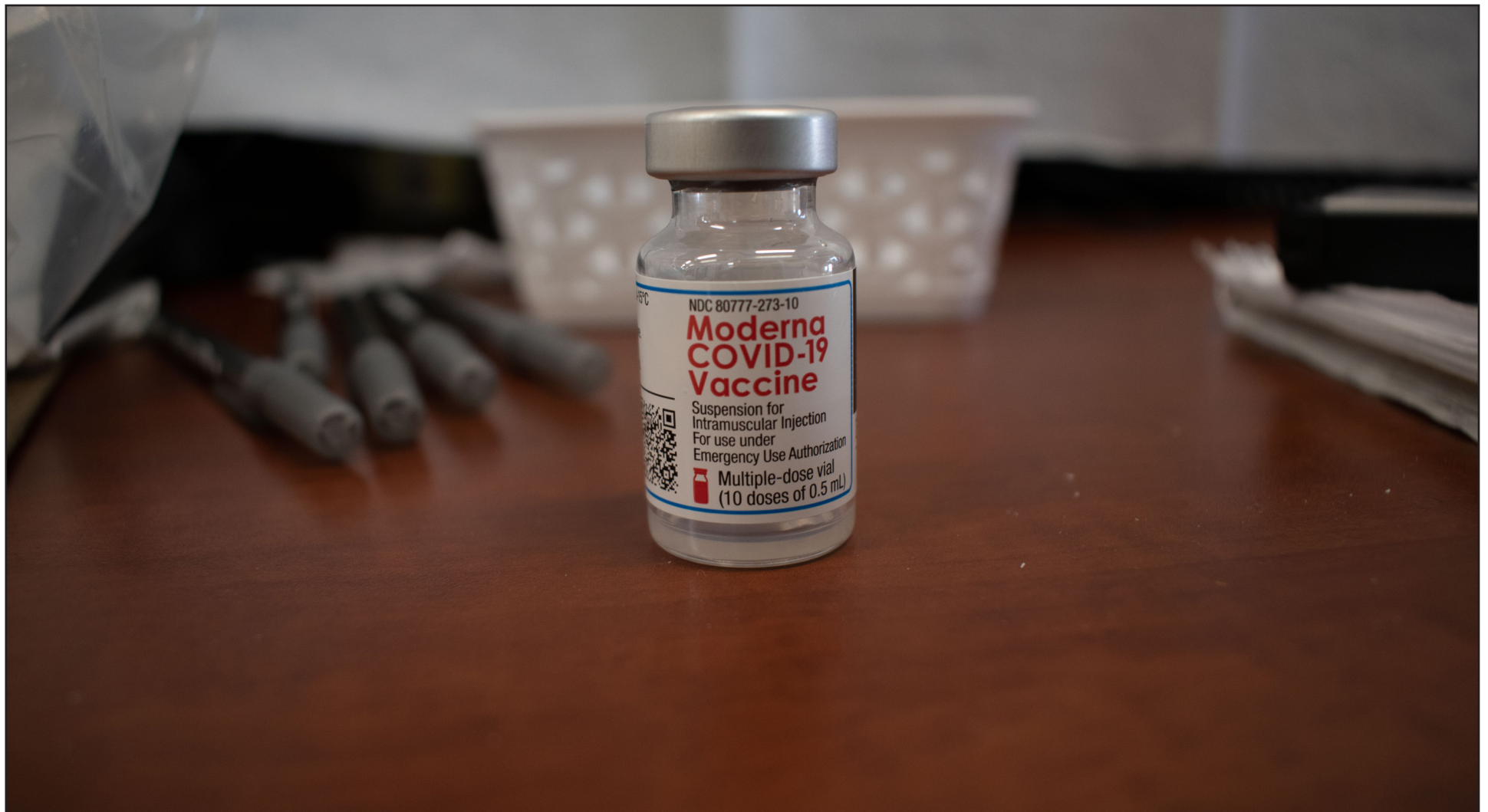


## Cerritos College awaits vaccination site



VINCENT MEDINA/TM

**COVID-19:** On Feb. 3, Cerritos College held its regular board meeting via Zoom where Dr. Jose Fierro explained the issues with getting a community vaccination site. Based on the difficulty in getting the approval for the community vaccination site, the college has shifted its priority to getting approval for a smaller vaccination site that will be ran though the student health center for faculty and staff.

Jacqueline Cochran  
News Editor  
@talonmarks

In January, Cerritos College announced that negotiations were underway and an official Los Angeles County vaccine site opening at the college was imminent.

At the February 3 Board of Trustees meeting President Dr. Jose Fierro, Superintendent of Cerritos College, said that Blue Shield is would now be the provider of COVID-19 vaccines at the state level, as indicated by a directive from the L.A. County Public Health Department.

“What this means is that they are going to take the distribution to the local level. They are basically going to use local clinics, community hospitals and drug stores to be able to deliver vaccines in smaller numbers but in more locations to try to reach a larger portion of the population.

“This is actually good news for the communities around our institution that often times do not get access to the larger vaccination sites, because you cannot drive or be away from home for too long and so on. This is a step in the right direction in order to reach more of our population,” said Fierro.

“The bad news is until that partnership is completed, it is unlikely that we will be deployed as a community vaccination site. They are continuing to concentrate on the transition and maintaining the supply line for the mega sites.”

Currently, there are approximately eight super sites being operated by the LA County Public Health Department. They are located at Dodgers Stadium, Magic Mountain, the Pomona Fairplex, the Forum, Cal State Northridge, El Sereno Recreation Center, the L.A. County Office

of Education in Downey and the Balboa Sports Complex in Encino.

Although the community vaccination designation may not happen, Cerritos College is still slated to distribute the vaccine to employees and students.

Cerritos Colleges’ Student Health Center is enrolled in the California Department of Health and COVID-19 ready vaccination program.

“We have received approval and are now on the waiting list to receive vaccines. This is totally separate and apart from the community site that the county would be in charge of on campus. And it would be on a much smaller scale,” said Dr. Hillary Mennella, Associate Dean of Student Health and Wellness.

“I’m not sure how much vaccine we will receive or exactly when we will begin receiving it,” Mennella said.

According to Dr. Fierro, the college

vaccination site should be able to begin scheduling appointments for employees to receive the vaccination at some point in mid February.

“The hang-up on this is the availability of the vaccine. Vaccinations sites for educators in those counties that have not opened yet should be available sometime later this month, however this situation is fluid and ever changing,” Fierro said.

Vaccine’s are being administered to individuals that are higher risk of exposure..

At the present time, this is health care workers and senior citizens who are 65 years of age or older.

According to the official COVID-19 site for California, 7, 437, 925 vaccinations have been administered as of Feb. 22. Out of those, 1,827,609 were received and administered in Los Angeles County. Another 9,857,175 have been divided and shipped to the various counties for



Community-page 3: Restaurants re-open



Life-page 5: Nurses talk emotional toll



A & E- page 7: Professor bands with students





EDGAR MENDOZA/TM ARCHIVES

**Investigation:** Women's soccer players came forward after Ash Webb publicly shared her experiences with certain soccer coaches on social media. The investigation was approximately six months and was announced closed on Jan. 20, 2021.

## Cerritos College closes soccer investigation

Daniel Suarez Jr.  
Managing Editor  
@talonmarks

A nearly 6 month investigation involving the alleged misconduct of several Cerritos College women's soccer coaches has finally concluded. A Jan. 19 letter addressed to Ash Webb, the first former player to come forward and speak on her experiences while attending Cerritos, was posted on the alumni's social media account.

"The office of human resources determined that some of the allegations were sustained," said Adriana Flores-Church, the vice president of human resources and assistant superintendent. Later on Wednesday afternoon, a public statement was posted on the college's website. Neither the letter nor the statement detailed which allegations or which coaches were implicated in the investigation.

Former players made accusations against Head Coach Ruben Gonzalez, assistant coaches Memo Gonzalez, Ana Ramirez, Octavio Marquez and Pat Rossi. Gonzalez was placed on administrative leave and the assistant coaches were not rehired

pending the investigation results.

Most of the coaches, such as former L.A. Galaxy competitor Memo Gonzales, are themselves accomplished and accoladed soccer players who, along with Cerritos, coach for other girls soccer programs in colleges, high schools and youth clubs. Ruben Gonzalez, Ramirez, Rossi and Whitfield were all involved in several youth and competitive soccer programs in the Southern California region.

On Aug. 12 of last year, Webb posted a series videos titled "sexual harassment I encountered at Cerritos College" on her Instagram account. She detailed a number of alleged incidents with coaches from her first time practicing on the pitch. Several former players reached out to Webb afterwards sharing experiences of their own in the women's soccer program. Webb also posted screenshots of their testimonial on Instagram.

From lewd comments to inappropriate invitations to one coaches home, Webb described an environment of unchecked sexual harassment and verbal abuse created by the coaches' behavior and the lack of accountability

within the program.

Talon Marks reporting found that the coaches were previously investigated for an earlier incident that took place on one of the program's annual trips to play in other regions of the U.S., which at that time took place in Seattle.

