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## Fwd: NewsBank Hot Topics - August 2020

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From: **NewsBank** <pcomrie@newsbank.com>  
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To: <juliettedouglas@sixmilerld.org>

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**NewsBank Hot Topics**  
August 2020

### Current Events

#### **BUSINESS: Pfizer's Covid-19 Research**

**TOPIC:** The multinational pharmaceutical company Pfizer Inc. is partnering with the German pharmaceutical company BioNTech to create a vaccine and has recently announced that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has given four of their vaccines fast track status. How does the coronavirus damage the body and what is the science behind how these vaccines can help protect the public from this virus?

How does the partnership work between these two companies? How does the U.S. FDA make its decisions on vaccines?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Pfizer AND vaccine AND (coronavirus OR "COVID-19" OR COVID19 OR "COVID 19")

### **ECONOMICS: Worldwide – Covid-19's Economic Impacts Felt**

**TOPIC:** Countries around the world have endured varying periods of lockdown but have decided to try to get their economies started again. Some countries were very successful in containing the disease, others were less so. Which countries after re-opening felt the need to re-enter lockdowns either wholly or regionally? Did some regions around the world successfully re-start their economies? How did they define successful in this context?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Covid-19 AND economy

### **EDUCATION: School Reopening During Covid-19**

**TOPIC:** Schools and colleges around the world are evaluating how they can best serve their students and developing a variety of plans, most often with a partial reopening of schools under strict guidelines to keep their students safe from the Covid-19 virus. What are some of the common patterns that schools may implement to regulate student behavior while in school buildings? What are some factors determining how student populations are split between classroom and distance learning? What are some challenges to distance learning? What are some technologies that are helping schools to manage this? What are some new and innovative laws and guidelines that are helping schools with these opening plans?

**SEARCH TERMS:** (schools OR colleges) and covid-19 and (reopen OR reopening OR re-open OR re-opening) AND students

### **HEALTH: Worldwide – Lead Poisoning**

**TOPIC:** UNICEF has released a report claiming that one-third of the world's children have levels of lead in their blood that require action. How does lead poisoning affect the mental and physical development of children? How are children exposed to lead? Where is the danger the greatest?

**SEARCH TERMS:** children AND "lead poisoning" AND UNICEF

### **SCIENCE: Sun Photos**

**TOPIC:** NASA, in collaboration with the European Space Agency (ESA), has received the closest photos ever taken of the sun from the spacecraft Solar Orbiter. What do these photos reveal that hadn't been seen before? What were the biggest technical challenges in getting photos this close?

**SEARCH TERMS:** NASA AND "Super Orbiter" AND Sun

## **Business and Economics**

### **BUSINESS: Pfizer's Covid-19 Research**

**TOPIC:** The multinational pharmaceutical company Pfizer Inc. is partnering with the German pharmaceutical company BioNTech to create a vaccine and has recently announced that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has given four of their vaccines fast track status. How does the coronavirus damage the body and what is the science behind how these vaccines can help protect the public from this virus? How does the partnership work between these two companies? How does the U.S. FDA make its decisions on vaccines?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Pfizer AND vaccine AND (coronavirus OR "COVID-19" OR COVID19 OR "COVID 19")

**BUSINESS: Australia – Payments for Commercial Media**

**TOPIC:** The Australian government has announced that it will pass a law forcing Facebook and Google to negotiate within three months payments for the use of Australian-media generated content with the media companies. It will expand this to others over time. What are the arguments the government is making in favor of this act? How are the companies responding to this proposal?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Australia AND "media companies" AND (Facebook OR Google)

**BUSINESS: High Tech Companies Testify**

**TOPIC:** The CEOs of Amazon, Apple, Google and Facebook have testified to the U.S. House Judiciary Committee that is inquiring into how these companies may negatively impact free and fair competition. What were some of the main specifics being investigated and what has been discovered? How do each of these companies influence the industries they are in and what are the benefits to the public? What may be hurtful to the public?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Amazon AND Apple AND Google AND Facebook AND (House OR congressional) AND (hearing OR hearings)

**ECONOMICS: Worldwide – Covid-19's Economic Impacts Felt**

**TOPIC:** Countries around the world have endured varying periods of lockdown but have decided to try to get their economies started again. Some countries were very successful in containing the disease, others were less so. Which countries after re-opening felt the need to re-enter lockdowns either wholly or regionally? Did some regions around the world successfully re-start their economies? How did they define successful in this context?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Covid-19 AND economy

**ECONOMICS: Gold Hits Record**

**TOPIC:** The price of gold has hit a new record high. What has driven this price up? When was the United States on the gold standard, how did that work and why did we come off of it?

