CORONAVIRUS ROARS INTO 2020
Putting Health in Healthcare

WHO WE ARE
AIDS Healthcare Foundation offers a wide array of services all in support of your total health and well-being. From Free HIV/STD Testing and Treatment, Healthcare Centers and Community Activism, AHF is here when you need us. To find out how you can get involved or locate sites in a city near you, visit AHF.org
In this issue of the Collegian Times Magazine, we give you our hearts.

We profile Academy Award-winning actor Morgan Freeman who returned to City College on a sunny winter day to share advice, his sense of humor, and to offer encouragement to students.

Stories big and small emerged from the pandemic. Reporter and U.S. Navy veteran Michaelis Sanchez delves into reactions to the coronavirus outbreak on the USS Theodore Roosevelt and the gambit of Capt. Brett Crozier.

Art student Timothy Bluitt has made a habit of mingling with the stars – on canvas and in real life. His journey at LACC is just beginning at age 73.

Our must-read section includes coverage of the coronavirus around the world. It provides a first-hand account of how families and foreign governments are navigating the pandemic on four continents.

A little closer to home, culture reporter William Torres takes a unique tour of South L.A. – it's always sunny there. And this year marks the end of an era at Art's Famous Chili Dogs stand, an L.A. mainstay in South Central.

Whether it is first-person shooter games or the dance teacher who cultivates baby ballerinas, Diana Campbell covers arts and entertainment and sparks our creative spirit.

Speaking of spirit, intrepid reporter Angela Johnson went to church with ladies who are new to technology. But what about the singing ...

Photographer Ian Byersgamber stuck to dry land and drove through neighborhoods where he captured life under the shelter-in-place mandate.

With everything going on, we almost forgot this is a census year. In Los Angeles, this means counting the sizeable homeless population. Juan Mendoza walks the walk, through alleys and under freeway overpasses, to count the people who are often overlooked.

For an escape from reality, follow photographer Mami Yamamoto into a different dimension of fantasy and surrealism – but first, she makes a stop at the supermarket.

It was a tricky endeavor to publish this magazine in the time of COVID-19, but we had a north star in our adviser, Rhonda Guess. Our art director Beatrice Alcala was a strong gust of wind, constantly pushing us forward.

Yours truly wrote a couple more articles than anticipated and managed to get a photo essay in too, about a glorious - on the brink of the pandemic - New York City. Like the saying goes – if you don’t have anyone to do the job, then jump in and do it yourself. So, when someone mentioned honeybees on campus, I buzzed with delight, and I hope you do too.

Enjoy,

Ande Richards
Executive Editor
CORONAVIRUS ROARS INTO 2020

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MORGAN FREEMAN
REVEALED IN NUMBERS

A RETURN TO LOS ANGELES CITY COLLEGE

IN THE BEGINNING GOD SAID, “LET THERE BE LIGHT.” AND HE SOUNDED JUST LIKE MORGAN FREEMAN.

Before he played God in the Universal Pictures movie “Bruce Almighty,” Morgan Freeman worked as a transcript clerk in the admissions office at Los Angeles City College (LACC). He filed students’ academic records for a dollar an hour, eight hours a day. He attended class at night.

His earnings have increased significantly since those days, and the record of his time at LACC is etched on the wall of the Morgan Freeman Theater.

As he walked across the path from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) Building to the Camino Theatre, Freeman marveled at how much the campus had changed since he attended 60 years ago.

He studied at LACC for three semesters: summer and fall 1959 and spring 1960. Before he was a student, filmmakers used the Administration Building with its vine-covered archways to cheat for Harvard in movies. It was called Los Angeles Junior College back then.

“I went to school here,” he says as he settles into the folding chair onstage at the Camino Theatre. A group of L.A. City College Theatre Academy students sit behind him, obscured by darkness. Silent, they await their turn in the spotlight.

“I had no idea after 60 years they’d call me up and say hey, guess what? We are going to name a theater after you,” he says.

And so, Freeman — affectionately nicknamed “the voice of God” — awkwardly began his interview with HFPA board member Anke Hofmann. He struggled with the best way to place the microphone offered to him. It ended up on his plaid jacket, which hung neatly over his baby blue button-down shirt.

“What am I supposed to do now?” he says as the crowd erupts in laughter.

Although the actor has impeccable comedic timing, it seemed his ill-at-ease demeanor was a sincere demonstration of humility.

“Happy to see you all out here,” he says, searching for his way into the conversation. “Maybe somebody could explain what they’re doing out here. Oh, I know actually, I just don’t know what to say while I’m up here. Ah, dude, there’s a theater named after you. How does that feel? Strange.”

After that brief prelude, half to the audience, half inner monologue, he composes himself.

“OK. Why?” he asks. And in that instant, you see his thoughts crystalize. His face, used to being manipulated as a tool of expression, speaks before his mouth moves.
“Well, actually, they’re doing this because for the last, I guess 30 years, I’ve been proselytizing about having gone to school here and what I have gotten from going to school here,” he says.

Indeed, Freeman spoke; L.A. City College listened. On Feb. 24, 2020, LACC renamed the 95-seat theater in the HFPA Communications Building in his honor.

“Did I tell you how I got to go to school here?” he asks, taking a dramatic pause. “I was discharged from the Air Force with $175 pay on Feb. 17, 1959. My money ran out in late March, early April. So, from early April until about mid-May, it was really catch as catch can.”

Freeman landed a job in the transcripts department at LACC and soon discovered that he would get more than a paycheck.

“So, I was talking to someone and they asked, ‘What do you want to do?’” he says. “I’m an actor, yes. I’m thinking I’m going to go to Pasadena Playhouse to take classes. ‘No, no, no you don’t want to go to Pasadena Playhouse. We have a theatre department right here, and you can go for free because you work here.’ Enough said.”

At that moment, Freeman had a job and free education to boot. He enrolled at LACC that summer and took the first steps in his acting career. Freeman poses a question.

“You hear these pipes? They make a lot of money,” he says as the audience laughs.

Someone even verbally testifies, “You know that’s right.”

The audience laughs again. Freeman continues.

“And it was set in place right here on this campus: ‘Acting 101,’ ‘Acting 102,’ ‘Voice and Diction,’ ‘Voice Development,’ and French, all in one extended day.”

The actor credits the late professor and decorated WWII veteran Robert Whitten for the development of his voice.

“He [was] a very dedicated instructor for actors. Most of us who come into his classes, with our voices too high, slurred speech and stuff like that.”

Professor Drew Lobenstein prepares students for flawless delivery as he coaches the forensics team. He teaches communication studies at LACC, and he is familiar with Freeman’s voice.

“He is one of the classic-trained actors in the business,” Lobenstein says. “Singers and speakers all need to have voice and diction training and public speaking experience ... that is what we do.”

Lobenstein says vocal training is the way that an actor or a professional performer gets work.

Time-honored exercises help students improve their delivery. The late comedian Jerry Lewis adapted the announcer’s test, an exercise used in auditions at Radio Central in New York in 1941. It stretches the lips and gums and creates crisp dialogue. The speaker repeats a list of 10 short phrases. They start out easy and become progressively more difficult: One hen, two geese, three squawking geese, four limerick oysters, five corpulent porpoises, six pairs of Don Alverso’s tweezers, and so on.

“The point of it is that every sound in the English language is included in the work,” Lobenstein says. “To work professionally, you need to have correct presence and clarity of speaking voice. Articulation is paramount to any success you achieve.”

Freeman strikes the perfect balance. His deep voice and those pipes, as he calls them, prompt lots of questions on the talk show circuit. He tells reporters that voices sound higher than they should be—because of tension in the vocal cords. He recommends several deep yawns to relax the cords and deepen the tone. Then, Freeman begins to speak — very — slowly, he enunciates — each — word — with particular emphasis on the last consonants.

“He was a hard taskmaster,” he says. “We had to get up and read — ‘THIS IS A CARD THAT I MUST READ OUT LOUD!’ Now, that sounds a bit silly, but when you get out and just talk, you find yourself signifying consonants and speaking clearly. And I no-
ticed people would say “You must be taking theater.” And he answers in the deepest of tones, “Yes.”

7,000 – Country Sprawl Cures Big-City Blues

Mayne Edna and Morgan Porterfield Freeman welcomed their son Morgan on June 1, 1937, in Memphis, Tenn. Freeman comes from humble roots. His mother taught school and his father worked as a barber. His family relocated from Tennessee to Chicago, to look for better work opportunities. However, shortly after the move, his parents sent him 600 miles away to live with his maternal grandmother, Lenora Revere in Charleston, Miss.

Freeman says he stands on the shoulders of black women who form the base of his foundation.

“I owe whatever grace, shall I say in life, to my mother and grandmother,” Freeman says. “I was raised by women. My mother had one mantra for me: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. I live by that.”