A former coach for the women's soccer program, Jose Alfredo, alleges that he witnessed the coaching staff "drinking with 5 student athletes" while occupying multiple hotel rooms. A former player and team captain of the team, Alixandria Zabal, was on this trip, and corroborated stories of private get-togethers in coaches hotel rooms, players getting their phones taken at night and tape being placed on the outside of hotel doors.

While the team was under investigation, Zabal recalls Gonzalez instructing the team not to implicate him or the coaching staff or they would be jeopardizing their next trip to an out of state tournament. Zabal also alleges incidents where one coach, Brett Whitfield, made inappropriate and unwanted .....

[Read more on Talonmarks.com](#)

## Police forum offers policy suggestions



JACQUELINE COCHRAN/TM

**Panelist:** (From left to right) Sean Davis, Dr. Sheila Hill, Daniel Suarez, sign-language interpreter, Dr. Chris Richardson, Student Trustee Johnny Wallace, Campus Police Chief Don Mueller and President Jose Fierro. The panelist participated in Cerritos College Public Forum on Jan. 28, 2021. Black Lives Matter movement and campus police reform were the main topics of discussion.

Jacqueline Cochran  
News Editor  
@talonmarks

Vincent Medina  
Community Editor  
@talonmarks

Cerritos College Falcons Rising and Talon Marks hosted a Racial Justice and Equity Forum on Jan. 28. The Black Lives Matter Movement Dialogue, titled "Turning from National Rhetoric to Campus Action," was and focused on potential policy changes to address campus safety and policing.

The panelists in attendance were President Jose Fierro, Campus Police Chief Don Mueller, Student Trustee Johnny Wallace, faculty Dr. Sheila Hill and Dr. Chris Richardson.

It was moderated by Editor in Chief of Talon Marks, Sean Davis, and Managing Editor Daniel Suarez. Professor Joy Tshako acted as executive moderator and coordinator for the event.

Moderator Davis posed

the initial question, "What are your thoughts on the Black Lives Matter movement, police reform and police abolition?"

"These are my personal views, not necessarily the views of the district," Fierro said, signaling that any policy changes were unlikely.

"It is not enough to say 'I'm not racist.' It's not enough to say 'I'm in support of this or that.' We need to act in an anti-racist way," he said. "If you're doing nothing, then clearly you are endorsing the behavior."

"We should all expect the same from the police. If their purpose is to serve and protect, I should be served and protected regardless of the color of my skin," said Fierro.

"I want to know how we are going to understand our students and their lived experience," said Dr. Hill. "Then let that inform us in terms of the type of campus safety and campus policing that we do."

When students come to campus, it doesn't stop. The way they arrive on campus is the way they need to be ..."

[Read more on Talonmarks.com](#)

## Cerritos College Umoja Success program molds next Black leaders



COURTESY OF CHELENA FISHER

**Black students success program:** (From left to right) Prof. Damon Cagnolatti, Dr. Shelia Hill, Dr. Chelena Fisher, Ms. Clara Ross-Jones at the 2018 California Umoja Conference. They continue to lead the program at Cerritos College.

Lola Ajetunmobi  
Social Media Editor  
@talonmarks

The Umoja Success Program is a statewide program designed by educators in the Bay Area in Northern California who were alarmed at African American students' nominal retention rates.

The Umoja program at Cerritos College, which began in 2012, believes that it is essential for Black people, who have been continuously marginalized in this country, to be heard at Cerritos College.

Less than six percent of students at Cerritos College are Black.

Umoja is a word meaning

unity and the importance of togetherness among family and community members.

The program is the catalyst for helping students achieve success in their personal, academic, and professional life beyond Cerritos College.

While the country takes time out of the shortest month of the year to recognize Black leaders and their contribution, the Umoja program celebrates Black success year-round.

Dr. Shelia Hill, a professor in the Counseling department and a leader in the Umoja program at Cerritos College, says Black History month is significant to the Umoja program.

However, Hill said it is not

a focus because "we celebrate it every day."

Hill believes it is essential to teach Black history to our students, primarily Black students, who do not have this sort of access at home.

Umoja feels that Black History month starts by acknowledging and appreciating Black students and inspiring the confidence to follow in other Black leaders' footsteps. Students must learn about the people who look like them and made a difference, big or small.

Dr. Fisher, another professor in the Counseling department and a leader in the program.....

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](#)



# Churches cautiously resume in-person services



VINCENT N. MEDINA/TM

**Churches reopening in-person services:** Saint John of God church in Norwalk held an indoor Ash Wednesday service on February 17, 2021. The congregation is required to social distance and wear a mask.

Vincent Medina  
Community Editor  
@talonmarks

Churches in LA County are trying to keep their congregation safe during in-person services after the ban was lifted by the Supreme Court on Feb. 5.

Despite evidence from the World Health Organization and the CDC that COVID-19 is more contagious in closed spaces, churches have decided to take advantage of the ruling to hold services indoors.

The Saint John of God Church in Norwalk continues to hold indoor services at 7:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. "Those who attend the morning mass Monday through

Saturday are no more than 150 people. That's not even at 25% capacity. If we have more than 125 people, we will move outside," said Pastor Raymond Decipeda.

He has modified Saint John of God to try and keep his congregation safe. Every other pew is closed off, hand sanitizers are placed along the aisles and seats are marked for people to maintain a safe distance.

"When people come in, they use the sanitizing spray and rags to clean their seat. When they leave, they spray and clean it again," the pastor said.

Decipeda argues that indoor services are safe.

"Do the science," he said. "How many churches have had an outbreak?"

The Grace Community Church in Sun Valley reported three Coronavirus cases after holding indoor services. Awaken Church campuses in San Diego are tied to 64 Coronavirus cases.

Pastor Decipeda justified not wearing a mask during indoor sermons as he claimed that when he is on the stage, behind the pulpit, he is more than 12 feet away from the first pew.

According to the WHO, droplets containing the virus can linger for long periods indoors with no ventilation. People spread these droplets when they talk without a mask.

The Saint Dominic Savio Church in Bellflower refuses to hold indoor services, choosing to hold mass outside or on zoom.

"Since June, all of our services have been outside," said Pastor Mike Gergen. "We are probably going to stay outside until the summer. We are not going to open the building again."

“Do the science. How many churches have had an outbreak?”

Pastor Raymond Decipeda  
Saint John of God Church Pastor

Gergen stated they lack the staff needed to sanitize their church for their multiple services. They also did not want to risk any

chemicals staining the furniture. In place of the church, sermons are held under large solar panels on the Dominic Savio campus. People can bring their own chairs, or listen from their cars.

"People are much more comfortable outside right now. We also try to keep interaction to a minimum," Gergen said.

When asked if he felt it would be dangerous to follow Saint John of God's plan to reopen, Gergen said it matters what the people think.

"My congregation feels better doing an outdoor service right now," he said.

Saint Dominic Savio Catholic Church held a socially distanced Ash Wednesday drive thru event on Feb. 17.

## LA County lifts ban, allows outdoor dining at restaurants

Vincent Medina  
Community Editor  
@talonmarks

LA County lifted restrictions on outdoor dining on Jan. 29, after the COVID-19 infection rate began to decline. One week after the restrictions were lifted, some restaurants are still struggling to stay open, while others are profiting from the extra business.

The Bellflower Diner at 17018 Bellflower Boulevard, in Bellflower, has followed Coronavirus safety restrictions since its implementation by only serving takeout and serving food outdoors when it is allowed.

Since the diner opened in 1978, it has remained a family business. It is owned by Ollie and Martha Padilla, as well as their son, Jonathan.

"Business is not like we expected it to be," said Mrs. Padilla. "We set up the tables outside, but nobody came. They would rather have the food to go."

Ollie estimated that the diner serves one customer an hour. They have laid-off four employees due to the slow business.

Jonathan stated that they would continue to obey restrictions, even if their business gets worse.

"At the end of the day, it's about people's safety," Jonathan said. "I don't want more people to get infected. We have a lot of older customers, and their health comes first."

Despite having an Instagram @bellflowerdiner, Uber Eats, Postmates, DoorDash and GrubHub, they are still struggling to compete with other restaurants.

"Taco Nazo takes the whole street to do business, and here there is no parking in the front of the restaurant," said Ollie. "The city does nothing to help us, but they (Taco Nazo) gets to take the whole street."

Taco Nazo at 10326 Alondra Blvd., Bellflower has acquired a city permit to have a designated

street lane to do their business.

"People come from different cities, but when they come and find no place to park, they are going to go somewhere else," he continued. "We have tried calling the city, but nobody answers. We have been waiting to hear back from them."

Just up the street, Fronk's at 16922 Bellflower Blvd, Bellflower, is having better success since reopening outdoor dining.

The sports-themed restaurant and bar opened in 2010 and has obeyed Coronavirus restrictions since they were set in place.

Since outdoor dining restrictions were lifted, they have reopened their outdoor patio to eager customers.

