

Chernobyl fires causing spike in radiation levels

By Zach Dickerson
Editor in Chief

A forest fire covering 50 acres erupted on the afternoon of Saturday, April 4, near the village of Vladimiovka, located in the exclusion zone, with another smaller fire around 12 acres also burning. Because of these fires, radiation levels near the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster site have spiked.

Since the start of the fire, the area of the blaze has increased to nearly 250 acres. According to the Associated Press, the fire is believed to have started near the village of Volodymyrivka.

Egor Firsov, head of Ukraine's ecological inspection service, made a Facebook post of a picture of a Geiger counter and a statement saying, "There is bad news — in the center of the fire, radiation is above normal. As you can see in the video, the readings of the device are 2.3, when the norm is 0.14. But this is only within the area of the fire outbreak."

These measurements are referring to the microsievert per hour ($\mu\text{Sv/h}$) reading. The

maximum allowable amount of natural background radiation is $0.5 \mu\text{Sv/h}$, but Firsov's reported amount was nearly five times that.

Some reports have shown that radiation has now spiked up to 16 times higher than the typical levels of the area. Local media also reported on Thursday, April 9, that authorities were evacuating a small community within the exclusion zone.

The spiked radiation levels don't appear to extend to Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, or to the city of Chernobyl itself. Authorities state those radiation levels remain normal.

Another image, on Sunday, April 5, showed a Geiger counter near the fire with readings just below the maximum natural amount, $3.4 \mu\text{Sv/h}$. Other reported footage, also taken near the fire, show higher readings.

Hundreds of firefighters, two An-32P planes and an Mi-8 helicopter are working to battle the larger fire. About 42 water drops have been carried out on the area. A smaller number of firefighters were sent to work on the smaller fire.

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Photo by Yaroslav Yemelianenko

A view of a forest fire burning near the village of Volodymyrivka in the exclusion zone around the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, Ukraine, Sunday, April 5, 2020.

BC to reimburse room and board for students who moved home

By Aia Andonovska
Arts & Life Editor

By now, most students will have checked their email and seen that Brevard College has come up with a reimbursement plan for students who are completing their spring 2020 semester online in the comfort and safety of their own homes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and colleges shutting their doors all over the world, most have enacted reimbursement policies in order to aid their students during this dire time of need.

On the BC website, a breakdown of numbers is posted. Total room and board fees for one semester equals \$5,200. The total number of days students attended school this semester was 109. The daily rate of room and board equates to \$47.71.

First, Brevard College calculated each student's refund by gathering data through the use of a Google form, communication with students, walk-throughs of residence halls and reviews of meal swipe activity. This reimbursement period began on March 22 at the very earliest. For students who did not inform the college of their departure, the college used March 29 as their reference move out date.

Students who continue to live on campus do not qualify for reimbursement of any kind. Students who moved out but are still storing belongings on campus are eligible for 75 percent of a refund. Some students initially expressed mixed feelings about this, because of various circumstances surrounding travel such as flights being cancelled.

However, there is a very simple appeal process that the college has created, according to Mitch Radford, Associate Vice President for Finance/Controller. "We realized that some would have had to travel very far to get their belongings, which is why we implemented

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Illustration by LA Johnson / NPR

Response to school closings

By Mickayla Smith
Staff Writer

According to NPR, once COVID-19 became an issue in the United States, most schools nationwide closed because of this pandemic. Teens ranging from 13 to 17 participated in a national poll to see how schools are proceeding after their closing. The results concluded that distance learning is not a universal substitute for students.

A poll of 849 teenagers, conducted by Common Sense Media using SurveyMonkey, found that as schools were transitioning to online learning, 41 percent of teenagers, including 47 percent of public school students say they haven't attended online classes. This survey was conducted between March 24 and April 1; some schools may have been on spring break during this time and weren't aware of this survey. This could have affected the engagement with online learning.

There was a big gap found between public and private schools. About 18 percent of private school students say they haven't attended an online class, compared to 47 percent of public school students. A lot of students, like the rest of the world, are worried about the coronavirus pandemic.