Freeman’s path led him to world-famous cities: Los Angeles, New York City, San Francisco — cities where culture thrives, where he could live and build a career.

But he calls the South home. The Mississippi Delta’s muddy plain formed over the course of thousands of years. The land is flat and fertile. It measures 7,000 square miles and rests on the fields where slaves picked cotton and sang the blues.

“What stands out is being a little boy, around five years old,” he told Southern Living magazine in 2006. “It was a time of freedom. I’d wake up in the morning and didn’t have to ask if I could go play.”

His parents returned to Mississippi in the late 1950s, and he would travel back frequently starting in the 1970s. Eventually, he too returned to Mississippi and made his home on land originally owned by his grandparents. In a Biography.com interview, Freeman talked about his connection to his hometown.

“Where was I going to build a house?” he said. “Where was I going to put my roots down? Why don’t I put my roots down where they were?”

The small town of Charleston, he says, is the only place where he can truly relax. He can drive for 50 miles and never see another person — and he likes it that way.

“When there’s no work, I go home,” he says. “I have a very nice little place in Mississippi. If I had it here [L.A.], it would cost me 20, 30, 40, $50 million. I raise bees and horses. Geese come and nest on my place. Deer don’t run from me.”

124 – Protector of the Bees

Freeman takes his God moniker to heart. He converted his 124-acre ranch in Charleston, Mississippi into a wild honeybee sanctuary in 2014. His intention: to save wild bees and replenish their colonies.

A colony is the family unit and consists of a queen, workers and — for a few months of the year — drones, according to honeybeesuite.com. A colony lives in a hive.

An awareness about the decline in wild bee colonies and their importance to crops and nutritional health inspired him to begin his beekeeping journey.

Freeman had no particular beekeeper training. His first step was to import bees from Arkadelphia, Ark.

He has about 40 hives and with the help of a gardener, he has cultivated several varieties of bee-friendly plants like clover, lavender and magnolia trees on his property to support his new ecosystem.

He talked about his beekeeping duties with “Tonight Show” host, Jimmy Fallon.

“They are out of their own environment,” he told Fallon. “They don’t know where the food is, so I have to feed them regularly. I feed them sugar and water. You give them two parts sugar and one-part water, put it in a feeder and put it into the hive.”

He has never been stung, and says he discovered that he never has to wear a bee suit.

“Beekeeper suits are for those who can’t resonate,” he says.

He seems at one with the bees.

1 – Million Dollar Baby Pays Off

Freeman’s career grew with roles on TV and in major motion pictures after his days at LACC. His extensive resume includes one Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor in the role of Eddie “Spare-Iron” Dupris in “Million Dollar Baby,” a film that another L.A. City College alumnus named Clint Eastwood directed.

Freeman narrated for the voice of God in “Bruce Almighty,” and his distinctive sound gave him an edge in the role of the president of the United States in “Deep Impact,” long before America had ever heard of Barack Obama.

Films like “The Shawshank Redemption,” “Driving Miss Daisy,” “Invictus,” “Outbreak” and “Unforgiven” show the depth of his abilities as an actor.

In Hollywood, sometimes even the most beloved star loses their luster. CNN.com reported extensively on allegations of inappropriate behavior and sexual harassment by the actor in a May 28, 2018 article. Production staff on several of Freeman’s movies, and reporters who interviewed the star at press junkets promoting those films, questioned him about complaints by women of numerous incidents of sexually charged comments and unwanted touching.

Freeman apologized in a written statement after the article came out.

“Anyone who knows me or has worked with me knows I am not someone who would intentionally make anyone feel uneasy,” he stated. “I apologize to anyone who felt uncomfortable or disrespected — that was never my intent.”

The actor lost lucrative endorsements after the allegations in 2018, but his career glitters as he creates new projects with his longtime business partner Lori McCreary, the CEO of his production company, Revelations Entertainment.

His work sparkles in “The Story of God with Morgan Freeman,” where the lines blur between Freeman’s “God” characters and the real man. The Netflix series, now in its third season, is produced by National Geographic Channel and Revelations Entertainment.

It sets the actor up as part travel guide, history
HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME

2. Photo By CHRISTOPHER BALAN
Morgan Freeman sits on the Camino Theater stage at Los Angeles City College. The icon gave acting tips to students and advice on how to conduct business in the film and television industry.

3. Photo Courtesy CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION-SHARE ALIKE 2.0 GENERIC LICENSE.
The Morgan Freeman star on the Walk of Fame sits close to the El Capitan and Dolby Theaters on Hollywood Boulevard. Stars of David Copperfield, James Doohan, Donald O’Connor, Brooks & Dunn, Charlie Sheen, Ricardo Montalban, Dolores Hope, Bob Hope, Raquel Welch, Nancy Kelly and many others are located nearby.

teacher, anthropologist and seeker.

Freeman's popularity matches his critical acclaim, with Facebook pages like “I wish my life was narrated by Morgan Freeman.” He has worked more than 125 acting jobs in motion pictures, documentaries and stage performances.

In addition to his Oscar, for “Million Dollar Baby,” he’s won a Golden Globe for “Driving Miss Daisy,” the Screen Actors Guild Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017 and the prestigious Cecil B. DeMille Award in 2012 from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association.

“Incredible talent, of course, manifested by his long and outstanding career, as well as worldwide recognition and awards is what makes Morgan Freeman so special,” Hofmann said in an email after she interviewed Freeman at the dedication of the theater.

“At the Q&A that I was honored to moderate, he didn’t simply answer questions — mine or the students,” she says. “His very words were empathetic with concern of what might be important to and interesting for the students. He moved the limelight from himself to the next generations of actors, filmmakers and writers.”

Now, he has the Morgan Freeman Theater at Los Angeles City College to add to his legacy.

83 – Zen in the Art of Being

At 83 years old, Freeman can reflect on a deeply satisfying career, joyful personal projects and meaningful philanthropic work. So, what does he think about when his thoughts slow at the end of the night? Deadpan, Freeman drops his answer.

“That I wake up,” he says with a twinkle in his eyes.

MORGAN FREEMAN’S 10 TIPS FOR ACTORS

Belonging
“I got to New York in September 1963, and I signed up with this extra casting guy. Bernie Styles was his name. I got cast on “The Pawnbroker” as an extra, and it was a night shoot where we were a crowd walking on the street. And so, the director didn’t like the background — it was too busy, so they thinned it out and took a few more people out. Shoot it again — still don’t like the background. He kept doing that until there was only one person left on the street. You’ll never guess who it was. That night, I’m saying to myself, ‘Right, this is where I belong.’”

Doubt
“I meet a lot of people who have young children and they say, ‘Oh, he or she wants to be an actor, but I prefer that they went on to college and got a profession, something to fall back on.’ I say if you are in a fallback situation, then that’s where you are going to be. No fallback position. Either you are going to do this — I’m GOING TO SAY THIS — you’re going to do this or die.”

Characters
“Even if a writer doesn’t write all the directions, characters do express themselves. And I think you can probably get a hundred actors to play one role and they will all play them differently and be successful. Sometimes you will get a director who wants to give you chapter and verse on what you’re doing. I’ve gotten fired a couple of times. Either, am I going to do the acting or you are.”

Rejection
“I don’t deal with it. Well, who does? You are going to be rejected. It’s not like get out type of rejection. It’s not your fault. Sometimes you will get a director who wants to give you chapter and verse on what you’re doing. I’ve gotten fired a couple of times. Either, am I going to do the acting or you are.”

Typecasting
“Being identified by the parts you play, and then have to shut it down to get another part looking like something else. I did a movie called “Street Smart.” I was a pimp. Scripts I got because everybody in Hollywood was like, who the hell was that? Where did he come from? Is that somebody they got off the street? New York was saying he’s a Shakespearean actor. But I think that’s a tripping place, that you get stuck being hired to play the same characters. Have the guts to say no.”

Technique
“I walked into his class one day, [our professor] was explaining about the different techniques that actors use. You have Stella Adler, Herbert Berghof. It’s not a method, it’s preparation. That’s the method. There’s no method to acting. Morgan Freeman is intuitive. I don’t have an opening on how to do something. I get it from the script. It comes to me whole, and if it doesn’t, I make a fool of myself, which I have done on at least two occasions.”

“I did “Othello” in Texas, Dallas. I had this costume that was like harem pants and a blouse and scarf. I had Jimi Hendrix hair. I just put the costume on and when I walked out on stage my first time someone from the back shouted, ‘sing Purple Haze’ and I actually never got over that. Shakespeare isn’t difficult; “Othello” is.”

Passion
“I don’t do movies for anything but money.”

Balance

Parting words
“It’s possible that all of us are not going to be superstars. But all of us can make a living in this business. I promise.”