"It was definitely a struggle before outdoor dining was allowed. We were checking our finances daily," said Tony Acero, general manager of the restaurant. "Our success was dependent on our regulars and our customers. We made it through because of



VINCENT N. MEDINA/TM

**Outdoor dining reopens:** Customers enjoy an outdoor meal at Fronk's bar and restaurant on February 5, 2021. Fronk's has observed safety restrictions since they were implemented.

the people that support us."

Despite their financial struggles during the pandemic, Fronk's decided to put customer safety first.

"Staying open despite restrictions is a short-term mindset. If you do that, you are losing customers," the manager stated. "People who see you are open will tell others not to go to that restaurant. Then people who do come and break restrictions are usually not the most savory characters. It would create a hostile environment and put the health and safety of employees at risk."

Acero went on to say that Fronk's wanted to set an example to other restaurants in the area to observe safety protocols.

"We are one of the largest restaurants in the city. If other businesses see us breaking the rules, what's to stop them from doing the same?"

The restaurant has managed to promote its business through social media. They are on Instagram @eatatfronks, and Fronk's website gives information about their meal options.

Ahead of the Super Bowl on Feb. 27, Fronk's will continue to...

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](#)



## Inglewood Forum distributes second Pfizer vaccine doses



LOLA AJETUNMOBI/TM

**Forum vaccine:** Workers at the Inglewood Vaccine Site give patients their vaccine on February 10, 2021. Afterward, they held for 20-minute observations to check for any allergic reactions.

Lola Ajetunmobi  
Social Media Editor  
@talonmarks

Approximately 2,500 people were vaccinated for COVID-19 at the Inglewood vaccine site in the Forum parking lot on Feb. 10.

The second dose of the Pfizer Coronavirus vaccine became available to healthcare workers and patients 65 or older on Jan. 20. The Forum vaccination site is one of the five mega vaccination sites across Los Angeles county distributing the second shot.

The other sites are located at the Pomona Fairplex, Cal State Northridge, Six Flags Magic Mountain and the County Office of Education in Downey.

Appointments to receive the vaccine must be made through the LA Public Health Site.

Healthcare workers and people 65 or older are in the first tier to receive the vaccine. After receiving their first shot, they must wait 21 days before receiving their second dose.

Zhane Wright, a registered

nurse at the Forum vaccine site, stated that it is necessary to get both doses of the vaccine to achieve 95% immunity from the virus.

Doctors, nurses and volunteers worked from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to supply patients with their second dose of vaccines.

Volunteers Monique Collins and Jason Dawson said that they volunteer once a week. This is their fourth week volunteering at this site.

Read more at [Talonmarks.com](https://www.talonmarks.com)

## Norwalk addresses new programs during virtual city forum

Samuel Carey  
Staff Writer  
@talonmarks

The City of Norwalk held a virtual public forum on Jan. 28 to discuss events and new programs in the community. City residents also aired grievances with the homeless situation in the city.

Norwalk Mayor Jennifer Perez and city council members welcomed everyone to discuss problems in the city.

Councilmember and Public Safety Director, Grissel Chavez, discussed actions to help improve the city.

Chavez's department provides the service H.O.P.E (Homeless Operation Prevention and Engagement), which provides services to the less fortunate and conducts clean ups around the encampments on city, county and state property.

Chavez discussed how she is helping the homeless and advocated for the need for a Neighborhood Watch in Norwalk.

Assistant City Clerk Marissa Asistin went over several job openings in Norwalk.

"Emergency Food Assistance

Program will be provided to families in need," said Asistin.

She added that each program provided from the city will be either free or charged at a lower price.

Asistin also discussed youth and family services, which will be provided to families with children ages three to thirteen.

City Councilman John Ramirez discussed community development. Petitions were made for outdoor drive-in movie events and more indoor dining restaurants for the public.

Ramirez also went over business plans for the city, including reducing parking fees and making special events less expensive.

He plans on having more opportunities for people in the city by slowly and safely reopening stores.

Anonymous callers also had opinions about the topics at hand. One concerned resident asked about the homeless situation in the city.

Gabby Sorenos stated that her friend was walking by the now-abandoned Walmart in...

Read more at [Talonmarks.com](https://www.talonmarks.com)

## LAX caravan calls for federal and executive immigration reform

Vincent Medina  
Community Editor  
@talonmarks

A caravan of approximately 150 vehicles rode through LAX International Airport on Jan. 27 to call for President Biden's immigration reform bill's congressional approval.

The president's bill would carve a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

The protesters chose Jan. 27 in response to the fourth anniversary of the "Trump Muslim ban," which stopped immigration from several Muslim-majority countries.

The Biden administration has repealed the ban.

Vehicles lined up along the corner of Century and Avion Blvd., in front of the LAX shoe horn.

At 10 a.m. they rode in their cars, honking their horns and raising demands for congressional action on Biden's immigration bill.

Some onlookers in the terminal also held up signs with calls for new immigration policies.

They choose to do a caravan to follow COVID-19 safety guidelines. Organizers outside wore masks.

The Immigration reform organizations that sponsored the event included We Are All America, International Institute of Los Angeles, Arab American



VINCENT N MEDINA/TM

**Immigration Reform:** SEIU Labor Organizer, Felipe Caceres, gives a powerful speech to the pro-immigration caravan. SEIU and several other organizations called for immigration reform during the caravan at LAX on January 27, 2021.

Civil Council, No Muslim Ban Ever, MPower Change, Never Again Action - Los Angeles, Council on American-Islamic Regulations (California) and the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights.

The organizations used the hashtags #YestoRefugees, #AllofUs and #NoMuslimBanEver to raise awareness.

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) labor organizer Felipe Caceres addressed their calls to action.

"The reality is that Biden has

announced a day one immigration bill, but that bill has not been acted upon," Caceres said.

"We support the day one immigration bill, but we support it going through congress and becoming a law."

We Are All America refugee organizer Anahita Panahi's family was separated by Trump's travel ban. They can see each other again since the ban was lifted.

"I'm an immigrant. My parents are from Iran, which is one of the countries on the travel ban. I have family in Iran who were banned

from coming to the United States, and I could not visit them because of the tension between the two countries."

"Once things cool down with the pandemic, we look forward to seeing each other again. We want to make sure that Biden comes through on his promise for immigration reform," Panahi explained.

MPower Change Organizing Director Ishraq Ali stated that protests took place across the country that day supporting immigration reform.

"This is part of a coordinated effort of national actions that are happening. Right now, as we speak, there is an action happening in Washington D.C., there is another in Atlanta, GA, Seattle, WA and Denver, CO," Ali explained.

"Our idea is that we are coming together as several immigrant communities to demand that our safety and protections are recognized by our elected officials."

Some members of Congress have worked with these immigration reform organizations to pass progressive legislation.

"Representative Pramila Jayapal of WA is introducing the 'Roadmap to Freedom' legislation that has many regulations and protections for immigrant communities, reforming the immigration system and stopping surveillance of our communities," Ali stated.

"Congresswoman Judy Chu of CA was also one of the congressional sponsors when we tried to pass the 'No Ban' act in Congress last year."

Ali could not recall any Republican congress members who supported their proposed legislation.

Law enforcement observed the caravan but did not interfere with the peaceful protest as it rolled through the LAX shoe horn.

These organizations did not disclose any plans for future protests or caravans. They will continue to advocate for reform. .



# California nurses face heartache battling COVID-19



COURTESY OF ANA VALDORIA

**Front-line Workers:** Registered Nurse, Ana Valdoria, was deployed to assist with COVID-19 patients from the Apache Tribe and Navajo Nation. Valdoria poses in front of an air medical helicopter while wearing a mask and goggles, as she arrives at White River, Arizona on August 14, 2020.

Emily Melgar  
Opinion Editor  
@talonmarks

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to take an excruciating toll on front line healthcare workers in California.

Nurses on the front lines not only face constant potential COVID-19 exposure but have also experienced a debilitating amount of stress and emotions in the last 11 months.

Ana Valdoria, a registered nurse at Veterans Affairs Long Beach Healthcare System, has worked in the healthcare field for 26 years and says things were very chaotic and stressful when the pandemic first hit.

"It's very stressful even until now," Valdoria said.

Valdoria explains the stress they feel when there is a confirmed positive case and they try to trace back whether they were exposed themselves or not.

In addition to the risk exposure, the hospital is seeing an overflow of COVID-19 patients. The hospital had to create a Mobile Medical Hospital, which is made of tents in the parking lot in front of the hospital, to make room for more patients.

As the COVID-19 surge continues, Valdoria says their numbers are going up. She was recently deployed to Arizona to help the Navajo nation with their COVID-19 patients.

There she treated a 31-year-old COVID-19 patient on his birthday. "He could only say three words — not sentences — three words," Valdoria remembered. "Three words and he was done

and completely out of breath."

A message for those skeptics who question the virus, Valdoria tells them, "You really have to see it for yourself to even say anything. To be able to judge this whole situation."

“

There are people who suffer alone until the very last moment. Why would anyone want that for people?

Victoria Garcia  
Registered Nurse

”

As a mother, Valdoria also faces the burden of taking the role of a teacher with most schools doing online learning.

