commitment that we have to working every day to accomplish that," Hutchinson said.

Bounty

From Page A1

his current schedule during an interview at his Kingsport office in early March. "I got one guy, just missed court here recently. He's in Tampa, Florida. I've got a pretty good location on him."

Hood said he prefers local clients, though, which means he and his staff often wind up searching neighborhoods in Kingsport, Bristol and Abingdon. The bounty hunting they did one gray Tuesday in mid-March was strictly local.

The day started promptly at 8 a.m. in Hood's office. There, he and three of his four employees — Jon Reed, Derek Bishop and Jeremy Judd — met before heading out. A-Hood Bonding was actively looking for 80-odd bail jumpers, their names listed in neat block letters on a white board in the office. Hood said their bonds alone totaled about \$1 million.

Under a steady drizzle, the bounty hunters loaded into their cars, Hood and Judd in Hood's teal CR-V, Reed and Bishop in a gray SUV. Fog covered the mountains like a blanket that hadn't been kicked off yet. Mornings, Judd said, are a good time for bounty hunting: You can catch some people before they wake up.

"And, of course, that's better if they're strung out on drugs," he added.

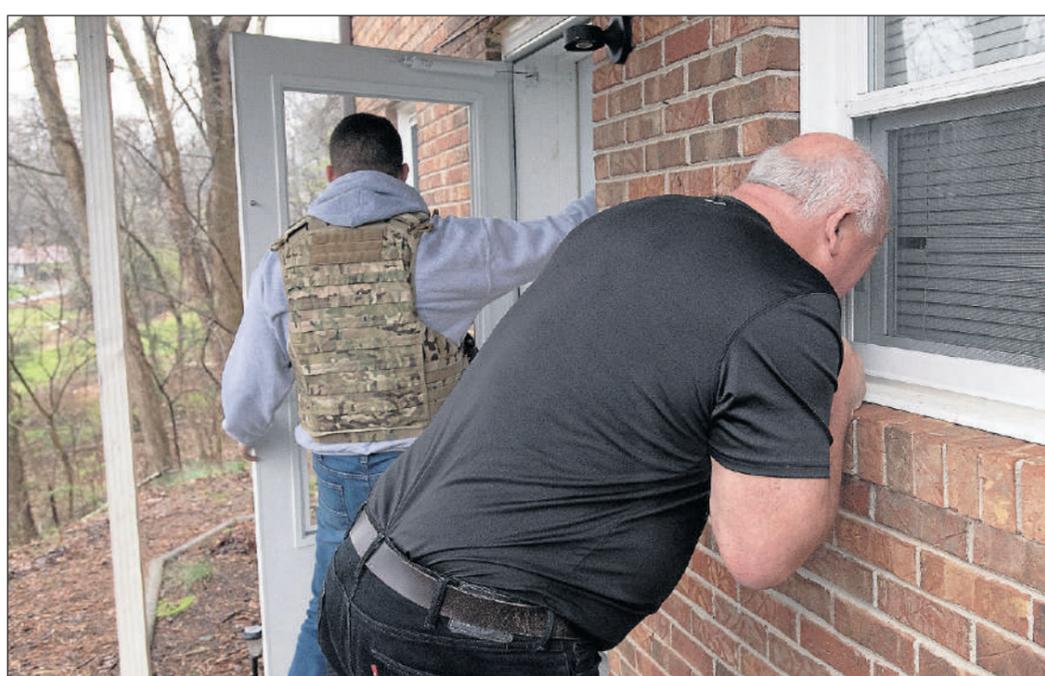
First stop: a house in the Kingsport neighborhood of Cliffside, where a client lived. A-Hood bailed him out on a \$35,000 bond for FTA, or "failure to appear": missing his court date for a previous charge. Now he'd missed his hearing for the FTA charge.

The cars turned off one of Kingsport's streets and followed a road that climbed uphill, into a maze of little one-story houses.

"This house is best from the back, isn't it?" Hood said into a walkie-talkie.

"No, there ain't no back door or anything," Bishop's fuzzed voice responded over the speaker. "He's in the very back corner ... the far left-hand side."

They stopped at a cream-colored prefab. Its yard held a wood pile and an assortment of toys and baby seats, several



ANDRE TEAGUE/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Bail bondsman Allyn Hood peeks through the blinds as recovery agent Derek Bishop knocks on the door while trying to find a bail skip who had moved from their last known address.

overtaken as if blown about in a storm.