Know yourself
“I started taking dance classes. Yes, I used to dance. I studied ballet, I studied jazz and I studied tap dance. All of this is an effort to get on Broadway, in one of those musicals where they were only going to have one black person, but you know, they all felt like — could be me. I had an understudy role and I got to go onstage as an actor and I had that life-changing epiphany: You’re not a dancer, fool. You’re an actor, this is what you do. So, I stopped trying to be a dancer and started being an actor. That same year, I got my off-Broadway show and then I got a Broadway show and another Broadway show. And, the rest is what we call history.”
In love? There are so many ways to revel in your bliss—more than you ever imagined. Take a page from Korean couples who celebrate love in a unique way, all year long.

Couples plan events for each other and observe random rituals. The affection is nonverbal and might confuse a foreigner. Couples favor matching clothes, because they want to look united.

In Seoul Korea, Namsan Tower is a popular landmark, a 777 foot communication and observation tower. This hot spot attracts many romantic activities because it sits on top of a mountain. Couples admire the sites, eat snacks and go to museums. However, the most romantic gesture would be to buy a lock and attach it to a fence somewhere in the tower area.

Attaching the lock may not be a grand gesture, but it sits on the newlywed couples’ bucket list. Koreans consider these traditions to be romantic and meaningful.

There are 12 distinct holidays that people celebrate with a different theme for each month. The dates provide a reason for people to express their love, whether they are single or taken.

**Diary Day, January 14**

Couples stay up until midnight and they count down together. This day brings an opportunity to kiss and start the New Year together. The duo exchanges gifts such as a diary, planner or candle. This does not sound romantic until couples add all the other 11 “love” holidays, events, anniversaries and possibly a wedding date. The planner can serve as a perfect gift to ensure that they are accountable for important dates.

Diaries are exchanged to record future memorable moments or dreams. Looking back at old entries will fire up the relationship because it reminds the couple how happy they were. People take time for granted.

Candles take forever to burn and last a long time. They symbolize a healthy relationship.

**February 14, Valentine’s Day**

Typically, the ladies receive chocolates and flowers on this day while they break their partner’s budget.

In Korea, however, it is different. Ladies give chocolates to gentlemen, but the chocolate gift cannot be store-bought. Not even Godiva chocolates will make the cut. Ladies spend hours on preparation and decoration at home.

The rule of thirds requires men to give three times as much the next month. Ladies can give chocolates to admirers at work, and this can include friends.

**White Day, March 14**

Men give chocolates to their partner. However, it is not as simple as buying a box of chocolates, flowers or a stuffed bear. Men must triple their partner’s effort from the previous month. Events are huge in Korea, and they speak louder than an “I love you.” This is Valentine’s Day on steroids. No gifts are too large or over the top.

**Black Day, April 14**

People feel alone, but they are not. There are other singles around. In April, all single people eat black-colored food and lament that they are alone.

They feast on a Korean dish called, jajangmyeon. This dish resembles a black spaghetti. The sauce consists of black bean, meat, onion and zucchini. Singles go to a jajangmyeon restaurant and see who is eating this dish. There’s no guessing as to who is single and who is not.
Yellow Day/ Rose Day, May 14
Couples exchange roses as the sun rises. Partners wear yellow because the color represents optimism, and they celebrate their cheerful relationship. If individuals are single, they gather to eat yellow curry in the hope that it will “spice” up their love life.

Kiss Day, June 14
PDAs (Public Displays of Affection) are frowned upon in the Asian community. However, there are multiple ways to demonstrate affection in a nonverbal way. Koreans wear matching clothes or participate in events for couples. They get a chance to express their passionate love with a kiss when the day arrives. This day is dedicated to displays of affection.

If you are single, have no fear. Singles wait for this day. Lonely singles can “shoot” their shots by confessing their love or kissing their love interest.

Silver Day, July 14
Summer is here and the fling can start — unless you are in a committed relationship. Partners test their loyalty. The pair exchanges rings to show commitment. A ring is the perfect symbol since it forms a circle with no end.

Meanwhile, single people can fling all they want while the couple takes their relationship to the next level.

August 14, Green Day
Couples stroll through a beautiful green hillside or park. They bring the green-bottled soju with them. Soju is a rice wine that has a harsh taste. The duo slams back a couple of shots before their journey. Partners need to see the worst in each other. The worst may come out and the love of your life might not be quite as attractive.

Partners need to see the worst in each other before it’s too late. The singles can drink to their heart’s desire because they are still single.

September 14, Photo Day/Music Day
Pictures create memories that last forever. Therefore, couples hire photographers to capture beautiful pictures. Candid photos from smart phones are great, but photographers can capture the perfect moment. Partners can have fun posing too.

For an opportunity to serenade the person of interest, couples head to a karaoke room. This is where they express their love for one another through music, no matter how tone-deaf the other person might be.

October 14, Wine Day
Romantic and classy. That is what people think of wine. Couples choose this alcoholic beverage for a fancy dinner. Homemade dinner with a glass of wine is even more romantic because the duo allows enough time to prepare a nice meal. They take advantage of this to feel elegant and become intoxicated by the romantic atmosphere. Wine Day is a classy way to spend time with your partner before Halloween.

November 14, Movie Day
Partners watch movies in the theater or at their homes on Movie Day. If they live with their parents, they can go to a DVD room. These rooms invite partners to rent a romantic comedy and cuddle. The rooms are designed for couples who live with their parents and have no privacy.

December 14, Hug Day
Christmas invites hugs because it’s getting cold. Couples step under the mistletoe and kiss. Partners embrace each other to “wrap” the year up and wait for the New Year to begin.

The “love holidays” skim the surface of romantic gestures in Korean culture. They overshadow the basic relationship rituals like holding hands and remembering anniversaries. The unique days and observances provide meaningful thoughts to a relationship and a day.
IT’S BETTER TO BE SIX FEET APART RIGHT NOW, THAN SIX FEET UNDER

- Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer

**COV**ID-19 has radically changed my life, from employment to creative process. My work involves going to individual artists or galleries and documenting their work. This requires both human contact and access to non-essential businesses, so once the shelter-in-place orders came through, everyone I work with and myself had stopped working!

While I’m used to being at home a lot, the emotional and psychological toll of the pandemic has been pretty intense! I’ve had ups and downs, but figuring out that I wanted to take socially-distant portraits of friends and community members gave me something to look forward to.

Losing access to the darkroom was a real blow, as I was really excited to continue practicing printing, as well as figuring out some of the new techniques we were introduced to in the first few weeks of class.

Early on in the social-distancing times, I had an idea to go out and photograph friends from inside my car. It took a while to work up the energy to actually go out and start photographing, but once I did, it felt really good to go out and do something, as well as see friends and talk to them, even if it was on the phone while I was in my car and they were at their apartment.

While I’ve been trying to stay in touch with people via text and call and video chat and everything, seeing someone in person feels really good.

It’s been an interesting process getting used to this new way of taking photos. Normally I’m drawn to very square, lit, and considered photos. By figuring out how to even just get my 4x5 camera set up inside my car, I’ve had to let go of a lot of my instincts.

Parts of the car are visible in the frame, people aren’t perfectly lit or perfectly framed, and I’m not giving much direction in terms of posing or outfits or anything. Some people wear masks, some hold their phones as I talk to them, and lighting conditions are all over the place. It’s liberating to embrace these elements as an answer to the restrictions of social distancing - especially if I collect enough photos, some variance in quality and color and such is something I can embrace.
ON ART’S FAMOUS CHILI DOGS

[By LOUIS BLANC]  [Photos By LOUIS BLANC]

There is nothing more authentic in Los Angeles than food and traffic! Car culture is one of the many touchstones of L.A. When you find a restaurant or food truck, or even a little hot dog shack with Teslas and lowriders parked out front, you had best get in line because the food is good!

Before In-N-Out, McDonalds, and Taco Bell started in Southern California, there was Art’s Famous Chili Dogs near the corner of Florence and Normandie Avenues. Art’s fed customers for 81 years. That’s a long time in Los Angeles.

Arthur Elkind was a German immigrant from New York who found himself out of work during the Great Depression. He built a cart with its own steamer and sold Hot Dogs to fellow German immigrants. His customers worked in the aeronautics, rubber and manufacturing jobs nearby.

One day, he smothered a hot dog with leftover chili. It was a hit.

On the restaurant’s last day, a silver-haired gentleman lined up for one more chili dog and recounted how his family moved into the neighborhood in 1958 when the area was predominantly white.

“We don’t serve Negros,” Rod Wright said the white man behind the counter told him. Wright was a kid at the time. He ran home and told his mom who he says comforted him and told him to stay away from there.

Over time, more African Americans arrived.

“The neighborhood changed and so did Art,” Wright said. “Art became a big part of the community.”

Elkind died of a heart attack in 1990. The little hot dog stand would sit empty during the 1992 civil unrest, which exploded mere feet away from but never touched the hot dog stand.