This is a challenge many adults in the U.S. face, and one Valdoria says has been difficult to juggle.

Valdoria received her first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine in mid January and will receive the second dose in February — this has alleviated some of her fear and anxiety.

"I hope to lead by example," Valdoria added, "Maybe more people will get the vaccine as they see more and more people getting it."

PIH Health Whittier Hospital registered nurse, Victoria Garcia, said the beginning of the pandemic was a scary time with so many unknowns.

Garcia explains her frustration after months of treating COVID-19 patients and feeling hopeless.

"You do everything you can,"

Garcia said, "and most of them will probably still die."

Garcia says that after treating COVID-19 patients for two to three weeks, the nurses become attached. Seeing them decline has made them cry and left them thinking of the deceased for days after they pass.

"We're almost grateful their families can't see them," Garcia said, "It would traumatize them. It almost traumatizes us and it's our job".

Garcia received both doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in January and is happy for the "extra layer of protection."

For Garcia, looking into the future means hoping for the day she can see her family without the fear of getting them sick.

Garcia also wishes that people who are skeptical about the vaccine or COVID-19 do their research.

"Look at the worse possible cases and imagine them being [your] family," Garcia said. "There are people who suffer alone until the very last moment. Why would anyone want that for people?"

Elena Rodriguez, a registered nurse at the Torrance Memorial Medical Center, also explained the same challenge of the unknown when the pandemic first hit in March 2020.

Rodriguez works in the specialty department for pediatrics at Torrance Memorial and said they did not see their first child case of COVID-19 until Nov. of last year.

During the first few months of the pandemic, the pediatric nurses' shifts began getting canceled as fewer children were being seen at the hospital.

In an effort to avoid layoffs, the hospital found different jobs for the pediatric nurses to do. "I've

had many roles since COVID-19. I went from a peds nurse, to making wipes, to being a spotter [for ICU nurses]," Rodriguez said.

A first-time home buyer needing job security, Rodriguez said she jumped at the opportunity to work at a nearby COVID-19 testing site.

Rodriguez is now working at the testing site twice a week in addition to her role as a pediatric nurse at the hospital.

"I come home tired," Rodriguez said. "I haven't had a weekend off in three months." As a mother of two, she says it has been very stressful because her kids miss her.

In addition to the stress at home, there is the emotional toll of facing the reality of the virus.

Rodriguez remembered the time the ICU unit at Torrance Memorial requested tablets from the pediatric department.

When asked what they were needed for, Rodriguez remembers them saying, "Because we want the families to say goodbye."

This was the moment reality hit Rodriguez.

"People are dying alone," Rodriguez said she realized, "People are really, truly dying from this."

Rodriguez added that as a professional in her field, she feels for families that don't have their loved ones with them.

"Especially because of the surge," Rodriguez said, "it's almost like we're starting all over."

Starting over for these nurses means the stress and anxiety will remain a fixture of their life as the pandemic rages on.



COURTESY OF ANA VALDORIA

**COVID-19:** Valdoria treats Apache patient with COVID-19. After losing oxygenation, patient recovers and takes a selfie with Valdoria on August 14, 2020.



# LA DJs adapt their craft during pandemic

Mirella Vargas

Life Editor  
@talonmarks

Before the pandemic, you could find Jesus Rojo spinning the hottest hip-hop and reggaeton tracks to the masses packed in popular downtown Los Angeles clubs, including the Broadway Bar, The Reserve and the Treehouse Rooftop on any given weekend.

Those places, however, along with clubs and bars across the county, still remain closed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Rojo, known as DJ Hazeus, is one of the many DJs in LA who have been impacted by the pandemic, and since then has had to adapt and explore other avenues to continue their craft.

"I had a lot of events planned for this year, weddings, private stuff a lot of other events that involved artists and DJs. When all this stuff happened, everything got put on pause," said Rojo.

Almost a year into the pandemic, most activities where one could enjoy music, including festivals, concerts and night clubs still remain too dangerous to resume.

This has upended the music industry and forced labels, promoters, artists and even DJs to adapt and find new, creative ways to bring the music to the crowds.

Different formats have been tried including virtual live-sets, online concerts and even drive-in concerts, to give music-lovers an experience without the risk of

spreading COVID-19.

At the beginning of the lockdown last year, many DJs took to Instagram Live to stream music to their followers.

Once Instagram noticed it was suddenly flooded with live sets, they strongly enforced copyright laws and DJs noticed the algorithm started to cut off and take down their livestream within seconds of going live.

This forced many to move to other platforms, including the popular live streaming service Twitch, initially used for video game streaming content.

"I didn't even know how to do any of this stuff. It's a whole other thing. You have to literally learn how to broadcast," Rojo said.

Rojo expressed how there's been a bit of a silver lining, having the opportunity to step back from the club scene and focus solely on the music — something he had been wanting to do even before the pandemic started.

He has started a weekly stream called LA Vice Radio on a digital platform called Massif LA, which features many underground and upcoming rap artists from LA.

"That's when I started doing what I'm working on now, which is a brand called LA Vice. I'm going on SoundCloud and finding music that is underground and local, that people don't know about but that is fire and that people are going to want and like," said Rojo.

"From doing these mixes and reaching out to these artists, I've been able to tap into them and they've actually reached out to me



ANGELKIHILLZ/INSTAGRAM

**Virtual DJ Sets:** LA based DJ Hazeus, is one of many DJs who have resorted to virtual live sets amid the pandemic. He hosted a livestream fundraiser event, with proceeds going to families affected by COVID-19 on November 27, 2020.

as well."

Rojo, along with many in the industry, believe that shows and events won't go back to normal attendance until later in the year or until 2022, so in the meantime he is focused on his weekly broadcast and plans to expand it to include a Twitch livestream featuring different artists and DJs each week.

Other DJs in the community have also used their craft for good, organizing livestream events to help those in need over the holidays.

Another DJ from LA, DJ Major Hype, organized a 24-hour "Music for a Cause" livestream

event — featuring other local DJs — and accepted food, toys and cash donations during the event.

Despite the county-wide lockdown, many DJs are still receiving offers, and some even participating in dangerous clandestine events.

There have been cases of illegal parties and warehouse events all across LA County, dangerously packing hundreds of people close to one another and violating social distancing measures.

These events are so secretive they won't even post the location on social networks — people need to call a number to get the address.

On New Year's Eve, LAPD officials broke up parties of more than 2,000 people in downtown, including one with 1,000 attendees at a popular Agatha Street warehouse space.

Over the past holidays, LA county has become an epicenter of the pandemic, with cases rapidly rising and hospitals at or nearing capacity.

More than 2,300 people have died from COVID-19 since New Year's Day and the county has averaged about 231 deaths daily, over the last week.

"People are always going to party, even before COVID-19..."

[Read more on Talonmarks.com](#)

## Couples eager to say 'I do' forced to alter wedding ceremonies

Josselyn Garay

Staff Writer  
@talonmarks

Weddings are something that every couple looks forward to from the second the proposal happens. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing pandemic many couples can't look forward to that special day, as large group gatherings still remain restricted.

Whittier residents, Nancy Monroy and Gustavo Lara, are one of the many newly engaged who've had to hit an unexpected pause on their wedding plans.

"It's been really hard on me, it took a toll on my mental state as well. Not knowing when I'll get to live the wedding I always dreamt of since I was a little girl," Monroy said.

She also expressed how not knowing when she will be able to enjoy the celebration of her dreams is truly worrisome.

It has been almost one year since the initial lockdown was

first imposed and there has been little to no change to the rules of having parties and gatherings.

It is still unsafe to have large gatherings that include more than 15 people, especially if everyone is from a different household.

"It's upsetting to have your plans cancelled out of nowhere, especially when a big amount of hard earned money is completely lost," said Lara.

“It was nice having just our parents there to witness our special day we will never forget.”

Brenda Bravo  
Recently Married

Many venues have refused to issue refunds to those who left deposits or even paid their expenses in full.



DOUGLAS GRAHAM/FLICR

**'In Sickness and in Health':** A couple from Loudoun County getting married in front of a courthouse during COVID-19 pandemic. Couples have had to make tough decisions and choose whether to wait or get married during the pandemic.

Monroy expressed, "You know we tried and tried to get our money back for all the stuff we had already paid in full and the only thing I was able to get credit for was my dress — but just credit, no cash."

Monroy and Lara are not the only ones who have dealt with issues with refunds. According to NBC, a San Diego couple was dealing with the same issue.

Another couple from Whittier, Brenda and Osvaldo Bravo, handled their wedding plans completely different and shared some thoughts for couples going through similar situations,

on how to get some stress off their mind.

"Not knowing how long we're going to be in this is very hard and can lead you to overthink a lot, but I think just having a positive outlook on everything helped me decide what I wanted to do with my wedding and I don't regret anything at all," Brenda said.

Mr. and Mrs. Bravo were one of the few couples who actually said screw it, we're still going to get married during a pandemic.

They both expressed how reading blogs and watching YouTube videos on how they weren't the only ones going

through this helped a lot.