The survey showed that four out of five students are following news about COVID-19 closely. More than 60 percent of students say they are worried about how this pandemic is

going to affect their schooling, family, friends and ultimately themselves. They're afraid of having someone close to them get exposed to the virus or accidentally getting exposed themselves.

Jose Luis Vilson, a middle school teacher in the Washington Heights section of New York City, says that these findings ring true in his society. "You think about the vast majority of the kids, they're going through their own levels of stress," he said.

Engaging them right now, in a city that has been at the center of one of the worst outbreaks of the coronavirus, he added, is challenging, and not just for technical reasons: "There are hundreds of cases just within the school district that I work in of COVID-19." Vilson adds that a lot of kids have parents that are essential workers. "So really, we as educators have to be mindful of all those things."

In past disasters, research has shown that teenagers are most at risk when school is interrupted. Some have to work in order to help the family income, or they are forced to stay home to look after younger siblings.

With all of this added pressure, students are more likely to drop out and not go to college. Experts say keeping students connected to the community helps their future chances.

On the bright side, teens have said they have stayed connected to family and friends through social media, texting and talking on the phone. In addition, 68 percent of students say they have stayed connected with their schools through email.

THE CLARION

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Ticket issued to Hunter Reynolds for non-essential travel while getting a driving lesson from her mother.

COVID-19: Australian teen fined for 'nonessential travel'

By Caroline Hoy
Staff Writer

Many people are taking the quarantine seriously, but it's easy to see that the feeling is not mutual everywhere. People have been fined as a way to keep them in their houses. With this in place, people are not outside for no reason. From reports, the fines have been reasonable since the world has been in a state of emergency.

However, in Australia there is a different story. In Frankston, Victoria, a suburb in Melbourne, someone was fined \$1,652 for being out of her house with her mother.

Hunter Reynolds, 17, was out of the house with her mother to do a driving lesson. Although people were not supposed to leave their house at that time, the fine that was about \$1,700, which seems a bit over the top.

The main hole in the story is that hundreds were reported to be at Sydney's beaches that

day and none of those people had any fines. In fact many of those people failed at being six feet apart from one another.

On the other hand, Reynolds was staying in the car with her mother and not getting out at any stops. In fact, Reynolds's mother did not even know that what they were doing was considered illegal. The fine is currently up for debate on whether it was being too strict or not.

The police have given out other fines that are being contested. For example, one man in Newcastle, New South Wales was given a \$1,000 fine for eating on a park bench. The price of the fines are very high especially since the people who receive the fine may not realize that the act they are doing is against the rules. In one part of Australia, the fines have reached up to \$11,000.

Everyone is probably getting stir crazy at this point in time. The true question behind this is what are reasonable fines for leaving the confines of one's home?

Reimbursement

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the appeal process," Radford said in an email interview. "Our goal was to be fair and consider all circumstances. We also wanted to not prolong a decisive action by the college, so we had to initiate a policy for the entire residential population, knowing there would be exceptions that certainly warrant the full refund.

"All those students need to do is email me with details, as my email indicated. Brevard's stance was never to be unfair. We have a procedure and an appeal process in place to protect those that could not get back to campus," Radford said.

The 25 percent of room and board funds not reimbursed will be used to pay for expenses needed to run the college so they are ready to be fully operable in the fall, Radford said.

"The goal was to issue credits to students that were logical and fair, yet help sustain our financial viability to hit the ground running in August," Radford said. "We do plan to continue with updates to campus for you all, but that source of funding is separate from this refund process."

Many students at other schools have not been so fortunate about refunds. Two schools coming under fire for their questionable methods include Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina and the University of North Carolina-Charlotte. Students at these schools are facing a terrible dilemma: they are still required to pay rent for student housing, despite the fact that none of them are living in those spaces.

"A lot of them can't afford to stay there—they have a loss of income, their parents have a loss of income," said Rima Daya, a parent of a junior at Winthrop who lives at Walk2Campus.

"The financial burden for me is that I work a little bit but most of what I rely on to pay rent comes from my parents, and with both of them not really working right now, there's not any income coming in to pay rent in the foreseeable future," UNC-Charlotte senior Yovany Romero said.