**SEARCH TERMS:** gold AND price AND (investment OR investors OR investing) AND record

**ECONOMICS: Record Monthly Budget Deficit**

**TOPIC:** The United States monthly budget deficit hit a record in June of \$684 billion dollars largely due to spending to help the economy during the COVID-19 crisis. How is the monthly budget deficit measured? What are some ways to retain the needed aid while bringing costs down?

**SEARCH TERMS:** monthly AND budget AND deficit AND June

**ECONOMICS: Economy's Record Second Quarter Decline**

**TOPIC:** The U.S. economy contracted by nearly 1/3 in the second quarter (April-June) of 2020 which is an historic record drop for the United States. How is this quarterly economic status measured and what are the key factors that drove this economic decline? What measures has the federal government taken to try to correct this? What are some examples of other major economic declines in our history and what are some ways we have helped the economy recover? What is unique and challenging about this decline?

**SEARCH TERMS:** ("gross domestic product" OR GDP) AND (Q2 OR "second quarter") AND economy AND (coronavirus OR "COVID-19" OR COVID19 OR "COVID 19")

**FINANCE: COVID-19 Relief**

**TOPIC:** Specifics about the next group of COVID-19 relief checks are being debated in the U.S. Congress. What are the key issues that are being debated and what are the controversies? What are the most convincing arguments on either side of this debate?

**SEARCH TERMS:** (coronavirus OR "COVID-19" OR COVID19 OR "COVID 19") AND (relief OR stimulus) AND checks AND debate

## Civics, Government and Politics

**GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Canada – Trudeau Ethics Probe**

**TOPIC:** It was discovered that members of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's family have been receiving speaking fees from the WE Charity, which in June was awarded a government contract to manage a government grant program for student volunteers helping with the coronavirus crisis. His mother, Margaret, his brother, Alexandre and his wife, Sophie Gregoire, all received payments. Trudeau has appeared before a parliamentary committee to answer questions about this. What was Trudeau's approach in responding to the committee? Are any laws alleged to have been broken? What other ethics missteps has Trudeau made since becoming prime minister?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Justin Trudeau" AND "WE Charity"

**GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Faithless Electors**

**TOPIC:** The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that members of the Electoral College are beholden to vote for the candidate they are pledged to. What is meant by a "faithless elector"? What are the strongest arguments for and against this court decision?

**SEARCH TERMS:** ("faithless elector" OR "faithless electors") AND "Supreme Court"

**GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Political Conventions**

**TOPIC:** The Republican and Democratic parties are planning how they are going to organize their conventions during the COVID-19 pandemic. What are the major plans for each party and how have they changed over the last several months? What are the biggest challenges to having an online convention and what are the challenges in holding it in a convention hall?

**SEARCH TERMS:** (Biden OR Trump) AND convention AND (coronavirus OR "COVID-19" OR COVID19 OR "COVID 19")

**GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Hong Kong – Elections Postponed**

**TOPIC:** The Hong Kong government has decided to postpone September's local elections for a year, citing concerns about the current coronavirus crisis. The disease has begun to surge again in early July, but pro-democracy legislators claim this is an excuse. Just before this announcement, twelve pro-democracy candidates were told they could not run in the election. Why is Hong Kong the only part of China that has opposition candidates running in its elections? How does the new security law impact pro-democracy demonstrations and how do regulations around Covid-19 impact them?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Hong Kong" AND elections

**HISTORY: Australia – Palace Letters Revealed**

**TOPIC:** Letters between the Governor General of Australia Sir John Kerr and Buckingham Palace in the run-up to his dismissal of Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam reveal that the Queen did not know in advance of the dismissal. By what authority did Kerr act and how controversial was his action at the time? What was the reason for Kerr dismissing the prime minister? What else has been revealed through these letters? Was there a long-term impact to Kerr's actions?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Gough Whitlam" AND "Palace Letters"