It made them appreciate life a little more and made them realize that maybe a big wedding party wasn't really necessary.

One of the blogs they read that helped the couple, was on theknot.com.

"At first I was so upset with the world because I always wanted a big wedding, but after reading this blog and seeing how I could still celebrate life with my best friend in the entire world, a small wedding didn't seem too bad," Osvaldo Bravo added.

"Plus we saved so much money that we can use for our honeymoon when everything is safely back open. It was nice having just our parents there to witness our special day that we will never forget. Plus now we have a funny story to tell our kids about our wedding." They both laughed.

The Bravos hope that every newly engaged couple stays hopeful and comes to accept the idea of having a small wedding celebration because they are not as bad as they sound.

Sometimes having too many people in one place can be so stressful.

Brenda Bravo acknowledged the struggles that it can have...

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](#)



# Singularity, Entropy & Winter: History of Andrew Maz

Rafael Magana  
Co-A & E Editor  
@talonmarks

For many, the commercial music program here at Cerritos College allows them to develop their skills and prepare themselves for a future in the music industry.

It doesn't get much better than performing in a band lead by the music department's chairman, Professor Maz.

He heads a rock band consisting of students from the college, simply named "Andrew Maz".

"Back in 2016, I was working on a project and I had one student, Sergio, who was interested in the process. We were originally going to work on an instrumental album, but a few months later we had new material and he brought up the idea of adding lyrics. We realized if we were going to do this, we needed to add a drummer," recalled Maz.

Maz and Sergio eventually decided to form the band with people in the music department.

"I pulled from the talent pool

I had, and I wanted to work with students because I had done it in the past... a large part of it is the fact that they're a different generation and they have a different take on music and a different take on sound," said Maz.

At this point, the group began to form. The group consists of Maz on vocals, Mikey Enriquez on drums, Joel Alvarez on bass, Sergio German on guitar and Emili Romano on vocals.

Maz recalled the recording process for the group's first album, Entropy.

"We were recording and eventually released the album (Entropy). We were done with the show, and people were asking 'When's the next one?' and so I was like okay... That's when I began to work on Singularity," said Maz.

"Singularity was part two of the story that had started off on Entropy. Everyone kind of knew that. I had been secretly working on part three, Winter, during the Singularity sessions. The last song on Singularity, Static, had



COURTESY OF ANDREW MAZ

**Performing live:** (Pictured above left to right): Joel Alvarez, Eric Orellana, Emili Romano, Professor Maz, Mikey Enriquez, and Sergio German. Still is from a performance on February 2, 2019 at the Cerritos Burnight Theatre.

the lyrics written by Emili. The last line was 'Here we are, before remember, like it was that cold December'. When I saw that, I told her that the next album was called Winter," said Maz. "It all kind of fell into place".

Winter is the third part of a trilogy that has a consistent theme throughout it. For each record in the trilogy, his goal was to ensure that each one of them had their own distinct sound.

Maz wants the audience to interpret the meaning of the

records themselves.

Emili Romano, one of the vocalists in the group, was instrumental in providing the tone and content of the vocals in both Entropy and Singularity.

"I really wasn't able to find the words for it. I handed the music to Emili. She ended up writing the lyrics for one of the songs on Entropy, track 10. Eventuality. It was originally an instrumental, but she wrote a melody and lyrics for it which I really ended up liking," said Maz.

According to Maz, she wrote about 60% of the lyrics on the album.

Regarding the influences on the albums, which are very synth driven, Maz stated that there was never a clear intent on replicating a certain genre.

"I never go in with an intent, I guess. I forget that the current crop of late 20 and 30-year-olds are actually big fans of 80's music. Likely because their parents listened to it," explained Maz.

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](#)

## What Lola Likes: Finger lickin' local Nashville chicken experiences

Introducing a new Talon Marks food column!



LOLA AJETUNMOBI/TM

**Delicious Nashville Chicken:** Cluck and Blaze located in Long Beach offers some of the best local Nashville chicken. This three piece chicken tender combo is about \$10 and was enjoyed on February 6, 2021.

Lola Ajetunmobi  
Social Media Editor  
@talonmarks

Nashville, Tennessee is home to the hot Nashville chicken.

Luckily for California residents who want to enjoy the same crispy, fried, flavorful, cayenne spiced chicken, restaurants such as Crimson Coward and Cluck & Blaze have brought to SoCal.

Crimson Coward, a Nashville chicken joint located on Lakewood Boulevard in Downey and South Street in the Artesia area gives the locals that authentic Nashville taste.

The owner of Crimson Coward, Ali, first opened the restaurant in Downey in April of 2019. Due to popular demand, the business opened another location in Artesia on Feb. 6.

Opening the doors to the public at their new Crimson location around 11 a.m., about 35 customers waited in line to taste the tendered, crispy chicken and other finger-smacking items from their menu.

Food from the menu includes half coward, full coward, chicken sandwiches, lone breasts and more mouth-watering options. Each chicken option lets you



authentic taste for local residents to experience.

Their menu consists of individual chicken pieces, chicken sandwiches, their famous breakfast burrito and mouth-watering sides.

I got their three tenders, hot, which comes with Texas toast, special sauce and pickles.

Their chicken tenders are perhaps the juiciest chicken I have ever had the pleasure to eat and their sweet, yet tangy creamy sauce pairs wonderfully with the chicken.

I can honestly guzzle a whole bottle of the sauce. That is how good it was.

New and recurring customers continue to walk through their doors, creating more demand for their delicious, lip-smacking food. Their following continues to grow on Instagram and their lines reflect this as well.

General manager of the Long Beach location, Andrea, stated that she is not aware of any possible new locations talked about by the owners but hopes the business will expand further.

For Cluck & Blaze first timers, Andrea recommends the Nashville hot breakfast burrito consisting of egg, cheese, tater tots, their special sauce and chicken.

This Nashville joint is also organic, non-GMO and their food is made fresh everyday.

Crimson Coward and Cluck & Blaze are chicken joints that I definitely recommend and trust me, you will not be disappointed at all with this food.

choose your heat level, ranging from no heat, mild, medium, hot and if you dare, burn baby burn.

Their most popular item is the crimson; a boneless breast with slaw, pickle, their famous crimson sauce, compacted between two brioche toasted buns and the joey-eat-fries smothered in cheese sauce, crimson sauce drizzled, slaw, pickles, and a whole chicken breast into pieces to make it \*chef's kisses\*.

I got their half-coward, hot, which came with four wings and two drumsticks and a side of ranch. Of course I had to get their crispy fries with their special seasoning along with it.

Their food is organic, non-GMO and made fresh everyday at an affordable price.

However, they are not the only Nashville hot chicken place in the local area. Cluck & Blaze, located in Long Beach and, just recently, a new location in Glendale, is a spot you definitely need to try.

Owners Jerry, Adam, Vatche and Jack opened Cluck & Blaze to the public in November of 2019. Four Nashville chicken lovers decided to bring that



# 'WandaVision': It was Agatha all along!

Oscar Torres  
Co-A & E Editor  
@talonmarks

Episode 7 comes out with an ending that not only introduces fans to the Villian but the direction where the last two episodes will play out.

The latest episode of "WandaVision" gives the audience a great take on the 2000s and 2010s sitcoms while also shocking its viewers with a huge surprise to newcomers of the Marvel Universe and an introduction to one of Marvel's oldest comic book villains.

The style of the episode is inspired by popular sitcoms of the 2000s and 2010s, shows like "Modern Family" and "The Office" where the person is talking to the camera.

The episode begins with Wanda waking up from bed after making the rift between Westview bigger. She decides to have the day to herself after the event last night with her letting Agnes take care of the boys, letting them go to her place while she has time for herself.

However everywhere around her house like the furniture starts to change uncontrollably and has no power to change it back to the way it was before.

Outside of the city, Vision



**Vision:** Paul Bettany is Vision in Marvel Studios' WANDA VISION, exclusively on Disney+. Photo Courtesy of Marvel Studios. ©Marvel Studios 2021. All Rights Reserved.

wakes up from last night being in the middle of a Circus with a bunch of S.W.O.R.D agents turned circus performers.

He finds Darcy Lewis and awakens her from the spell she's in from the rift. They get into a car to drive to his house, with Darcy explaining to him his questions and telling him who he is.

It cuts to a commercial about NEXUS antidepressants, saying things that represent what Wanda is currently feeling right now, like depression and figuring out her

own path or destiny.

Back outside of Westview, Monica and Jimmy meets up with their Aerospace engineer who gives them a vehicle that'll help them get through the barrier.

Monica Volunteers to pilot it and almost gets through, but failed due to the rift being too powerful to go through. However, it didn't stop her, and goes through on her own. She passes through the wall gaining improved vision and improving her abilities.

She confronts Wanda and tries

to get her to see reason, but before she could Agnes stops her and takes Wanda back to her house telling Monica to leave. While there Wanda goes to the basement to look for the boys but finds a strange lair.