Darrell and Francine Nelms bought the place with the chili recipe in 1994. It closed on March 8, 2020, and Art’s grandson came by to mark the passage. But a part of that “little boy” who was turned away in 1958 still remembers.

“And sometimes there would be those that were down on their luck and had no money at all, you could count on Art for a chili dog, some good advice, and a cold pop,” he said.
SURFING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

By Angela Johnson  Illustration by Johnathan Valdivinos

ALLAH REPRESENTS THE LIGHT OF THE HEAVENS AND EARTH FOR MUSLIMS. CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE EXALTS JESUS CHRIST AS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD AND HAS DONE SO FOR MILLENNIA. NOW, BELIEVERS EMBRACE A NEW DISRUPTER.

A
different source of light calls the faithful to worship in greater numbers than ever before, and Mrs. Nancy Cameron answers the call.

She chooses a silky sky-blue frock and a string of stark white pearls. She prepares for church service at Kingdom Hall, just like she has for the past 50 years. That’s how long she’s been a Jehovah’s Witness.

After she positions her favorite wig, she applies rouge to her cheeks and classic red to her lips. She dresses up for the “Memorial of Jesus Christ’s Death,” which is the highest of holy days for Jehovah’s Witnesses around the world. She’s ready to go.

Nancy walks from the vanity in her bedroom, and across the hall to the kitchen where her son Clinton has set up the iPad for his 85-year-old mother.

He prepares to stream “the word of God,” in memorial services broadcast with Zoom.com from the Kingdom Hall where his mother’s Culver City congregation would normally meet.

“Stay at home” orders from state and local government and fear of community spread of coronavirus have changed the location where many religions convene.

Officials in Los Angeles County suspended gatherings of 100 people or more along with all “non-essential” group activities like concerts and face to face meetings at schools. To the surprise of many, even gatherings in the name of the Lord have been suspended indefinitely.

Salvation, however, may present in the form of a reliable Wi-Fi connection and a computer. It is a trend and an alternative in the virtual church experience during the pandemic of 2020.

Years ago, the advent of “church TV” ushered in ministers who attained rock star status with their fiery sermons in the 1950s, ’60s and ’70s. The late Rev. Oral Roberts began to broadcast his religious revivals on television in 1954.

Evangelist ministers like the late Rev. Ike promoted the theology of prosperity in a daily message to 2 million listeners on 1,770 radio stations in the mid-1970s.

Pentecostal evangelist Jimmy Swaggart began in 1971 and is still going. His weekly telecasts reached 3,000 stations and cable networks throughout the U.S. and around the world. Today, church TV is mainstream, and online is gaining ground. A statement on the United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana website says digital church is here to stay.

“One of the remarkable stories of the global pandemic is that suddenly, 49% of churches are reporting that their online attendance is higher or much higher than their in-person attendance,” according to the statement published in April of 2020.

Jimmy Swaggart preaches on at 85, and a new generation of TV watchers tune in to larger-than-life personalities like Joel Osteen and Rev. T.D. Jakes who now dominate the spotlight.

Nancy Seizes the Light

At 85, Nancy has become more tech savvy with the transition to church online.

“It's funny because she knows a lot,” Clinton said. “She just is not part of the generation that understands this is streamed and what is not. I am proud of her because she's learning to do so much on her own.”

Nancy confesses that at first, she did not like computers. She was apprehensive about technology altogether. In an odd way, the “shelter in place” order has helped to change her mind.

“Clinton teaches me how to use the iPad. Because I really didn’t know anything about it,” Nancy says. “He put me into Zoom and showed me how to join the meeting. I really appreciate him doing that for me.”

Worship gatherings are streamed on various websites and software applications allow congregations to commune with the Holy Spirit in a cyber environment. Zoom.com has become a popular live-streaming website and application that uses the webcam on a computer where a variety of large events are staged online.
Service Stirs Childhood Memories
Home-based church online is often an inter-generational family affair. Denise West and her mother Joan live in Hemet, which is an hour and 40-minute drive, east of Los Angeles on the 60 Freeway.

They meet with communities online that they can no longer visit face to face; Joan with their old church home in Los Angeles, and Denise connects with childhood friends in New York.

They used to attend regular Sunday services at St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church in the Baldwin Hills area, next door to Inglewood, the new home of the NFL Chargers and Rams.

Denise and her mother both served as church elders. Denise enjoyed a vibrant and abundant church social life. She says she spent time as director of the youth department, and she taught praise dance for a while.

Now, Denise and Joan worship virtually. It is an experience that Denise says leaves her wanting something more.

“I miss hearing our choir. I love fellowshipping with our congregation. It’s not as personal as being face-to-face,” Denise says. “Just hearing the word and scriptures is wonderful. But being in the presence of others while hearing the words and scriptures gives it a totally different meaning and feeling.”

Fashion Matters
A stylish hat, a pair of gloves, a pendant or a scarf can make the perfect fashion statement. Dressing up in one’s Sunday best is a significant part of the churchgoing ritual.

“My mother has always been a sharp and classy dresser,” Denise says. “As a child going to church, my great grandmother made it mandatory that we dressed for church.”

Painstaking efforts to put the best fashion foot forward may seem unnecessary to attend church online. After all, the computer screen frames attendees from the waist up.

“It’s not like you’re sitting in a church among others,” Denise says. “You’re at home in comfortable surroundings.”

And now, Joan enjoys herself, as she sits at home in leisurewear and attends vespers services on the computer in her bedroom.

“The services my mother attends are done by our pastor from our home church in L.A.,” Denise says. While her mother enjoys local spiritual nourishment closer to home, the internet leads the way for Denise to connect across the country with old friends.

“The services I attend are generated out of New York with people throughout the country. Those who attend are from the camp I attended as a child, and we would attend vespers after dinner every evening.”

It was a walk down memory lane for Denise. She attended online vespers streamed from New York for the first-time, although there were some technical hiccups.

“It was very confusing and not very organized,” Denise says. “There were time delays ... and people were late signing in on the call.”

Despite the confusion, Denise says the cyber service was still rewarding. It allowed her to reconnect with friends who have moved to different states scattered around the country.

“No matter, I did enjoy the reading of the scriptures and a song that one of the [alumna] sang by herself,” Denise says. “It felt good to see faces and names that I haven’t seen or heard from since I was a child at camp over 50-plus years ago.”

The virtual experience is just not as robust or fulfilling for Denise. The human element—the feeling of being among fellow parishioners makes a difference.

“Attending a virtual service feels very sterile to me because with the time delays, we were unable to sing our hymns. There is no fellowshipping after the service.”

COVID-19 will disappear eventually, but digital church has had a moment and carved out an indelible space that fulfills many who worship virtually. For Denise though, there is a personal disconnect.

“The difference for me is being among your fellow parishioners,” she says. “Everyone vibes off one another and it feels like ‘Home.’”

“Then, most of all, you couldn’t hug the person in the pew in front or behind you.”

-Denise West on what’s missing in online church.
IT’S ALWAYS SUNNY IN SOUTH LOS ANGELES

SOUTH LOS ANGELES IMAGES OF POVERTY, VIOLENCE AND GANGS PROMOTE THE HOLLYWOOD NARRATIVE OF MOVIES LIKE “STRAIGHT OUT OF COMPTON,” “TRAINING DAY” AND “BOYZ N THE HOOD.”

Hodari Sababu sells tours to visitors who happen to walk by the business stand where he sits on Hollywood Boulevard between Vine Street and Ivar Avenue. He works seven days a week.

If he attracts a prospect’s attention, he stands up and makes small talk with the potential customer. He approaches with a smile or a compliment. His tours are not the average jaunt through the Canyons, Hollywood, or Beverly Hills. Sababu sells something different. He makes sure his guests get the ultimate South Los Angeles experience when they board one of his vans for “L.A. Hood Life Tourz.”

“Wanna see another side of the L.A.? Sababu says. “The other side where nobody dares to go …”

It’s a departure for guests and the tour vendor. Sababu was born and raised in South Central L.A., and he dealt cocaine and crack on the streets of Compton and Watts—the very streets where he grew up.

“In another world, I was a drug dealer in the hood,” Sababu says. “I got indicted by the federal government back in 1999, and I received a 25-year federal sentence, which got overturned to 10 years.”

Sababu completed the last three years of his sentence at a medium security prison in the United States Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kan. It housed infamous inmates like convicted bank robber turned CEO of Cavvy R. Records, Troy Deon Reddick, aka rapper Da “Unda” Dogg. Latin Kings gang leader Antonio Fernandez of New York also served a stint at Leavenworth. He says the idea for a tour business came to him while he did time in prison.

“Fortunately, in the pen, they have a lot of good educational programs,” Sababu says. “One of the programs I took was a computer graphic arts class. The final assignment of class was to come up with a business and design the flyers and business cards on the computer. I came up with the idea of a tour around my neighborhood and created the logo from a computer in jail.”