"This is Jon the bondsman!" Reed yelled, pounding the door. Birds twittered in the quiet. "You there?"

The bounty hunters were confident that he was: It was the address the client listed, for one thing, and they'd done their research, calling contacts and combing through his history. Reasonable suspicion is nowhere near enough for a police officer or sheriff to break into someone's house in Tennessee. But the state's bail bondsmen and bounty hunters "have a lot more leeway than [law enforcement] when it comes to the law," said Sullivan County Sheriff Jeff Cassidy.

"If somebody's absconded, and that individual's at a residence that [the bail bondsmen or bounty hunters] know they live at, without a search warrant or anything, they can pretty much go in that residence. Us, unless we see the offender that we have a warrant for in the residence, we can't enter," the sheriff said.

Tennessee's bail bondsmen and bounty hunters do need a court-certified copy of the bond; that's pretty much their warrant. Armed with just that document and reasonable suspicion that a client's inside their house, they have the right to do

what they did when the client didn't answer that day — force the door open and enter with the right to arrest him.

The group filed inside. The house was a dim wreck, its living room floors mostly hidden under heaps of clothes and plastic bags, the kitchen choked with canned goods and cleaning supplies. As Hood and his employees predicted, the client was in bed in the back room. They pushed aside the curtain that served as a door. The client's girlfriend sat up in the bed and turned on a lamp, her pale face floating in the light as the men let their client dress.

"Did you get my text?" the man asked.

"Yeah, but we couldn't wait," Hood said.

The man had called the judge and texted Hood after missing his court date. But he hadn't gone to the court to explain in person, which Hood said can sometimes resolve the issue.

Despite the forced entry, the client was chill. He went quietly, chatting a little with the bounty hunters, exhaling a puff of cigarette smoke before getting in the backseat of the gray SUV. His girlfriend followed him out in a purple bathrobe with "The Joker" blazed in green across the back, weeping a little. She bent down and kissed him.

Then Bishop and Reed drove

off to deliver their client to Hood's other employee, who would take the defendant back to jail. A little more paperwork with the judge, and A-Hood Bonding would get its \$35,000 back.

The U.S. bail bonding industry has become the subject of intense debate in recent years. Its supporters — most vocally, bail bondsmen and bounty hunters, themselves — argue that they're performing essential services for the public.

"Once [defendants get out of jail], you've gotta monitor their case through the courts, make sure they show up for their court dates, keep track of them like the pretrial [program] is supposed to be doing," Hood said, referencing Sullivan County's new pretrial release program. "We do the same thing at no cost to the taxpayers. Where they spend \$850,000 to monitor, they don't have 100 [defendants] yet. We monitor 1,200."

There's also research showing that commercial bail bondsmen and bounty hunters are effective at getting pretrial defendants to make their hearings and tracking them down when they fail to appear. According to economics professor and researcher Alex Tabarrok, defendants who miss court and are pursued by bounty hunters "are a whopping 50% less likely to be on the loose

after one year than other bail jumpers."

Sheriff Cassidy said that many of those bail jumpers are people his department simply doesn't have the time or the resources to pursue.

"They help out law enforcement tremendously," Cassidy said of bail bondsmen and bounty hunters. "They capture thousands of fugitives yearly that have absconded from jail or failed to appear that would take us from other law enforcement activities if there wasn't bondsmen and bounty hunters."

On the flip side, a host of other criminal justice experts — particularly those who focus on the rights and needs of defendants — argue that bail bonds place a heavy burden on low-income defendants before they've even been proven guilty.

"Indigent people, even a lot of working-class people, are affected by bonds in that they can't post the bonds that are required, so they stay in jail pending their case," said Andrew Gibbons, Sullivan County's public defender, who represents people from those groups. "Lots of times, people [charged with] minor offenses are incarcerated longer because they can't afford bond than they would have been had they made bond at the outset of their offense, been released and later found guilty."

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, a nonprofit that advocates for reforms to the criminal justice system, 70% of all inmates in the country's local jails are pretrial defendants. Gibbons said that's why Tennessee has such crowded jails. He's even seen defendants plead guilty to serious crimes just to get out of those jails, "and at the same time maintain their innocence the entire time. It's very unfair," he said.

Defendants who do manage to scrape together the fee for a bail bond company — either in one lump sum or in installments, depending on the agreement — don't get that money back. And they're at the mercy of a company that can quickly, easily revoke their bond and take them back to jail if the bondsman suspects they might break the conditions of their bond.