**HISTORY: Tulsa Race Riots**

**TOPIC:** A search in Tulsa, Oklahoma to find a mass grave from the 1921 Tulsa Riots has ended with no human remains found. What were the events that led to a group of white rioters entering a black neighborhood and attacking them with brutal violence? What was the predominantly black Tulsa neighborhood of Greenwood like before the attack?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Tulsa AND (riot OR riots OR massacre) AND Greenwood AND 1921

## Social Issues

**CRIME AND LAW: Portland Protests**

**TOPIC:** Black Lives Matter protests in Portland have faced strong tactics from law enforcement officers sent in by the federal government. What has been the level of violence among the protesters and what were the tactics used by the police? What lawsuits were issued as a consequence? What were some other reactions from the public and state politicians to federal police tactics?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Portland AND ("Black Lives Matter" OR "George Floyd") AND federal AND ("law enforcement" OR police)

**EDUCATION: School Reopening During Covid-19**

**TOPIC:** Schools and colleges around the world are evaluating how they can best serve their students and developing a variety of plans, most often with a partial reopening of schools under strict guidelines to keep their students safe from the Covid-19 virus. What are some of the common patterns that schools may implement to regulate student behavior while in school buildings? What are some factors determining how student populations are split between classroom and distance learning? What are some challenges to distance learning? What are some technologies that are helping schools to manage this? What are some new and innovative laws and guidelines that are helping schools with these opening plans?

**SEARCH TERMS:** (schools OR colleges) and covid-19 and (reopen OR reopening OR re-open OR re-opening) AND students

**EDUCATION: International Students**

**TOPIC:** The Trump Administration has stepped back from its policy of stripping visas from international students except for first-year or new students. What prestigious schools have filed lawsuits against this policy and why? How is this impacting schools?

**SEARCH TERMS:** (international OR foreign) AND students AND Trump AND visa AND online

**RELIGION: Religious Work Laws and Teachers**

**TOPIC:** The U.S. Supreme Court has decided that religious protection in the workplace does not apply to lay teachers at religious elementary

schools. What are the details of this decision? What are the most compelling arguments for and against this Supreme Court decision?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Supreme Court" AND "Morrissey-Berru" AND (religion OR religious)

**RELIGION: Turkey – A Mosque Reopens**

**TOPIC:** The Hagia Sophia is allowed to return to being a mosque following a court ruling and Muslim prayers have been said in it. Built in 537, it was a Christian church until the Turkish conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Who ordered it built and what was notable about its construction? What changes were made to the building when it became a mosque? Why was it turned into a museum in 1935 and why has it been returned to being a mosque?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Hagia Sophia" AND mosque

**SOCIAL RELATIONS: China – Repression of Uighurs**

**TOPIC:** It has come out that China is forcing Uighur women to have abortions and to use birth control while encouraging Han Chinese in Xinjiang to have more births. This comes as China has put tens or hundreds of thousands of Uighurs in re-education camps. How long has China controlled the Uighur territories? When did the current crackdown on Uighurs begin? What excuse is China using to justify their actions?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Uighurs AND ("birth control" OR abortions)

**SOCIAL RELATIONS: Cancel Culture**

**TOPIC:** Growing concerns over a trend, often called "cancel culture" on college campuses and in public life that tries to censor views rather than challenging them in open debate has spurred an array of well-known scholars, academics, activists and writers to publish "*A Letter on Justice and Open Debate*" in Harper's Magazine. What are some of the tactics that censor or intimidate people from sharing frank opinions? What have been the arguments from people who either support the concepts of cancel culture or claim it doesn't exist in any significant way? How is the idea of compromise that evolves from opposing views reflected in our system of government and what are some historic examples of its use in U.S. history?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "cancel culture" AND ("A Letter on Justice and Open Debate" OR "The Harper's Letter")

## Science, Technology and Health

**FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: France – Rebuilding Notre Dame**

**TOPIC:** French President Emmanuel Macron has decided to rebuild famed cathedral Notre Dame exactly as it was, including the use of lead in the reconstruction. Originally, he had asked for modern additions to be submitted with the plans. Did he say why he changed his mind? When would he like the work to be completed? Where in the rebuilding process is the cathedral?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Notre Dame" AND cathedral AND rebuilding

**FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Controversial Mural**

**TOPIC:** A lawsuit has been filed arguing that a controversial mural depicting slavery that the University of Kentucky has planned to remove is a publicly owned rare piece of art that promotes education and the arts. What is the history of this mural and how was it involved with President

Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal? Who was the artist, what were her comments regarding this mural and what arts organization did she found in Marin County, California? How does the context of the time impact the perception of history, or the meaning of a depiction viewed as art?