From that class in prison, he created L.A. Hood Life Tourz, one of the most successful five-star tours in Los Angeles, according to the travel deals and review website, tripadvisor.com.

Asi and Erick Smith are from Tampa. They say the L.A. Hood Life Tourz was on the top of their list.
of things to do while in Los Angeles. “I googled it online and I saw the reviews,” Asi said. “I was looking for something with history and stuff like that.”

Van Surprises
L.A. sunlight reflects the high gloss shine of tour vans with large logo signs as they cruise Hollywood Boulevard.
A driver arrives and walks the tour group steps away to the corner of Ivar Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard without introduction. He leads the group to an old white cargo van parked in the yellow loading zone. There are a few dents on the rear bumper and scratches on the right side of the back door.
Inside the van, there are five air-fresheners in each passenger seat armrest in various scents, and 20 “Little Trees,” car air fresheners hang from the rearview mirror. The fragrance saturates the van.

But why so many fresheners?
“Welcome to L.A. Hood Life Tourz, I’m Steve your tour guide and driver,” says Steve Barbee as he lights a joint. “Now that pot [marijuana] has become legal for recreational use here in the state of California, feel free to smoke a joint inside. For a small donation, I can pass, and you can puff-puff from mine.”
Steve informs the group that they may consume any type of beverage inside the van. As they settle into their seats, 2 Chainz “Birthday Song” blares in the background.
They ask me what I do and who I do it for (yeah) And how I come up with this s### up in the studio (yeah)
All I want for my birthday is a big booty ho (true) All I want for my birthday is a big booty ho (tell ‘em!)
The tour begins and the atmosphere inside the van lives up to its “hood life” name.

Culture Unfolds in Crenshaw
The Crenshaw district is one of the largest middle-class black neighborhoods in California. It is largely residential with tree-lined streets, single-story homes, bungalows, alleys and apartments.
Mediterranean and Spanish architectural style influence the area that was once the home of upper and middle-class whites only. That changed when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down racially restrictive covenants in 1948.
The decision allowed Japanese Americans to move in and African Americans came soon after, according to a May, 2019 article in Curbed LA.
Multicultural life flourished in the Crenshaw District. Residents celebrated events like Nisei Week in Crenshaw Square with Japanese traditional dance, music and food. Participants invited onlookers to learn the dances and celebrate the culture.
Over the next three decades, demographic shifts brought the growth of the gang-dominated crack and cocaine trade. Crenshaw became one of the most violent neighborhoods in the city during the 1980s.
Since the ‘90s, many hit movies and television shows such as “Moesha,” “White Men Can’t Jump” and “Insecure” have used Crenshaw neighborhoods for their settings.

This year, the CW hit show, “All American,” filmed its second season at Crenshaw High School.
Leimert Park is a cultural hub for the Crenshaw community and the Vision Theatre is an architectural focal point of the neighborhood. Today, it is one of L.A.’s last art deco commercial buildings. Legendary billionaire Howard Hughes commissioned the Morgan, Walls & Clements architectural firm to build the Leimert Theater in 1931. Morgan, Walls played an important part in the early architecture of Los Angeles with projects like the El Capitan and Wilten Theatres.
In the 1970s, the Vision Theatre became a Jehovah’s Witness Kingdom Hall, later renamed Watchtower.
Now, in front of the building on Degnan Avenue, vendors sell incense, dashikis for men and women and lappas, multi-colored African fabrics that are used to make clothing, tablecloths and curtains.
Before freestyle hip-hop and breakdancing dominated Leimert Park, several African American jazz musicians made the area their home. The list of music genius includes the late jazz trumpeter, Freddie Hubbard, pianist, Cedar Walton and drummer, Billy Higgins.
Every passenger in the van takes swigs of beer bought from a corner liquor store. The tour continues east and the van cruises into a different neighborhood: South Central.

South Central
South Central is a predominantly Hispanic community. It is also home to Hispanic gangs like “F-13,” named for the Florencia Street Gang and the “18th Street Gang.”
Bad blood surrounds this region. The L.A. riots started in South Central after a jury acquitted four LAPD officers of the beating of Rodney King on April 29, 1992.
The L.A. Riots lasted six days. More than 50 people died in the rioting and thousands more were injured. Rioters burned buildings to the ground and property damage estimates hit the billion-dollar mark. It made the L.A. Riots one of the most destructive civil disruptions in American history, according to Britannica.com.
The tour always winds back to culture. Before gangs and drugs, the jazz scene thrived in South Central. The Dunbar Hotel on Central Avenue served as the main hub for Jazz performers in the 1930s and 1940s. The hotel played a key role in L.A.’s African American community for decades. The original hotel sign still hangs at the corner of Central Avenue and 42nd Street. Hotel Dunbar extends from the side of the building and is spelled out in large white letters with neon lights on a red
Watts

The Pacific Electric Railway car was a major stop in Watts in 1904. The Watts Station became the town's first railroad station and one of its first buildings. It is often depicted in popular movies like "Menace II Society," and "Colors" as a dangerous place. Even though Barbee is a family man with a decent job, he still affiliates with his old crew.

Central Avenue began as a major thoroughfare in Los Angeles. In 1888, the town's first railroad station and one of its first buildings, the Watts Station, became a major stop. It is often depicted in popular movies like "Menace II Society," and "Colors" as a dangerous place.

South Central is also the home of the African American political scientist, Dr. Ralph J. Bunche. He negotiated the 1949 Armistice Agreements between Israel and four Arab states and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950 for his work. He was the first African American to receive the prestigious award.

His childhood home is his grandmother's Victorian duplex on E. 40th Place between Central and Hooper Avenues. The Ralph J. Bunche House is designated a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument since 1976 and has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978. Together with the Watts Towers, the Bunche House is the only remaining reminder of the vibrant African American community that once flourished in this neighborhood.

The Watts Towers are a series of three towers located at 3300 S. Central Avenue in Los Angeles. They were built by the artist Simon Rodia over a period of 33 years, from 1921 to 1954. The tallest tower is 99.5 feet high.

As the tour heads south to Figueroa Street, the scenery changes. A woman wears a short leopard skirt, a black crop top and she sports a carrot-orange colored wig as she strolls down the street. This area of South Central is known as "Fig-a-hoe," a popular area to pick up prostitutes.

California Penal Code 647 makes it a crime to offer, accept money or any other valuable in consideration of sexual or lewd conduct. Yet, these women walk the street on Figueroa in the middle of the day. The hustle is real on "Fig-a-hoe."

The van continues to roll east on the 110 Harbor Freeway, which was once the territory of "Freeway Rick" Ross, (Ricky Donnell Ross) a notorious 1980s drug dealer. Now the van enters Watts.

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Alondra and South Long Beach Boulevards.

While unconventional, the joint, the alcohol and the loud rap music did not detract from the professionalism of the tour guide, or the knowledge and love for community that the tour company employees shared with the group of visitors.

“We take what we do, you know, and try to give you a better insight and better thought for what’s going on here,” Barbee says. “You only get to see one side of it, but when you get to be inside of it, it makes a difference to people’s perception.”

A rich history of South L.A. awaits visitors. It is told through murals, structures, business establishments and the residents who live in its neighborhoods.

Barbee ends the tour with rapper-actor Ice Cube’s famous lyric as the van arrives back in Hollywood.

“... plus, nobody I know got killed in South Central L.A.

Today was a good day.”
1. A mural of slain rapper and philanthropist Nipsey Hussle displays a classical flair at the corner of Slauson Avenue and Crenshaw Boulevard. Visitors use markers to write their names on the wall in honor of the late entrepreneur.

2. The South Central L.A. mural “2 Live and Die in LA” represents fallen heroes in the hip-hop community. Gun violence cut short the lives of both Nipsey Hussle and Tupac Shakur.

3. The historic Dunbar Hotel played an important role in L.A.’s African American community for decades. The building is located on Central Avenue in South Central Los Angeles. Photo Courtesy of CreativeCommons

4. Visitors pay their respects at a mural in an alley located next to the Marathon Clothing Store. The wall marks the site where Nipsey Hussle died.

5. Superstar rapper, philanthropist and Pulitzer Prize-winner Kendrick Lamar performs in the Netherlands in 2013. Lamar grew up in Compton and supports after-school programs there and has received the keys to the city.

   Attribution 3.0 Unported (CC BY 3.0)
   Nederlands: Kendrick Lamar
   Feb. 7, 2013
   wikipotret.nl
   Photo By Merlijn Hoek

6. Italian immigrant Simon Rodia’s nine Watts Towers are made of steel, covered with broken glass, pottery, sea shells and ceramics. Rodia bought the lot in 1921 and worked on the towers for 34 years. Photo Courtesy of CreativeCommons

“NOW THAT POT [MARIJUANA] HAS BECOME LEGAL FOR RECREATIONAL USE HERE IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, FEEL FREE TO SMOKE A JOINT INSIDE. FOR A SMALL DONATION, I CAN PASS, AND YOU CAN PUFF-PUFF FROM MINE.”

