

# BUSINESS

**Perspective:** Our guest essayist — “one of the gullible masses” — could use a little help figuring out how this whole COVID-19 hoax thing works. **B4**

Despite record readership, The Atlantic is forced to lay off dozens **Page B8**



JONATHAN NEWTON/THE WASHINGTON POST

Lonnie Swindell tees off at Renditions Golf Course in Anne Arundel County, Md., as fellow golfers, from left, Jeff Chapman, Sean Walsh and Tim Rose keep their

## The golf industry is seeing a big upswing. But will it last?

**By JENA MCGREGOR**  
The Washington Post  
LINSEY CHAMBERLIN’s first time playing golf in eight years was on Mother’s Day weekend amid a global pandemic.  
After weeks of sheltering in place and without their usual Mother’s Day options of lunch and a pedicure, Chamberlin and her brother decided to introduce their mother to the game by playing

nine holes at Friend Country Club, a public course outside Lincoln, Neb.  
“We’d been stuck in our house the last eight weeks, and we didn’t want to go to her house to just sit around,” said Chamberlin, 27, who was on her high school golf team but gave up playing in college after getting frustrated with the mental aspects of the game.  
Despite safety precautions — no

ball washers, no rakes in the sand traps, a foam pool-noodle ring for touchless ball retrieval from the hole, and a closed clubhouse — “we had a blast,” Chamberlin said. “I didn’t play as terrible as I thought I would after not playing for eight years, and my mom played better than I did my first time out.”  
Across the country, Americans remain deeply divided about

leaving the house for work and leisure activities, except, apparently, when it comes to golf, giving an unexpected jolt to a sport that has seen declining popularity.  
It’s too early to say whether the heightened demand will continue, especially in the middle of an economic recession, or how much the cost of safety protocols will affect course revenue.  
But some in the golf industry

are hoping that the interest in a relatively safe outdoor activity — and the expected return of the PGA Tour to television on June 11, at a time when there are few alternatives for watching live sports — could boost enthusiasm for the game.  
“People are itching to get outside,” said Stuart Lindsay, a principal with Edgehill Golf Advi-  
**SEE MANY PAGE B2**

## Millions lost jobs in hard-hit New England. Many fear their homes could be next.

In the Northeast, the economic carnage arrived almost as quickly as the coronavirus outbreak that caused it.

**By TONY ROMM**  
The Washington Post  
Carrie Duran didn’t have to scrounge too much when her rent came due in April. The 48-year-old single mother covered the bill with the \$1,200 federal stimulus check she received that month.  
But May soon would prove to be much tougher. Her hours working for a local nonprofit had been cut dramatically. She wasn’t receiving unemploy-

ment benefits in her home state of New Hampshire. She had three kids to feed, a daughter with Down syndrome to support, a car payment that hounded her so much that creditors called her five times on Mother’s Day alone — an ever-growing list of responsibilities competing for her attention and her ever-dwindling bank account.  
“You have to think about what is the most important thing,” Duran said, “and a roof over our head is the most

important thing.”  
As the coronavirus pandemic threatens to lapse late into the year, many families in New Hampshire and across the six-state New England region are coming to a similar, scary realization: It’s never been easy to afford a home or apartment here, and it’s about to become even more difficult.  
With unemployment skyrocketing — and some federal financial aid weeks away from running dry — millions of

local residents newly find themselves at risk of prolonged financial hardship, perhaps even staring down the once-unfathomable prospect of homelessness. Despite the U.S. government’s efforts to halt evictions and extend \$3 trillion in aid, many say they fear falling behind on their rent or mortgage and lack the means to put off some of those payments until their bank accounts — and the broader economy —  
**SEE DATA PAGE B2**

### McDONALD’S WARNS OF FRANCHISE CULLING, OFFERS AID

McDonald’s Corp. is estimating that tens of millions of dollars will be needed to help U.S. franchisees, but has also warned that some distressed franchisees may need to downsize or sell off locations.  
The company has earmarked about \$40 million in aid for restaurant owners that are in crisis following the covid-19 lockdown, according to documents and internal emails viewed by Bloomberg News.  
Temporary assistance will be available on a case-by-case basis, and franchisees are expected to work with the parent company to “find a suitable financial solution,” according to documents and an internal email. Aid will likely come in the form of rent and service fee deferrals for operators that have a large portion of restaurants in malls, airports and other areas hardest hit by the pandemic.



ANGUS MORDANT/BLOOMBERG

**Cones sit on top of tables to prevent customers from dining inside a McDonald’s location in New Rochelle, N.Y.**  
Nevertheless, franchisees that want aid beyond the existing measures were advised by McDonald’s U.S. President Joe Erlinger that they may have to consider selling locations or seeking other alternatives.  
— Bloomberg

### Starbucks CEO says sales at two thirds of 2019 levels

Starbucks Corp. Chief Executive Officer Kevin Johnson said that sales are recovering as the coffee chain moves toward normalizing its operations.  
“Over the last week, we have now regained about 60-65% of prior year comparable U.S. store sales while reopening under modified operations and with reduced hours,” Johnson said in a statement. “In China, we have seen progress as well and our comparable store sales have reached about 80% of prior year levels, reflecting gradual improvements over the past several weeks.”  
The coffee giant is being closely watched as a barometer of consumers’ willingness to leave their homes and open their wallets following the intense lockdown measures that brought much of the economy to a standstill in the U.S. and beyond.  
— Bloomberg



GABBY JONES/BLOOMBERG

**Pedestrians walk past a temporarily closed Starbucks coffee shop in the Brooklyn borough of New York.**