It's there that Agnes finally reveals herself as Agatha Harkness another witch that was behind all the weird events that were happening in Westview. She was the one who sent Pietro to Wanda and the person who killed Sparky to dog.

The plot was great and was a great way to introduce Agatha into the MCU with the last two episodes seemingly going to follow the plot of a Marvel comic where Agatha uses the souls and bodies of Wanda's kids to transform them into the ruler of Hell/Hades Mephisto.

As a big fan of the comic storyline, it was one of the great ways to do this story the acting like all the other ones are great with Kathryn Hahn being the highlight of the episode. She did a fantastic job playing not only a good side character but one of the villains of the show, even though she was introduced as the villain just now she made a good impression on acting like a witch/villain.

The effects are also impressive with the walking into Westview looking both impressive colorful and unique looking. The effects of the furniture changing are also great and fast along with both Wanda's and Agatha's magic abilities looking great.

One minor complaint is that the episode felt short and leaving with more, but that's what T.V shows are wanting to wait and anticipate for the next one.

"Breaking the Fourth Wall" gets a 4.5 out of 5 with it being a must-watch for everyone who want to see what happens next.

## 'Super Mario 3D World + Bowser's Fury': New experiment for Mario



OSCAR TORRES/TM

**Running away:** Some parts of Bowser's Fury would be having the player run from Bowser trying desperately not to get hurt by his attacks. Even riding plusie won't stop him from catching up to the player.

Oscar Torres  
Co-A & E Editor  
@talonmarks

"Super Mario 3D World + Bowser's Fury" takes the already perfect 3D/2D style of Mario that fans experienced in the Wii U and while adding the ability to take it anywhere people want and an added mode that brings in tons of fun, innovative gameplay elements.

Nintendo announced that a port of the Wii U game "Super Mario 3D World" would be coming in February. It'd also

include a new expansion alongside it titled "Bowsers Fury". Starting off with the main dish: "Super Mario 3D World".

During the fireworks festival, Mario, Luigi, Peach, and Blue Toad were walking enjoying the festival where they see a tilted glass pipe in the path.

Mario and Luigi fixed the pipe, a green Sprixie appeared and tells the gang that Bowser has taken over the Sprixie Kingdom and kidnapped the princesses in jars. After she explains this to them, Bowser appears and kidnaps her before making his escape to the

Kingdom.

Peach goes into the pipe first with the Mario Bros and Toad following into the kingdom to put a stop to Bowser's schemes and save the princesses.

The gameplay is great, like any other Mario game. Mario and the gang can run and jump to different levels, collecting green stars and stamps to unlock more levels and challenges.

Each character has a specific ability, with Mario being the all-around character, Luigi being able to jump high but is slippery, Peach can float for a while but is

slow and Toad can run fast but can't jump very high.

Each character brings in a lot of replayability that many can try either on their own or with friends.

The level designs are also fun and creative with many levels having a specific theme that feels fresh and not repetitive.

Speaking of friends, the online function is fantastic, with the frame rate high and online being smooth and playable with no choppy connection or interactions.

Multiplayer can get chaotic but that's what makes Mario games fun with friends, even if they throw you down a hole all the time.

One downside to the game is that it's too easy. Getting lives doesn't take skill if people know the 1-UP trick.

Now for "Bowser's Fury", and its plot. There's a good amount of content that Nintendo has added here for players.

Mario was walking down a path enjoying his day when he spots a weird black ink and follows the path. He sees an M shape symbol and gets sucked inside into a new world where everything is either a cat, has cat fur or has cat-like abilities.

He sees Bowser who is black, giant and terrorizing the place. After collecting the shine, Bowser gets hurt and goes away.

Bowser Jr. explains to Mario that his dad is out of control and in order to free him from the corruption they need to get a bunch of cat shines to get enough

strength to take him down. So it's up to Mario and Bowser Jr. to travel around the Cat Kingdom and free Bowser.

The gameplay is the same as "3D World," only this time instead of going through smaller levels, the player travels in one big open world with numerous set pieces and obstacle course-type level design.

This is pretty good, as it lets the player get any shine they want to regardless of order or location. They have complete freedom to do what they want, when they want to.

One of the best parts of the game as it can get chaotic when players try to complete an obstacle course or mission to grab a shine before Bowser can attack and take Mario down.

However the game can get pretty slow and frame rate would go down due to having Bowser appear but it's only for the more serious places.

The new expansion is pretty great and shows a glimpse into future Mario titles. Many people would be interested if a future game looks like this.

Sadly as much fun this mode is, it's also really short, being able to complete it in a few hours.

Overall "Super Mario 3D World + Bowser's Fury" is another great game that lets new players experience the game for the first time.

The game gets a 4.5/5, an amazing game for old fans to experience again and new fans to have fun and enjoy an amazing/unique experience.



# US education needs action, not rhetoric

## EDITORIAL

Now more than ever, American children can't afford for President Joe Biden's administration to forget them. The effects of COVID-19 have taken a toll on virtually every aspect of our nation and society, and the education system is no exception.

As schools shut down and converted to online learning, children were left out in the cold with the burden falling on their families.

In Biden's first week in office, he has proposed a national plan to combat the pandemic. Formally known as the National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness, goal five focuses on safely reopening schools, business, and travel while protecting workers.

According to the plan, Biden's administration has committed to ensuring that students and educators are able to resume safe, in person learning as quickly as possible. The plan calls for billions in funding to K-8 schools, child care providers and colleges.

President Trump's failure to move forward with a plan of this magnitude feels like a breath of

fresh air to many.

While there is cause for optimism, it is imperative that the plan is implemented, enforced and that the government ensures kids receive the help they desperately need sooner rather than later.

It's important to remember that most areas, such as Los Angeles County, are still in the midst of a major crisis.

Online and remote learning, unpopular as it may be, must continue until cases and hospitalizations decrease more substantially.

Until then, it is crucial that school districts have the funding to provide for their students, staff and teachers until schools can safely reopen.

That also means funding for PPE, daily screening, more busses and more teachers to decrease class sizes and ensure students can follow social distancing guidelines.

There's also a need for counselors to address students' social and emotional needs. With the funds proposed in Biden's national plan, the schools can make these adjustments and reopening becomes a safer and more tangible process.

The mental health of children



UNSPLASH.COM

**Pandemic learning:** Online learning must continue until schools have the resources to reopen safely. Screening and PPE are amongst essential items needed before schools reopen in LA County, still closed as of Feb. 24, 2021.

has been affected drastically by no longer being able to play, grow, behave or interact emotionally with other children. Children suffering from depression, anxiety, mood disorders such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) have been the ones to suffer the most.

Since the pandemic started roughly 143 countries have shut down their schools and about 15% of children and adolescents world wide have mental disorders.

It is crucial that funding is used to add more mental health programs and add more mental health counselors accessible to the students.

This will be helpful to all students, not just the ones with mental disorders but students

who need someone to talk to in regards to the unfortunate events that came along COVID-19.

The funding provided by President Biden can also alleviate the need for parents to rely on school programs, such as special education programs, tutoring, after school activities or food stamps provided by the schools.

Many parents relied on their children being taught properly as they may not have finished school themselves and feel like their children are not learning and growing academically as they would at school.

Providing enough funding that will allow for children to have more assistance with their academic work will not only help children's education outcomes

but also assist parents that are already working as hard as they can to provide for and help their children learn remotely.

For parents having their children in school, knowing they are being properly taken care of, well nourished and taught while they might be the only working parent in their household is soothing their mental health needs as well.

Biden's national strategy needs to go beyond proposals and become action. Majorities in the House and Senate bolster his chances at passing this stimulus and the president must stand firm on his policy.

Our children and the future of America depend on it.

# The child care crisis in US affects all aspects of society

Mirella Vargas

Life Editor

@talonmarks

Many of the country's social issues have been exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic, one of them being America's sub-par child care system. Thousands of childcare centers that were ordered to close temporarily are at risk of shutting permanently.

In the state of California alone, more than 1,200 of the closings are permanent, eliminating about 19,000 child-care spots.

America's child care infrastructure has been failing compared to other developed countries — and this has serious implications on parents, society and the economy in the long run.

The US should look to other countries and realize that child care is not just a woman's responsibility but of society as

a whole. When children and parents are set up for success, the entire country benefits and in not doing so, the country can suffer serious repercussions.

The National Academy of Sciences study estimated in 2019 that child poverty reduces the country's long-term economic potential by between 4% to 5%, or roughly \$800 billion to \$1 trillion per year by reducing lifetime earnings and increased illness and crime.

On top of this, the US ranks as one of the worst for employee benefits amongst developed countries. The US is one of the few industrialized countries that does not require employers to give employees paid parental leave — with most of the child care costs falling heavily on the parents.

The Coronavirus relief bill, which passed in March of last year, included \$3.5 billion to the

Child Care Development Block Grant to help states provide vital temporary aid to providers and support the cost of providing child care for children of essential workers.

President Joe Biden has recently introduced a similar proposal in the most recent COVID bill that would allocate \$15 billion to the same child care

grant.

Critics say this is merely a quick fix to return child care to its already below average state.