-Tour Guide, Steve Barbee
Rufus did all the driving. Timothy ran his mouth the entire trip. He chatted nervously about what to expect at the art fair. Otis Reading, Aretha Franklin and Marvin Gaye were hot artists back in the '70s, but as Rufus Daigle and Timothy Bluitt cruised on U.S. Route 101, they listened to Bob Marley. It was Rufus' van after all, and he loved Marley.

They drove through cities that owe their names to Spanish origins — San Mateo, Palo Alto and Santa Clara. They arrived at a school gymnasium in San Jose. A number and a space assigned to each artist indicated where they would set up their booth. Rufus paid the entry fees—a $65 investment. It would be Timothy's first art show.

It was a Sunday, and the fair teemed with people dressed in suits and ties like they had just come from church. Others wore more casual attire. People walked around and looked at the art; the crowd was spending money.

They asked the artists how much for this and how much for that. Timothy kept changing his prices and Rufus reprimanded him — “you have to keep the prices consistent!”

Rufus showed his oil paintings, mainly portraits and landscapes. Timothy told Rufus his portraits were much stronger. Ironically, Timothy and Rufus had both painted portraits of the famed author James Baldwin, often called one of the greatest writers of the 20th century.

The talented essayist, novelist and playwright is remembered as much for his activism in the civil
rights movement, as for his prose. Titles include “Notes on a Native Son,” “Fire Next Time,” and “Go Tell It on the Mountain.”

“I’m a little nervous,” Timothy says as he recalls his face to face encounter with a legend. “He is just going to say nice job and he is going to walk by.” Timothy’s insecurity mounted.

“The competition here is so thick, there are so many other people here way better than I am,” Timothy says. “I just put something together. I’m just fumbling in the dark.” But before Timothy could collect himself, Marlon Brando asks about his painting.

“He stops and he looks at it, looks at me and looks at it again and asks, ‘You’re the artist?’” Timothy says as if it happened yesterday. “Yes sir,” he replied. “How much?” Brando asks. “And I said $600.”

Brando asks Timothy if he would take a check. Timothy says that he will take whatever Brando has in his pocket.

“So, he says to the young lady he is with, ‘Give him $600.’ So, she reaches into her bag, pulls out her wallet and hands me six crisp $100 bills,” Timothy says. “I thought to myself that this is a dream, and I’m going to wake up.”

Timothy didn’t have time to wake up because right after that, Ralph Carter — the actor who played Michael, JJ’s little brother on the 1970s popular TV sitcom, “Good Times,” — wrote him a check for $800 for a huge painting. It depicted three African American kids.

“One was standing at the blackboard working on an advanced mathematics problem, the other was looking through a microscope and the third was reading a book,” Timothy says. “He bought it. He kept saying this is our future. This is where we have to direct our people.”

Vietnam War Inspires Activist Mission

The Vietnam War raged in Southeast Asia while Americans watched the conflict on their television sets every night. An estimated 2 million Vietnamese people died as the body bags of fallen soldiers piled up in the U.S. It was a confusing war for the soldiers in combat and an unpopular war for the folks back home.


Timothy met his long-time friend Rufus in Vietnam. He also experienced troubling situations — but not from the enemy.

Timothy went to a village where there were no men. Just boys, old men and women. That meant one thing: The young men were out fighting the Americans. There was another Marine in Timothy’s troop that used this opportunity to assert himself. He made his annoyance that no one in the village spoke English clear. He began to shout derogatory words at the villagers as he wielded his weapon.

“This young woman looked like she was about 19 or 20,” he says. “He took his hand and stuck it down the back of her black pajama trousers and grabbed her buttocks and said she’s got a fat ass on her … When she started crying, he took the hand from there and started fondling her breasts and said she’s got nice boobs on her also.”

At that moment, Timothy says he realized his fellow officer was determined to dehumanize the people in the village. He wanted to let them know he could do anything. He was in charge.

“These people are crying, petrified,” Timothy says. “Old people down on their knees begging, and these two ignorant assholes were just laughing. And I’m saying don’t do this, we are better than this, this isn’t who we are. And I’m feeling guilty because I’m wearing the same uniform they are wearing. At that moment, I realized I was an activist.”

Paintbrush Brings Portrait to Life

Timothy did his time in the Marines and then headed to Berkeley to earn a degree. He studied philosophy. He says his parents didn’t care what he majored in. They were just happy he was going to college.

In 1979, Baldwin spoke at a UC Berkeley event. Timothy was listening to the man his parents had praised for intelligence and wit. The man whose portrait he painted because they all looked up to him. In his talk that evening, Baldwin spoke about the nuances of racism.

“What a writer is obliged at some point to realize is that he’s involved in a language he has to change,” Baldwin said during the event. “For example, for a black writer, especially in this country, to be born into the English language is to realize that the assumptions of the language the assumptions of which the language operates are his enemy.”

After hearing those words, Timothy approached Baldwin and asked if he could interview him.
“He asked me, ‘Are you a journalist? Are you working for some magazine or newspaper?’” Timothy says. “And I said, no sir. I said I’m just an individual and I would love to meet with you.”

Timothy told Baldwin about how he sold a portrait of him to his friend Marlon Brando. Upon hearing that, Baldwin agreed to meet with Timothy the next day.

“We met at the Le Mediterranee café down the street from campus,” Timothy says. “He walked in and I said, ‘Whatever you want, I’ll take care of it.’ And he said, ‘Aren’t you the big shot?’ And I told him, ‘I’m taking up your time.’”

They talked for about an hour and 40 minutes. Timothy says he watched Baldwin smoke cigarette after cigarette and drink red wine. Baldwin picked up the tab at the restaurant.

“He told me that he didn’t leave the United States to escape racism,” Timothy says. “He said he was looking forward to finding something better. He said he had more freedom in France to write and to live like a human being. But racism is everywhere, and if they find a place where there is no racism and no hostility against black people in particular, they will export it to that environment. It’s everyplace. There is no escaping it.”

On hearing those words, Timothy recalled a billboard ad he saw in Vietnam. It featured a very dark black man with big white teeth. The brand was called Darkie Toothpaste.

“So, I asked this captain, ‘What’s that?’ Timothy says. ‘And he said to me, ‘Oh the French left that here.’ And I said, ‘If the French left it here it would be in French. Why is it in English?’ My friend Carlos said to me later on, they get the Vietnamese to act hostile toward you, and then it creates friction between blacks and the Vietnamese.”

**Artist Starts a New Chapter**

Timothy reads a book a month and recently read, “Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America” by James Allen. He wants to do something on the subject of lynching, but first, he wants to complete a series of 20 pieces that feature African American historical figures.

Writer and civil rights activist, W.E.B. Du Bois said all art is propaganda, and it should be used to gain the rights of black folk to love and enjoy. Timothy has taken that edict to heart.

“I want to paint people who didn’t give up,” he says. “Muhammad Ali stood his ground.”

Timothy may paint James Baldwin again and Langston Hughes, Frantz Fanon, Malcom X, Winnie Mandela, Billie Holiday and Nina Simone.

Timothy married, but he divorced and did not have any children. He suffers from PTSD because of his experiences in Vietnam. He never took formal art classes, but as a substitute, he read books and observed what other people were doing while they created art.

Five years ago, Timothy retired and decided to take art classes at Los Angeles City College. A drawing class and an oil painting class.

“We are always learning,” he says. “I think a person is cheating themselves if they don’t try to learn something new every day. Once we stop learning it’s because we’re dead.”

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“HE SAID HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO FINDING SOMETHING BETTER. HE SAID HE HAD MORE FREEDOM IN FRANCE TO WRITE AND TO LIVE LIKE A HUMAN BEING. BUT RACISM IS EVERYWHERE, AND IF THEY FIND A PLACE WHERE THERE IS NO RACISM AND NO HOSTILITY AGAINST BLACK PEOPLE IN PARTICULAR, THEY WILL EXPORT IT TO THAT ENVIRONMENT. IT’S EVERY PLACE. THERE IS NO ESCAPING IT.”

-James Baldwin

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1. Timothy Bluitt begins work on a portrait of jazz great Billie Holiday as part of his series on historical black figures. Bluitt says the achievements of vocalists like Holiday and Nina Simone inspire him with their talent despite turbulent personal lives.

2. Timothy paints a portrait of his friend Safika. Bluitt paints the famous and people from his inner circle.

3. James Baldwin takes a cigarette break. Baldwin is considered one of the great writers of the 20th Century as well as a fervent civil rights activist known for his elegant critiques of racism.