During these trying times, it is important to help one another as much as possible. By refunding students' money, colleges are doing the right thing in the long run. The economy and all aspects of life have already been affected by COVID-19 and will continue to be affected for quite a while. BC students are lucky to go to a school that is willing to be fair and just to all students by implementing an appeal process.

"I am here to answer any questions that may help students and families understand this process, and to assure all that Brevard has implemented a procedure in the effort to be fair to you all," Radford said. "We hope all of our students are staying safe, and we look forward to the day where things are back to normal."

Chernobyl fire

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As the region of the exclusion zone has been taken over by nature, forest fires are not uncommon.

Firsov also acknowledged this, stating, "The problem of setting fires to grass by careless citizens in the spring and autumn has long been a very acute problem for us. Every year we see the same picture — fields, reeds, forests burn in all regions."

The main problem with this event is that the fires are releasing radiation previously trapped in the soil, leaves and wood of the forests around

and within the exclusion zone.

Police have arrested a suspect believed to have caused the fire. He is a 27-year-old man from the area who reportedly told police he had set grass and garbage on fire in three places "for fun." After he lit the fires, he said the wind picked up and he was unable to put them out.

Firsov even commented on how there needs to be harsher penalties for anyone caught starting fires in the area stating, "There are relevant draft bills. I hope they will be voted in. Otherwise, large-scale fires will continue to occur every autumn and spring."

Weekly Horoscopes

By Mickayla Smith
Staff Writer

Aries: You're afraid that an endeavor you have put a lot of time into is lacking potential. However, this week you will see a more positive side to this situation. There may be potential after all.

Taurus: You cannot focus on the outcome of something before you have started it. You want to impress the people around you but don't get too ahead of yourself.

Gemini: Your fears and worries will be troubling you this week significantly. Try not to let them control you and get in the way of your wellbeing.

Cancer: A plan you have made with someone may not have worked out so well. Try to see if you can get to the bottom of the problem.

Leo: When something feels right, is it actually right?

Virgo: If you have wanted to fix a problem for a while, start taking the action to better the situation. You have to start somewhere.

Libra: Life has seemed really confusing and unpredictable these last few weeks, but this week things should settle down and you should be able to see clearly again.

Scorpio: You may find yourself stressed this week because there has been an unresolved matter. Go to your happy place when the feelings arise and try to think rationally about it.

Sagittarius: You want to approach life with a grounded mindset, but it may seem difficult right now. Develop a plan of action when things start to become less hectic.

Capricorn: Someone that already exists in your life may be a great source for advice this week.

Aquarius: A sense of deja vu may hit you this week. Try to recall the familiar feeling when you feel it. Is it of importance or just a memory?

Pisces: You have to be more cautious about your financial situation this week. Start saving your money for the future.

BINGO

QUARANTINE EDITION

STAYED IN PJS ALL DAY	STARTED A NEW HOBBY	GOOGLED "WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE BORED"	WENT DOWN A CONSPIRACY THEORY RABBIT HOLE	BINGED "TIGER KING"
UPLOADED A TIKTOK	ARGUED WITH A RELATIVE ON FACEBOOK	BROKE SOCIAL DISTANCING	PARTICIPATED IN VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR	REARRANGED FURNITURE
SHOPPED ONLINE	DEEP CLEANED THE HOUSE	FREE SPACE	WORKED OUT	IMPULSIVELY CUT OR DYED HAIR
HOARDED TOILET PAPER	3+ DAYS OF SWEATPANTS	WENT TO THE STORE SOLELY FOR ALCOHOL	WATCHED AN NBA RERUN	PUT ON REAL CLOTHES FOR A ZOOM MEETING
STARTED A HOUSE PROJECT	REALIZED I AM DEFINITELY NOT AN INTROVERT	BAKED BREAD	LIVED VICARIOUSLY THROUGH A SIMS CHARACTER	FORGOT WHAT DAY OF WEEK IT WAS

— Chloe McGee

— Audrey Ashburner

Janthina hangs to a bubble

By Solomon Turner
Contributor

This vivid purple snail is one of the great seafarers of the animal kingdom and spends its entire life hanging upside-down to a bubble raft. *Janthina janthina* was first documented by Carl Linnaeus in 1758 and has also been documented as, according to The Darwin Foundation, a gastropod often seen around the islands.