Cassidy said the pretrial pro-

See **HUNTERS**, Page A5

Hunters

From Page A4

gram is Sullivan County's attempt to respond to those issues. Meanwhile, at the state level, legislators have introduced House and Senate bills that would require courts to let certain pretrial defendants out of jail — namely, those charged with minor offenses who hadn't been previously convicted of anything serious. The bills, introduced in 2019, are still being considered.

Gibbons said he would be happy if bail bond laws were changed so that people charged with misdemeanors — which form the bulk of A-Hood Bonding's clients — could be released pretrial without bail.

"Cash bond should be reserved for the worst of the worst [charges]," Gibbons said. "I don't think people accused of run-of-the-mill non-violent property crimes should be required to post cash bond."

But there was one thing Gibbons, Cassidy and various other officials in Sullivan County's criminal justice system seemed to agree on: They don't want to see commercial bail disappear. Cassidy said he considers it one important tool among many for keeping jail overcrowding and unserved warrants in check. Gibbons said it helps the court protect the public in some cases.

"And if people don't show up for court, the whole system shuts down," he said.

While those debates play out in criminal justice circles, bail bondsmen and bounty hunters like the guys at A-Hood Bonding have defendants to bail out and bail jumpers to catch.

That Tuesday was a busy one. After their first case, the group hustled between a host of other houses and apartments, calling bond cosigners and local sources on their targets between stops. The neighborhoods blurred into one big labyrinth of steep, narrow roads, chain-link fences, shoebox-shaped prefabs and trailers.

Hood knew them like the back of his beefy hand. In one, he pointed out an empty lot where the house he was born in once stood. In many, he pointed out various little houses



Bail bondsman Allyn Hood and his fugitive recovery agents head into a Kingsport, Tennessee, apartment complex to find and bring back two wanted bail skips.

and plots of land he now owns. Between strategizing with his staff, he fielded calls from potential bail bond clients, plus a potential renter or two.

Some of the bail skippers and other people the bounty hunters spoke with that day were as calm as their first client had been. One man, learning that the bounty hunters were looking for his son, said that's what he figured.

"I know I paid mine," he added about his own bond with a chuckle. Others were more tense.

"I don't want this s--- here," one woman said when she opened her door to find Reed and Hood looking for her boyfriend. "He's not allowed here, he doesn't stay here, he doesn't come here."

Several hid, like one bail jumper they found hiding in the closet of an apartment.

And a few were openly hostile, like the man in a sagging little house they visited in search of a woman who'd been out on bond for driving with a revoked license and missing her court date.

Her three boys, out of school because of the coronavirus, were playing what looked like a combat video game in one of the bedrooms. They said they had no idea where she was. Neither did the man, whose relation to the woman was mysterious. He was slight but jumpy, and shaking a little. The air in the house was thick with smoke.

"Keep your hands out of your

pockets," Bishop said to him. Then, looking at the guy more closely: "You're high as hell."

"I'm stressed out because y'all are here!" the man shot back.

Bishop and Reed searched the man, found a gun they said he was trying to slip under a pillow and eventually marched him outside where Hood could keep an eye on him. They had quickly assessed the place and determined it was a methamphetamine house. Further searching revealed a huge flat screen TV connected to an army of security cameras showing various angles of the yard and street, glass pipes for smoking meth and signs of squatters. But the woman they were searching for was nowhere to be found.

The boys' aunt, who lived across the street, helped Hood reach the woman over the phone; she said she was heading back from another city to turn herself in.

"You workin' hard in school?" Bishop gently asked one of the boys. The kid nodded. "Good," Bishop said. "Make good grades and do well in school so you can get out of this." The kid nodded again, his face inscrutable.

Then Bishop, Hood and the rest of their team got into their cars and headed out to look for the next few bail jumpers on their list. They'd gotten a lead on one in Abingdon.

swade@bristolnews.com
276-645-2511 | Twitter: @swadely

Services

From Page A1

Besides his aides, a few invited prelates, nuns and laypeople were present, sitting solo in the first pews and staggered far apart to reduce the risks of contagion. A male choir, also practicing social distancing, sang hymns, accompanied by an organist.

Francis is also the bishop of Rome, and some of the parish priests in the Italian capital went to unusual lengths — or, more precisely, unusual heights — so their parishioners could follow Mass without resorting to streamed versions on TV or computers. The priests celebrated Mass on rooftops so faithful who lived nearby could watch from balconies or terraces. In one church, a priest marked Palm Sunday with Mass in the narrow confines of his church's bell tower.