Tango at the Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Philharmonic is a rush for everyone there: the audience, the dancers and the orchestra.

“I could feel the vibration of the hundred ... musicians and of the thousands of people in the audience,” says Giovanna Dan of the night she and her partner Guillermo De Fazio moved in tight embrace and graceful unison across the stage at the Hollywood Bowl.

“It was that wave of energy that was moving my body until the very end of the performance. Then when it came time for the bow, another flood of emotions. I had never seen 17,000 people all at once in front of me. Again, I felt a wave of energy from their cheers.”

It is a snapshot in time of Guillermo De Fazio and Giovanna Dan—masters of Argentine tango who have performed twists, dips, ochos, needles, quick taps and fast promenades on stages in Japan, Israel, Europe, Asia, South America and across the United States. GD Tango—the partnership of Guillermo De Fazio of Los Hermanos Macana and Giovanna Dan are regarded as world class performers and master teachers of tango.

But as long as the specter of coronavirus looms, it could be a while before Giovanna and Guillermo perform in front of thousands of spectators again. Still, the dance partners have not missed a beat. They made a pivot to a computer and the world of online dance.

“We coordinate a step of the day and individually give exercises filming ourselves in our backyards,” Giovanna says. “After doing technique practice that anyone can do from home without a partner, we show a past class review, so people can see what we practiced in action. I edit it all together, and that’s how we make our online classes.”

They dubbed it ‘Backyard Tango.’ Giovanna says it is teaching through “sensation.” Online classes encourage people to work on technique and balance, and she says it will help the student improve once they return to face-to-face tango.

“Giving virtual lessons has its pros and its cons,” Giovanna says. “It's something new for us, so we try to keep people entertained while simultaneously giving them material they can practice alone from home. The con is that we don’t have the option to dance with them to feel and work on their connection. The pro is that they can pause, rewind, slow motion, and see the material as many times as they want as they practice! So far it’s been pretty fun.”

From an audience of thousands under the glare of lights at the Hollywood Bowl, to an audience of one: Dee Bartolo studied tango in private lessons with Guillermo for four years and weekly group lessons led by both dancers. Pandemic life transformed the weekly encounters.

“We can no longer dance tango together,” Dee says. “I’ve found their online weekly lessons to be great, as one can continue to practice the drills, steps and keep on top of what we have already learned. No, it’s not the same as face to face and socializing with one's tango friends, but it’s a really great way to practice from home without a partner.”

Before social distancing was a concept and life seemed less strained, Guillermo and Giovanna welcomed enthusiasts into the Tango Room in Sherman Oaks for lessons. NASA scientist Kirk Reinholtz and his partner have practiced at the studio since 2015.

“My partner Virginia and I asked Guillermo if he would accept us as students because we are both fairly tall with long legs,” Kirk says. “We’d been discovering, via mangled pedicures, tangled legs and wobbly spins, that height brought unique challenges,” Kirk says. “Desperate to find some assets in our height, we went to Guillermo
who is the tallest tango professional in the world, I believe, and a master at filling the stage and the dance floor with his height and leg length.”

Giovanna says through tango, he learned to use his body in connection with his mind after years of only using his mind. Kirk and Virginia met the physical challenge of leg and hip strength, and the spins, and overall flexibility and balance needed to perform the advanced steps.

“And, so began our path into the many depths of tango Argentine style,” Kirk says. “Tango can be danced socially for fun after only a few lessons, but it also offers boundless physical, mental and emotional challenge to those that take the bait. I took the bait.”

It seems that the online lessons could lose some of the engagement and fun, but Dee sees advantages. In online lessons, the lead works on their steps and technique with Guillermo. Giovanna then guides the follower through their steps.

“The format of each lesson is concise, well guided and always fun,” Dee says, “and one comes away feeling as if they have learned something great. The added bonus is that you can replay it over and over.”

The tango partners have experienced a sense of loss during their quarantine because they cannot dance together. Guillermo has been doing some gardening. But Guillermo and Giovanna are not short on ideas. They have developed a concept for a new video project.

“To express our feelings of not being able to dance together during quarantine, we are creating a project filmed from each of our homes showing how we want to dance together, but as soon as we come into the embrace, the other person is not physically there. It’s going to be very interesting.”

When the pandemic has passed, the tango masters will light up the stage once more.

“Guillermo and Giovanna are professional dancers known around the world, who perform and teach with demanding physicality,” Kirk says. “They always took us to our limits and usually far beyond what we ever imagined we could do.”

Guillermo De Fazio and Giovanna Dan finish their tango performance with a flair in their studio in Sherman Oaks, California. v duet offer discounts to LACC students.
I did not have the motivation to do anything after the “Stay at Home Order” was issued.

One day during quarantine, I felt that I wanted to organize my photos. They are a reflection of my mind, what I think, and what I felt at the time of the photo.

When I first started taking photos, the characters in my images were lost, but they always found their happy ending.

For example, a girl from a different planet or a different dimension visits this world. At first, she is confused and unhappy. She struggles and tries to figure out what to do, and then she remembers everything. That revelation made her remember how to find happiness and live joyfully in the moment. In the end, new doors open and lead her on the path to where she wants to go next.

At this time of physical distancing and quarantine, many people have the time to face themselves and reflect on their lives. Some might consider a career change. People may realize their deepest desires.

So, I ask you the question: How do you want to live post coronavirus?

I want everyone to find happiness and enjoy the moment even if the current situation seems grim.

The message from my photos that I want to share is be true to yourself. That will lead you wherever you want to go.
ASIA VACATION
SHADOWS
TRAIL OF
CORONAVIRUS

EDITOR’S NOTE: COLLEGIAN CULTURE REPORTER WILLIAM TORRES NEEDED NO ENCOURAGEMENT TO FOLLOW THE STORY WHEN A “MYSTERY VIRUS” DISRUPTED HIS VACATION IN THAILAND.

I remember the start of the coronavirus outbreak like it was yesterday. On New Year’s Eve, I landed at Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport in China for a five-hour layover on my way to Bangkok, Thailand. I spent an entire day in the air.

I left LAX on Dec. 29, and I arrived in China early in the morning on Dec. 31, 2019.

Travelers crowded the airport as they prepared to fly out of Guangzhou. They jammed the airport restaurants and lined up for wontons, dumplings, egg drop soup and drinks. They sat close and appeared to enjoy themselves in the small restaurant spaces.

This was my first visit to Asia, and I was excited. I was also tired and jetlagged. I wanted to sit down and relax, so I could recharge and ring in the new year in Bangkok.

I waited in terminal 10 for my connecting flight to Thailand. As my eyes became heavy, I started to shut down. The last thing I noticed before my nap was a headline on a giant screen: “Mystery illness is found in China.”

I woke up from my three-hour nap in time to board my connecting flight. I had a fleeting thought about the virus found in China, and I told myself it was probably just a bug going around, nothing too serious.

I reminded myself, “This is the beginning of my dream vacation.” It was the start of a new decade, new resolutions and new goals. In Bangkok, people embraced and kissed, and no one was aware of illness spreading in China, about 1,400 miles away.

News Breaks into Vacation
It’s only the first day of 2020, and I have a massive headache from drinking and partying the previous night. Luckily, the Khaosan Palace hotel where I am a guest offers free breakfast from 7 a.m. to noon. I get downstairs by 11:45 a.m. and try to hydrate and get protein and vitamins to start my day.
As I pour my cup of water, I see the BBC World News is on the television.

“Chinese authorities announce the first patients who are infected with the unknown virus worked at a seafood market in Wuhan,” announced TV presenter Lindsey Brancher. “Aside from seafood, animals such as birds and rabbits were sold there. Authorities were ordered to close the market today.”

No one pays attention to the news. Most of the tourists eat their breakfast and attempt to recover from the night before. They continue to greet the new year. I am ready to explore more of Thailand.

My first five days there were magical. I relaxed on the most beautiful, although crowded, beaches in Ko Chang. I visited the Sanctuary of Truth, a majestic, wooden temple filled with Buddhist and Hindu wood-carved sculptures and scriptures in Pattaya, the Amsterdam of Thailand, where people partied every night without a care in the world - music, sex and drugs.

Virus Gains Ground, Gets a Handle

Meanwhile in Wuhan, at least 44 people showed signs of infection attributed to the unknown virus, with 11 in serious condition and all of them in quarantine according to the Jan. 4 edition of the South China Morning Post.

I left Thailand on Jan. 7 to embark on a 14-day cruise to Singapore. I boarded the Sapphire Princess, sister to the Diamond Prince. By coincidence, this ship would later be quarantined for 17 days at sea with the largest number of cases of COVID-19 outside of mainland China.

The day I boarded the Sapphire Princess, the World Health Organization identified the new virus. They stated 2019-nCoV is part of the coronavirus family, which includes Serve Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the common cold, according to Aljazeera.com.