As snails are one of the most widely distributed invertebrates in the world, they have adapted to many unique environments and this one is no exception. *Janthina* sp. is distributed globally in waters of both tropical and temperate seas and can be found in large groups on the ocean or stranded on the beach, according to Atlantis Diving and Australian Geographic.

According to Australian Geographic, these snails are some of the largest members of the Pleuston group, at 30-40 millimeters, and live their entire lives in the pelagic zone, living on the border between the sky and the sea. They do this by creating a bubble raft.

Janthina sp. builds its bubble raft by secreting a chitinous mucus that quickly hardens forming



Courtesy of The Metro Met

Janthina janthina, a violet sea snail found in warm waters around the world, spends its entire life hanging upside down to a bubble "raft."

a solid, yet fragile raft. This raft is then attached to their foot where they spend their lives completely upside-down. It goes without saying then, if these fragile rafts are busted or lost, the snail will sink into the ocean depths and die.

The upside-down lifestyle they practice is also tied to their unique coloration called countercolor. This means that the dorsal (back)

and ventral (front) sides are colored differently to match their environment. *Janthina* sp. does this by having a light violet coloration on the top of their shell, which is facing the ocean depths, and a dark purple on their underside, which is always facing the sky allowing them to blend into both the sky and the sea.

While drifting around with the ocean currents, these unique snails will feed mainly on the tiny medusa of cnidaria, but since they are subject to the whim of the ocean they aren't picky about their food. They will, if given the chance, eat by-the-wind-sailors (*Velella velella*) and Portuguese Man O' War (*Physalia physalis*). While also eating they are often eaten by fish, birds, sea turtles, mollusks and nudibranchs, according to Australian Geographic.

In their reproduction all *Janthina* sp. begin their lives as males and only later switch to being female later in life. Since males lack a penis, they instead shoot the sperm in the female's general direction, like many aquatic organisms. After fertilization, eggs are kept by the female until they hatch, fully capable of caring for themselves after which they make their own bubble raft and set off on their own voyage through the sea.

Storm causes damage, knocks out power

High winds and rain Sunday night and Monday morning wreaked havoc on the Brevard College campus and around Transylvania County, causing damage and power outages on lower campus, including the Villages, that lasted until late Tuesday evening.

Among the damage on campus was an uprooted tree between the tennis courts and Ross Hall (below and right). The flag pole in the residential quad was also toppled (far right); a close up of the base of the flag pole suggests the ferocity of the winds (bottom center).

The torrential rains and wind resulted in roughly half of 16,000 Duke Energy customers in Transylvania County losing power; as of 11:15 a.m. Tuesday, more than 3,000 were still without power. Rainfall amounts vary, but more than 5 inches of rain were estimated in parts of Brevard.

The severe weather was part of a line of storms that swept through the entire region, spawning tornadoes that killed at least 34, including nine people in South Carolina.



Photo by Sam Hipp



Photo by Sam Hipp



Photo by Zach Dickerson



Photo by Zach Dickerson

With Sanders out of the race, Democrats must stick together

By Eleanor Flannery
Staff Writer

Last Wednesday, Bernie Sanders announced the suspension of his 2020 presidential campaign. I was disappointed, to say the least, like many others who supported Bernie. I've been a fan of his since he first announced his candidacy, when he first ran back in 2015.

He was the first politician to get me interested in politics. He inspired me; he opened my eyes to the terrible injustices many Americans face on a daily basis. I believed in his vision of a better America, and desperately wanted to see him be president.

With that being said, and as bitter as it was for me to watch Sanders's announcement, I can't say that I was shocked that his campaign came to a close. He was, after all, polling substantially behind Joe Biden, and, to me, his resignation seemed inevitable. The party was against Bernie from the start, and they simply were not going to give him the support he deserved. While young voters were certainly behind Bernie, it was never going to be enough.