Social distancing requirements affected Palm Sunday practices around the globe. In Jerusalem, where thousands of pilgrims usually participate in the march, this year was limited to a handful of participants. Clerics and faithful went door to door, often throwing the branches to Christians looking on from their balconies.

"This year, because of the new situation, we are trying to come to all the Christians in our Christian Quarter to bring these branches of olives, the sign of new hope," said the Rev. Sandro Tomasevic, a Catholic clergyman at the Latin Parish of Jerusalem. Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

In the pope's native Argentina, the faithful were using plants at home for

a "virtual" blessing during livestreaming of Palm Sunday services.

In the United States, Rhode Island Gov. Gina Raimondo directed churches not to make palm branches available in a kind of "grab and go" pickup strategy. In a tweet, Roman Catholic Bishop Thomas Tobin urged parishes to comply with the governor's order.

Wearing red robes to symbolize the blood shed by Jesus in the hours of his crucifixion, Francis blessed braided palms.

"Today, in the tragedy of a pandemic, in the face of the many false securities that have now crumbled, in the face of so many hopes betrayed, in the sense of abandonment that weighs upon our hearts, Jesus says to each one of us: 'Courage, open your heart to my love,'" Francis said.

Francis urged people to hold fast to "what really matters in our lives."

"The tragedy we are experiencing summons us to take seriously the things that are serious, and not to be caught up in those that matter less, to rediscover that life is of no use if not used to serve others," the pontiff said in his homily.

In a remark directed to young people, Francis said: "Dear friends, look at the real heroes who come to light these days: they are not famous, rich and successful people."

Instead, he said, "they are those who are giving themselves in order to serve others. Feel called yourselves to put your lives on the line."

Earlier during the pandemic, Francis has praised medical staff, transport workers, supermarket clerks and others for their sacrifices to help lives.

Easter Loveables

BRISTOL HERALD COURIER WANTS TO HELP YOU CELEBRATE WITH A LAMINATED KEEPSAKE MAGNET OF YOUR CHILD FOR EASTER.

Display that someone special in our Easter Advertising Feature to be published in the Bristol Herald Courier on Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020

Send us a picture of your child, grandchild or special pet and we will publish the picture along with the child's name or pet's name, parents' names and hometown in a special feature page on Easter Sunday. FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE RULES:

- Limit 1 Child Per Photo.
- All pictures & extra laminates must be paid for in advance & mailed or brought to the Bristol Herald Courier office accompanied by the coupon below.
- Pictures will be returned with laminates via U.S. Mail unless you specify otherwise
- Extra Laminates may be purchased for \$5.00 each and must be paid for in advance.

\$20.00 PER PICTURE

DEADLINE FOR ALL PICTURES IS 5:00 PM WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2020

COME BY OUR OFFICE 320 Morrison Blvd. • Bristol, VA 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM ~ Monday - Friday or submit by email to classifiedads@bristolnews.com

Mail To: Classifieds Bristol Herald Courier P.O. Box 609 Bristol, VA 24203

Limit 1 Child Per Photo
CHECK ONE PLEASE
 BOY GIRL PET

NUMBER OF REPRINTS

Name For Picture _____
Parents' Names _____
Hometown _____
Submitted by _____
Mailing Name & Address for Laminates: _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
Daytime Phone _____

\$20.00 PER PICTURE MUST ACCOMPANY COUPON

Easter Loveables
Enclosed is \$20.00 Per Picture

AFTER EASTER LOVEABLES PUBLISHES, YOU WILL RECEIVE A LAMINATED DECORATIVE MAGNET (VIA U.S. MAIL) (ALLOW 4-6 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY).

BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR SUBSCRIBERS:

In this rapidly evolving news environment, make sure your digital account is activated so you can get the latest local news. The E-edition - digital copy of the printed newspaper - is included with your subscription.

- Turning on your digital access is easy. Start by typing in heraldcourier.com/activate on your computer or tablet. **Already have an account?** Click the icon in the top-right corner to log in
- Enter your email and create a password to sign up!
- Next, log in to your account and you'll be asked to fill in your last name and account information.

SUCCESS!
You can now read the digital copy of the Bristol Herald Courier every day. Sign up to receive the E-edition delivered to your inbox every day at www.heraldcourier.com.
Questions? Call us at 1-844-311-9811