**SEARCH TERMS:** O'Hanlon AND mural AND Kentucky

**LITERATURE: *Too Much and Never Enough***

**TOPIC:** President Trump's niece Mary Trump has written a book called *Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man* about the Trump family dynamics. What are some of the most discussed parts of this book and why? Who is Mary Trump's father and what do we learn about him? What is Mary Trump's profession and why does her profession give her perceived credibility in analyzing the Trump family? What has been the reaction from President Trump to this book and what has been the response from the public and the critics?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "*Too Much and Never Enough*" AND ("Mary Trump" OR "Mary L. Trump")

**LITERATURE: Great Britain – Prize Winning Poet**

**TOPIC:** Jamaican-born poet Linton Kwesi Johnson has won the PEN Pinter Prize. This prize, named for Harold Pinter, is given to writers from Britain or a resident in Britain who combines literary merit with a clear gaze of the world. What is notable about Johnson's poetry? What other art forms has he participated in? Who are some of the other authors who have won this prize and what do their work have in common with Johnson's poetry?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Linton Kwesi Johnson"

**MOVIES AND TELEVISION: Italy/Canada – Festivals Will Go On**

**TOPIC:** Both the Venice Film Festival and the Toronto International Film Festival will be occurring in September, they have announced. The two festivals have taken different approaches as to how they will operate in the time of Covid-19. What are the similarities between the two plans? What are the differences between them? What films will be seen at each festival?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Venice Film Festival" OR "Toronto International Film Festival"

**MOVIES AND TELEVISION: *Hamilton* on Disney+**

**TOPIC:** The film version of the popular Broadway musical *Hamilton* has been shown on the streaming service Disney+. When is the planned theater release date and why was it decided to have an earlier release on Disney+? What has been the reaction to this by the critics and the public?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Hamilton AND musical AND (Disney+ OR "Disney Plus")

**MUSIC: Folklore**

**TOPIC:** Taylor Swift has issued a surprise release on her new album called *Folklore* in which she explores new musical territory for her by mixing folk music with other genres in storytelling songs. How did she and her fellow musicians produce this album during the COVID-19 pandemic while remaining in isolation? What are some musical genres that critics have used to describe the music on *Folklore* and how has her album been received?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Taylor Swift" AND *Folklore*

**MUSIC: Great Britain – Peter Green**

**TOPIC:** Peter Green was one of the founding members of Fleetwood Mac



and one of its early songwriters. His career was blighted by mental illness exacerbated by drug use. How did he come to form Fleetwood Mac and what songs did he write for them? How did he make a return to performing in 1995 and how successful was that return? What were his notable attributes as a guitarist?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Peter Green"

### **PERFORMING ARTS: Italy – La Scala Will Be Open**

**TOPIC:** Milan's Teatro alla Scala has announced its fall schedule. It will start with a concert by its orchestra of Verdi's Requiem in honor of the victims of coronavirus to be performed in the Milan cathedral. It will include two operas staged as concerts, with a fully staged opera in November. What other performances will take place? Who are some of the artists scheduled to appear? Are other Italian cultural institutions re-opening?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "La Scala" AND "fall season"

### **PERFORMING ARTS: Dance on Camera Festival**

**TOPIC:** The annual Dance on Camera festival is being presented digitally for the first time. What is the Dance on Camera festival and what is its history? Who are some of the key dancers in the films this year?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Dance on Camera" AND "Dance Films" AND "Lincoln Center"

## People

### **PEOPLE: John Lewis**

**TOPIC:** John Lewis was a leader in the civil rights movement from the era of Dr. Martin Luther King to the present as well as a longstanding member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Georgia. What are some of the civil rights groups that Lewis was involved with, what was his role and how effective was he? What is some of the key legislation that he led to passage during his career in the U.S. House of Representatives? What are some key civil rights events that he played a major roll?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "John Lewis" AND "civil rights" AND (Rep. OR Representatives OR Georgia OR "Pettus Bridge" OR "Freedom Riders" OR SNCC OR "March on Washington")