Both Democrats and Republicans have acknowledged the child care crisis to some degree.

But instead of solving the issue, the parties end up going back and forth on the actual dollar amount. The federal government must provide a radical, sustained investment in the child care sector,



UNSPLASH.COM

**Child care crisis:** The U.S. is failing to properly support parents. Federal action needs to be taken to ensure young American's futures.

or else the country could suffer a vicious cycle of parents not being able to rejoin the workforce or able to afford altogether.

By overseeing and leading the child care sector, the government can collect and use comprehensive data to improve services and provide better information for parents, the way Europe does.

The Biden administration should start taking the necessary steps to overhaul the child care

system in the US now, and continue to make it a priority policy going forward.

A first step could be by appointing a dedicated team to research and create a comprehensive assessment of the current child care infrastructure, identify the gaps and plan out the necessary long-term policies to improve the country's child care to positively impact society.

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American film star Cicely Tyson during press conference in Utrecht, 1973. Tyson's memoir "Just As I Am" describes some of her struggles as a Black woman in Hollywood.

## Black women are excluded in the film industry

EDITORIAL



FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES  
BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA - FEBRUARY 09: Gabrielle Union attends the 2020 Vanity Fair Oscar Party hosted by Radhika Jones at Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts on February 09, 2020 in Beverly Hills, California.

Black women are becoming a more prominent part of the entertainment industry, yet they still face discrimination on movie sets. Unfair treatment range from their hair, makeup, negative stereotypes to completely silencing their voices in the film world.

Many Black women have spoken out about the discrimination they have faced, such as not getting the leading role solely because of their shade or the exclusion they faced when the studios did not provide a hair stylist that was knowledgeable about their specific hair type.

The myriad of actresses include Tia Mowry-Hardict, Halle Berry, Gabrielle Union-Wade, Tracee Ellis Ross and so many more of Hollywood's talented stars.

High School Musical actress Monique Coleman spoke to the Insider about her experience on set. In her recounting of her time on the set of the popular teen movie, she mentioned some of what she dealt with.

"The truth is, they had done my hair, and did it very poorly

in the front," Coleman said to Insider. The actress explained that she then suggested for them to "incorporate headbands into her character."

As they were unable to hire someone who could work with her hair type, they continued the three sequel movies with her character wearing headbands to make her hair manageable.

Actresses such as Gabrielle Union, Natasha Rothwell and Yvette Nicole Brown have also shared their experiences with the lack of diversity on set and mentioned how they often had to bring their own hair and makeup supplies because the stylist was not prepared to deal with Black actors.

Historically, through mainstream media, Black women were categorized by certain stereotypes: the nanny/maid, sassy big woman, angry, ghetto, loud and uneducated.

These tropes, primarily with dark-skinned women, reinforce the negative stereotypes that date as far back as the 18th century.

These forms of blatant

misrepresentation not only reproduce stereotypes of Black women, but also inflict trauma on Black actresses through the cinematic gaze.

Yet these roles were mainly fulfilled by not just Black women, but darker-skinned women. These roles aligned with the shade of their skin, further exacerbating

“Opinions from Black people are necessary in the hiring of more Black women to play leads...”

the negative stereotypes.

Octavia Spencer, a dark brown skinned actress, has played a maid, nurse or cleaner 21 times, two of them being in Oscar-nominated performances.

However for darker-skinned women wanting to do more than portray the stereotypical Black woman role, it meant

unemployment.

Cicely Tyson, a 96-year-old actress that died on Jan. 28, wrote in her memoir "Just As I Am," that "[she] was determined to do all I could to alter the narrative of Black people- to change the way Black women in particular were perceived, by reflecting our dignity."

Tyson wanted to portray Black women accurately and erase the negative stereotypes perpetuated in American cinema. This often led Tyson to be without work for weeks, months and even years.

The majority of films and TV shows where Black women act in main roles, they are usually cast with light-skinned women.

We have seen that pattern too often, and it seems that in order for shows and films to get recognition but include diversity, it must include someone with a shade closer to white people.

For the same consideration white female leads are given by film and TV studios, the same must go to their Black female actresses.

It is time for the voice of Black actresses, of all shades, to be heard and recognized.

It is also important for studios to get opinions from other Black people when writing scripts. Black voices need to be heard in the industry so they could properly execute how they are seen by the audience.

Something that may not seem offensive to the white writers, producers or directors could be perceived differently by Black audience members. Getting a second point of view shows Black viewers the commitment in portraying Black people in a more accurate light.

In a time in society where Black History is celebrated every February, it is important that we continue to fight for something to celebrate.

As the late Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Read more at [Talonmarks.com](https://www.talonmarks.com)

## Black history is more than just a month

Emily Melgar  
Opinion Editor  
[@talonmarks](https://twitter.com/talonmarks)

Every February, the United States officially celebrates and remembers important people and significant events in African American history, but this recognition falls short the rest of the year. The accomplishments of Black Americans are neglected when it truly matters.

Their lives and contributions to society should matter every day of the year.

African Americans have struggled for freedom and equality since they were first stolen from their native lands and brought to America to be enslaved. While fighting this battle, they have still made immense strides towards the nation's developments.

African Americans have found success in science, literature, sports, entertainment and more, so why do they continue to be marginalized?

For starters, the nation

continues to be plagued by racism and bigotry. In recent years, acts of racism have increased, with a government administration that not only turned a blind eye to injustice, but sometimes condoned it.

The Human Rights Campaign claims Federal data showed that hate crimes rose to the highest levels in more than a decade in 2019, and nearly half of those race-based crimes targeted Black people.

Black people all over the country have lived with racism all their lives. They are forced to live in a society where they don't feel safe anywhere- with police being responsible for many Black deaths.

In 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement spread across the globe as protestors demanded justice for the violence against Black people by law enforcement.

Social awareness skyrocketed with the peak of protests happening in June of 2020.

Eight months later, a new



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JAZMIN TAHA/TM

**Black history:** Black Americans built America. To understand U.S. history, citizens must learn from its most marginalized.

President sits in office, another month of Black History is "celebrated" and the injustice towards Black people and systemic racism still haunts the nation.

While the road to recovery from the pain this hate has caused is a long one, the fight must continue.

Every February, the nation needs to take advantage of every single day it gets to honor Black lives.

The Super Bowl happens every year in February, and millions tune in to watch. Some love football, others are lucky enough to have their teams play in the game. Still, every year, people

forget that African Americans play an essential role in American Football. The 2020 NFL season opened with 10 of the league's 32 quarterbacks having known black ancestry.

This year's half-time show was performed by The Weeknd, otherwise known as Abel Makkonen Tesfaye, a child of Ethiopian immigrants.

The contributions by Black people to make an event like the Super Bowl happen every year are overlooked, just as their many other accomplishments do.

The nation needs to wake up and finally acknowledge Black people for the incredible, resilient and talented people that they are.

Just as important, the people of the United States need to take a long, hard look in the mirror. In order to stop prejudice, they must recognize privilege when it is there.

This country was built by the hands of suffering African slaves. Over 400 years after the first African arrived on this land as slaves, it is imperative we continue to fight for the rights they have struggled for and fight to keep.

Our favorite movie stars, brilliant authors, unparalleled athletes and passionate activists—they all deserve our support and recognition.

Yesterday, today, tomorrow and always.



# Weight program getting pumped up in quarantine

Silas Bravo

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The lives for student and staff of Cerritos College have been impacted dramatically by COVID just as much as anyone.

Cerritos College Dietitian Hazel Ng said that “Our fitness and weight management program is a big example of the changes COVID has caused.”

Although a lot of people’s changes have been negative, the changes for this program have been mostly positive.

There have been more students participating in the Cerritos College exercise and health program as opposed to before quarantine.

Prior to the pandemic, students had trouble participating in the exercise classes or the free Zumba sessions that took place three to four times a week due to conflict of schedule.

Now it is like any other online class.

Students can set up their schedule to whatever fits them

“

Cerritos College has very strong mental health services, and we’re all here to help.

Hazel Ng

Cerritos College Dietitian

”



EDGAR MENDOZA/TM

**Quarantine Sweat:** Health and Wellness Complex is vacant as Cerritos College nears one year of virtual schooling. Fitness and Weight Management program continues to provide planned workouts and meals for students at home during quarantine.

best and have access to the program whenever it is necessary.

Ng said that COVID “has made it easier for students to participate due to them being able to take part whenever they want.”

“Online classes have given students an advantage. There is no excuse to not exercise,” said Ng.

Ng also stated that most students are unaware that they can still see the college’s dietitian by making appointments.

Ng is always available to help

and uses Zoom for meetings which are much easier to set up than in person.

Ng says that she can “assess eating problems of students and lifestyles to set up plans and goals to aid in the betterment of their health.”

Trying to develop healthy habits can be extremely difficult for some students which is why having consistent checkpoints with a dietitian can be very helpful.

Moreover, quarantine has caused a great deal of stress for students. Along with stress, this pandemic is causing emotional eating issues.

“Cerritos College has very strong mental health services, and we are all here to help,” said Ng.