Bernie has since endorsed Joe Biden for



Sen. Bernie Sanders and former Vice President Joe Biden during a break at the Democratic presidential primary debate on Feb. 25, 2020 in Charleston, South Carolina. Following his withdrawal from the race last week, Sanders on Monday formally endorsed Biden for the Democratic nomination for president.

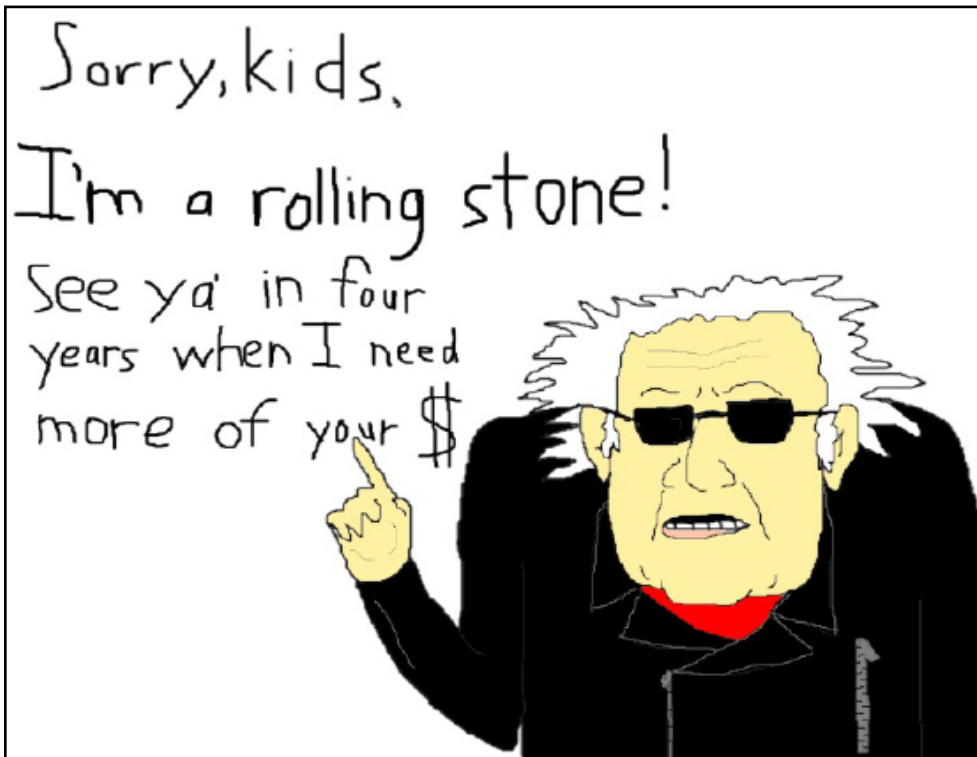
president and has encouraged his supporters to get behind the former vice president as well, since Biden is the presumptive nominee to run

against Donald Trump. It will be difficult for me to vote for Joe in November, but I know it's the best decision I can make to ensure I do everything in my power to prevent Donald Trump from becoming a two-term president. A lot of Bernie supporters do not share this sentiment.

I recognize that it is hard for such staunch supporters to commit to voting for Joe, but, like me, they have to realize it is in their own best interests to do so. The shared goal among most democrats, if not all, is defeating Donald Trump. So how does that happen? It happens by voting for the most viable candidate in the general election. Like it or not, it's looking like it's going to be Biden.

We cannot have a repeat of 2016; if democrats (especially young voters and Bernie supporters) sit this election out, Trump will have another four years in the White House. We need to unite. The "never Joe" people need a reality check. Is he the ideal democratic candidate? Of course not! But he's all we've got left.

The priority is getting the, as Bill Maher put it, "Tangerine Nightmare" out of office. If anti-Trump voters and democrats can't unite over a candidate, then they can kiss that idea goodbye. And I'm not saying voters should fall slave to a single party, but I think it is clear that one bad candidate is a hell of a lot worse than the other.



— Sam Hipp