### **PEOPLE: South Africa – Andrew Mlangeni**

**TOPIC:** Andrew Mlangeni was the last surviving member of the African National Congress defendants of the Rivonia trial. Among his co-defendants was Nelson Mandela. After the end of apartheid, Mlangeni became a parliamentarian. Who were some of the other defendants at the Rivonia trial? What were they charged with in 1963? How long did Mlangeni stay in jail? What did current South African president Cyril Ramaphosa say about Mlangeni's passing?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Andrew Mlangeni"

### **PEOPLE: Italy – Ennio Morricone**

**TOPIC:** Ennio Morricone was best known for the film scores of Clint Eastwood's spaghetti westerns in the 1960s. In his lengthy career, Oscar-winner Morricone worked with some of the greatest filmmakers around the world. What were some of the films he scored? For which film did he win the Oscar? What other forms of music did he write?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Ennio Morricone"

### **PEOPLE: Charlie Daniels**



**TOPIC:** Charlie Daniels was an American songwriter and musician known mainly for his contributions to the musical genres of southern rock, country and bluegrass music. What instruments was he known to play with expertise and what famous recordings was he on as a session musician? What are some of his most famous songs? What are the qualities of his music that impress music critics and his fans?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Charlie Daniels" AND "country music"

**PEOPLE: Nick Cordero**

**TOPIC:** Nick Cordero was a distinguished actor in theater as well as film and television, most celebrated for his role of Cheech in the Broadway musical *Bullets Over Broadway*. What qualities of his role as Cheech impressed the critics and what awards was he nominated for regarding that role? What are some of the films and TV shows he has acted in, what were the qualities of his acting that impressed critics and fans?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Nick Cordero" AND "*Bullets Over Broadway*"

**PEOPLE: C.T. Vivian**

**TOPIC:** Author and minister Cordy Tindell (C.T.) Vivian played a major role in the civil rights movement, often working closely with Dr. Martin Luther King. What are some key civil rights events that he was involved with and what did he do? What book did he write in 1970 and what were some of its main points?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "C.T. Vivian" AND "Martin Luther King" AND "civil rights"

**PEOPLE: Olivia de Havilland**

**TOPIC:** Olivia de Havilland was a distinguished actress during what is often referred to as the Golden Age of Hollywood. What is the timeframe and what are the qualities that define Hollywood's Golden Age? What are some of her most acclaimed films?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Olivia de Havilland"

**PEOPLE: Taiwan – Lee Teng-hui**

**TOPIC:** Lee Teng-hui, who was president of Taiwan from 1988 to 2000. A Taiwanese native, he was known for bringing direct elections to the island nation and was a strong defender of its sovereignty against Chinese claims that it was a part of the mainland. What was Lee's background and how did he get involved in politics? What domestic reforms did he champion? What were some of the notable events of his years in office?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Lee Teng-hui"

**PEOPLE: Hugh Downs**

**TOPIC:** Hugh Downs had a long career as a television broadcaster spanning almost the entire second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is perhaps best remembered as a co-host of NBC's *Today Show* and as a news anchor on ABC's *20/20*. How did he get his start in broadcasting and how did he advance? What were his qualities as a broadcaster that made him successful?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Hugh Downs" AND news AND (anchor OR broadcaster OR broadcasting)

**PEOPLE: Jody Daniels**

**TOPIC:** Jody Daniels is the first female Army Reserve commander in U.S. history. What is her background in the military and what are some of her greatest accomplishments? How many Commanding Generals of the Army Reserve are there and what are the responsibilities of this position?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Jody Daniels" AND "Army Reserve" AND (General OR Command OR Commander)

**PEOPLE: Regis Philbin**

**TOPIC:** Regis Philbin was a man honored by the *Guinness Book of World Records* for being on U.S. television for the most hours by hosting talk shows, game shows as well as a variety of other appearances. What television shows was he most famous for and why was he successful? In what 1967 TV role did he get his first regular network TV exposure?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Regis Philbin"

**PEOPLE: Herman Cain**

**TOPIC:** Herman Cain was a successful business man in the restaurant industry, an economic advisor to Senator Bob Dole and a 2012 candidate for U.S. president. What executive positions did he hold in the restaurant industry and what were his key successes? What was his role in the Kemp Commission? What was his political platform as a presidential candidate and what were his biggest challenges as a candidate?

**SEARCH TERMS:** "Herman Cain" AND (presidential OR president OR candidate) AND (executive OR CEO)

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