Ng encourages students to seek her or anyone for help if they need it and to schedule appointments. She also wants them to go online and search for different classes that fit their needs to enroll in

exercise classes.

She also stated that when quarantine finally ends and life returns to normal, things would go back to the way they were before.

Like many other classes and activities, the switch to online was difficult. It took a long time to complete the transition but now the program is running smoothly and looks to attract more students to the program.

## MLBPA rejects universal DH rule & playoffs for 2021 season not expanded

The MLBPA makes changes to their rulebook and alters

Matthew Ramirez

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### OFF THE FIELD

It’s saddening to hear that in the 2021 season, the motion to include the universal DH and expanded playoff was declined.

Last season, like most sports, the MLB had lots of changes to the way their game was played due to the ongoing pandemic.

Not only were there no fans but the league decided to shorten their season from 182 games down to 60.

The league also decided to experiment by altering one of the most ancient rules the sport has to date while expanding their playoffs.

The DH, or designated hitter, was a rule created in the 1973 season in which a hitter was assigned to bat in place of the pitcher and was only available to the American League.

In the 2020 season, the

universal DH rule was proposed and approved meaning the National League would also be using a DH in all their games.

The rule was also great considering it saves the pitcher from injury and draining stamina.

The expanded playoffs increased the number of playoff teams from 10 to 16.

Instead of having the division winners rest on a bye while the wild card sudden death matchups would take place, the first seeded teams in both leagues played the eighth seed in a three game series.

The playoffs also had neutral sites such as Dodger Stadium, Petco Park, and Minute Maid Park for the divisional and championship rounds of the playoffs with the first ever neutral site World Series which took place in Texas at the Texas Rangers new stadium in Arlington.

Many are not fans of the pitcher coming up with a runner on base as it is not ideal to the situation to be in and most likely results in a sacrifice bunt moving



COURTESY OF ALL-PRO REELS PHOTOGRAPHY

**Play Ball:** Juan Soto single from the Nationals and Marlins at Nationals Park, August 22, 2020. The proposal to include the universal DH and expanded playoff was declined for the 2021 season.

“

Many are not fans of the pitcher coming up on base as it’s not ideal to the situation...

Matthew Ramirez

Staff Writer

”

the runner or an automatic out all together.

Instead of the extreme likelihood of the pitcher costing an out, a DH can step in and take

on the responsibility of scoring that run or getting on base since they are skilled at hitting.

As for the expanded playoffs, there are mixed feelings about it. The baseball super-fan may love more playoff games on TV, but seeing that the number one seeded team could be eliminated in the first round of playoffs may not sit right with some.

The first seeded team should get the rest that they have played for and earned.

It’s hard to understand the reason for declining the motion to have a universal DH in play but

as for not having the expanded playoffs, it could range from a money standpoint to wanting to give the first seed teams a bye as

previously mentioned.

However, the teams that missed the playoffs even with the addition of six more teams will be motivated to navigate through the season with a new but familiar chip on their shoulder.

By not having these rules return for the 2021 season, teams will be planning accordingly in the off-season as the start of the new season lies in uncertainty.



# Let's normalize female officials in major league sports



RICH SUGG/THE KANSAS CITY STAR

**Women empowerment:** For 54 long years, the NFL has not allowed a female official to referee in a Super Bowl game. Sarah Thomas is the first woman to be a part of a Super Bowl officiating crew where she will side judge in Tampa, Florida for Super Bowl LV.

Davonte Booker  
Staff Writer  
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## OFF THE FIELD

Last Tuesday, the NFL announced that it will have its first woman officiate the Super Bowl, which is something astonishing to a lot of people. Despite their surprise, without a doubt, there's no reason a woman can't do things just as well, if not better, than a man can. That includes professional football officiating.

43-year old Sarah Thomas has been named the Super Bowl down marker, who is a part of the seven-man officiating team crew on the field.

There is no reason a woman

should just now in our country be achieving these accomplishments.

Thomas is an Alabama native where she first started out refereeing at the high school level before moving on to officiate NCAA football games.

She became the first woman to referee a Division-I college game, as well as the first woman to officiate in a Big Ten conference stadium.

After years of refereeing experience, Thomas officially started her professional career as a full-time referee in 2015. Four years later, she became the first woman referee to officiate an NFL playoff game.

This is another amazing accomplishment for her. It's astonishing, seeing how currently she is the highest paid referee in

a predominantly male profession. Women are continuously shedding this societal normalcy and rising to new growth of equal rights.

It's always good to see women showing that they can always do anything any man can do in a profession deemed unsuccessful for women.

She's a role model for other women who look to work in that particular field of work or other fields as well. Not every woman has to be an NFL official but this shows there are other professions deemed masculine that women are amazing at as well.

This is one big step for women in sports and the NFL, but they shouldn't stop there. What about raising pay salaries for women throughout the NFL? This action

will express gender equality to women and men in the same fields.

Seeing how women have been underpaid in all fields and aspects of business, this barrier-breaking action can be a big step for a lot of possible women officiates.

In an interview on the NFL website, Thomas explains how she wasn't ever planning on being the first woman to do any of what she's done and how amazing it's been being the influence that she is for her daughter and other women.

"That's what I want my daughter to do. I do know there are still industries that are not on an equal playing field with women.

My thing is, don't let that keep you from continuing to do what

you know that you have to do. Don't look at it as an excuse, look at it as an opportunity."

Initially, a lot of people hope that this will bring more women into the refereeing profession.

This is a great opportunity for making the room for women across countless spectrums to be able to break more and more barriers for women's equal rights.

“ This is one big step for women in sports and the NFL, but they shouldn't stop there

Davonte Booker  
Art major

## Fan-filled sporting events power on despite 471k dead in the U.S.

Keanu Ruffo  
Sports Editor  
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We as American sports fans all have a piece of responsibility to uphold in preventing the spread of COVID-19 during major sporting events.

Unfortunately, we've failed to do so and the effects have been disastrous.

The major sports events such as the Super Bowl, NBA Finals, and the World Series, have all caused serious spikes in cases throughout our communities in the past months.

Fan celebrations have been the serious causes of rising cases which hasn't helped us move forward during the quarantine process.

Yes, vaccines are being distributed as we speak, but the more we meet up with friends, families, and neighbors to watch these big time games, the longer it'll take for us to get back to normalcy.

NFL organizations allowing

a limited number of fans inside their stadiums to watch games tells us that money and profit are still more important to the organizations than slowing down the spread of COVID-19. For the NCAA, many college sports programs have historically lacked basic oversight to protect athlete health.

The New York times reported back in December that more than 6,600 athletes, coaches, and staff in the NCAA have all been diagnosed with COVID-19 since last spring.

Some athletes have even had their season cut short due to life-threatening symptoms due to the virus.

The fact that the higher risk athletes which also extends to higher risk trainers, coaches, staff, families, and ultimately, the community around their sports teams, simply makes the failure to prioritize athlete's well-being all the more inexcusable.

City and public health officials across the country should also be to blame for not laying stricter ground rules on what their teams

can and can't do.

Permanent change from local officials that leads programs to actively prioritizing both athletes' health and the public's health is an urgent, required action to take.

The right time to act was yesterday.

With more people getting the vaccine and COVID-19 cases decreasing, we're starting to head in the right direction of taking this virus more seriously.

We don't know what a return to sports will look like after this pandemic.

However we do already know that the community matters more than ever, and it is up to us individually to be responsible and do our part in slowing down the spread of COVID in our neighborhoods and cities.

With tighter restrictions and more vaccines being distributed, we can start to develop nationwide plans that will help our communities post-pandemic along with how we attend sporting events in the future.

## Trolling YouTubers: please stick to making videos, not boxing

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Social media has been intensifying for the Floyd "Money" Mayweather and Logan Paul exhibition match which takes place on February 20th, 2021.

What's the point of famous YouTubers trying to get more fans by going up against a fighter that they think they can beat? If the Youtuber really get more fans and still loses, it's a waste of promotion for everyone but them.

TMZ reported that Floyd was procrastinating or delaying to sign the contract because he thought it was a joke but he eventually did.

Logan's younger brother Jake knocked out former basketball star Nate Robinson in November 2020.

Logan wanted his own shot at glory and fame.

Many people say that Logan is foolish and is clearly delusional. Jake even said that Logan is dumb for taking this fight since he just

wants to fight and isn't passionate about the sport.

Mayweather has been a professional boxer for the past two decades so Logan's chance of winning are slim to none.

Trolling is the name of the game here, to hype up this fight.

Logan called out Floyd in a video that has gone viral all over social media. Logan says that Floyd is a "weak fighter" and has "no skill"

Floyd has taken Paul's trolling quite well since he is a much older and wiser fighter than Logan is.

This fight will prove to Floyd that he will remain the best tactical fighter of his time and show the world he is the best counter puncher in boxing.

As for Logan Paul, in order to at least survive this fight, he will need intense training to at least get a decent punch on Mayweather. Logan's main concentration should be learning how to see a counter attack coming from when he is on the offensive side.

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