SARS is a contagious and sometimes fatal respiratory illness caused by coronavirus. SARS first appeared in 2002 in China and spread worldwide within a few months, though it was quickly contained.

Coronavirus had a name, but people continued their lives as usual. In fact, the passengers on the ship were more stunned at news that Prince Harry and Meghan Markel would step down from their royal duties.

No one mentioned COVID-19 on the ship until China announced its first death. According to the New York Times, the fatality was a 61-year-old man who purchased goods from a seafood market. Treatment did not improve his symptoms after he was admitted to the hospital and he died of heart failure on the evening of Jan 9. The virus quickly spread to other parts of China.

Flights were still going in and out of China. Millions of Chinese traveled domestically and overseas to celebrate the Lunar New Year holiday on Jan. 25. Wuhan reported its second death on Jan. 17.

Bangkok: Party’s over Here

When I disembarked the Sapphire Princess and returned to Singapore on Jan. 20, CNBC reported new cases of the coronavirus in South Korea and Thailand. When I flew back to Bangkok two days later, the city had two confirmed cases.

The six-foot distancing rule was not in action yet, and everyone in Chinatown congregated shoulder-to-shoulder to celebrate the Lunar New Year.

Maha Vajiralongkorn, the King of Thailand, made an appearance in Chinatown to celebrate the new cycle - The Year of the Rat. Children dressed in dragon suits marched down the streets and tourists and residents danced to the drummers’ celebratory beats. On that day in Bangkok, people lived as though the coronavirus did not exist.

Meanwhile, the death toll was rising in other parts of Asia. On Jan. 26, the number of dead climbed to 80, according to the New York Times. News reports confirmed 2,000 cases in China and five cases in the United States.

On the same day, the world mourned the death of basketball legend, Kobe Bryant, who died in a helicopter crash that killed nine people, including his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna Bryant. The impact of Bryant’s death would not hit me until I returned to the U.S.

Good Times Wane in Bangkok

Chinese experts confirmed there was human-to-human transmission to state broadcaster CCTV. The next day, no one was on the streets of Bangkok.

Khao San Road is the craziest street in the capital. It’s a frat party seven nights a week. No matter what day of the week, vendors are out on the street selling pad thai noodles, beer and exotic tidbits, like crocodile and scorpion meat on a stick. Bars and clubs play loud music as people in the streets dance and grope each other.

After the news report, bar employees at Khao San Road begged the few people on the street to come inside to enjoy special discounted drinks. Vendors were almost nonexistent.

Everyone was on high alert during my last five days in Thailand. They wore masks and gloves to public areas. Even tourists like me bought masks from the pharmacy to wear whenever we went out.

Everyone in Bangkok was afraid of contracting the virus, and I was ready to go home.

Return to Guangzhou

If I had contracted the virus, my chances of fighting it in the U.S. would be better because I did not purchase travel insurance. I had another layover in
Guangzhou on my way home, and this time it was 10 hours. I decided to get a 24-hour visa.

The process was simple. I filled out a form and the immigration department approved it. There was no line, just one other person ahead of me. I should have recognized then that people were afraid to step outside of Guangzhou airport. I ventured into the city of 15 million to see how people there were coping with coronavirus.

Even though Guangzhou is 634 miles from Wuhan, the city was still on high alert. Deserted. It felt like an episode of AMC’s “Walking Dead.”

After passengers passed through the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Immigration check, they submit to a thermometer scanner before they reach their terminal. It is tedious, but no one complains. Sighs of relief are audible as several people test negative on the thermometer scanner for high fever.

“Everyone … working at the airport is scared to contract the virus,” said Cindy Gou in broken English. “We just hope they contain the virus before it spreads.”

Gou is a customer service assistant at Guangzhou Airport who has been handing out masks to anyone who asks.

China is known for congested public trains with thousands of people riding them each day. After the outbreak, the trains had plenty of empty seats, even during peak hours. People sat several seats apart or they stood.

Authorities in gloves and white surgical masks waited at the entrance of a Guangzhou train station to take each passenger’s temperature. They had backup. Police officers were there to monitor. Two officers scanned passengers, and two others were on standby, ready to take down anyone who resisted the test or protested the results.

Passengers patiently waited in line and probably prayed that they did not have a temperature or flu-like symptoms.

Outside the train station, the city of Guangzhou looked like a ghost town. Shops and restaurants were closed, except for American franchises like McDonald’s and Subway. They were open for business.

Few taxis, cars or people traveled the streets. Only students and people getting off work could be seen wearing gloves and masks.

Police cars pull over and stop people on the street to take their temperatures. They arrest anyone without a mask.

I spent less than five hours in Guangzhou city this time around because I did not feel safe. I waited in the airport terminal, wide awake this time, and I boarded the plane to Los Angeles at 8 p.m.

The Trump administration restricted all travel from China four days later, on Jan. 31.

I avoided the virus in Thailand, on the Princess Cruise and in a city in China. Let’s hope I can avoid it in the U.S.
SOCIETY SHOULD RECOGNIZE INVALUABLE TOOL IN AB 540

[By TUPAC ZAPATA] (Illustration By NANCY VALENCIA)

I would not be a full-time student at L.A. City College if it were not for the California Non-Resident Tuition Exemption, also known as AB 540.

This affidavit signed by former Gov. Gray Davis in 2001, has allowed thousands of undocumented students who attended high school in California, along with other eligibility requirements, to pursue higher education by paying in-state tuition fees.

What would have been an impossible $3,732 for 12 units, falls to a manageable fee of $552 for this spring semester thanks to the non-resident tuition exemption.

This brings higher education within reach for the estimated 25,000 undocumented California high school students who graduate each year.

Out-of-state tuition poses a serious obstacle for many college students. Many are not considered California residents because they do not have a resident alien card, or they are from another state.

The cost of a college education has increased 1,000 percent over the last three decades, according to the Center for American Progress. Federal financial aid makes up a large percentage of the support to most college students, but it is not available to undocumented students.

It baffles me how undocumented students could afford to pay out-of-state tuition at a community college. The $311 charge per unit not only seems punitive, but cruel to students who come from low-income families. Undocumented students should qualify for federal financial aid, and any other benefits that alleviate the financial burdens full-time college students face.

We should not penalize students of limited resources with exorbitant tuition fees—far higher than their peers.

They are not at fault because their parents or someone else brought them to this country as young children. AB 540 and AB 60, which granted undocumented immigrants drivers licenses, are true testaments of the inclusive and progressive values our golden state has recently shown, especially during the anti-immigrant practices of the current administration.

Eighteen other states aside from California allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition, including Washington, Oregon, Texas, Colorado and New York, according to the National Council of State Legislatures.

Why create barriers to higher-ed, when everyone benefits from an educated citizenry. Hopefully, many of these students will stay in the country as well-educated, paying, contributing members of society. It is in the country’s best interest to urge every state to adopt similar measures. This will encourage members of immigrant communities to pursue a proper education that will in turn help them flourish.

[Graphs and data visualizations are not transcribed]
A SAILOR’S TALE
VETERANS WEIGH IN ON CAPTAIN’S GAMBIT

Former Navy personnel drop the formalities at the mention of Capt. Brett Crozier of the USS Theodore Roosevelt who military officials fired over a controversial letter he wrote about the spread of COVID-19 aboard ship in March.

Enlisted persons were reluctant to share their thoughts with me. So, I spoke to personnel who have returned to civilian life and some cursed like a sailor at the treatment Crozier received.

“That’s f##ked up, having a C.O. [commanding officer] who gives a damn is not common,” says Matthew Patton who served aboard the USS Kitty Hawk and the Aircraft Carrier Nimitz in 2004 and 2008. “Almost an admiral. The administration as a whole, not surprised that they did it, but still upset, disappointed.”

Osamu Evbuomwan served five years as a U.S. Air Force medic at Joint Base Andrews in Washington D.C.

“Typical bullshit, they removed him because he did something positive for his people,” Osamu says. “The military is very black and white. He knew what he was risking as a captain.”

Osamu says there are lessons to be learned from what happened when coronavirus appeared on board the USS Roosevelt. He expects that procedures will change.

“If there wasn’t a protocol for infections, there will be now,” he says. “This is something where people will remember the COVID-19 incident. This is going to be something that the future Navy is going to go over in training.”

Osamu spoke well of his time in the military, and I could relate to him. Like a lot of young men and women today, not just those who join the military, I believe he was a bit lost before his service. He talked about what his “time in” did for him.

“It allowed me to not feel like a loser,” he says. “I got life experience, basically it allowed me to move on in life.”

I also felt that way as a Navy vet who is now back in school at L.A. City College. I was unsure what I wanted to do in life and the military causes people like me and Osamu to change.

I spoke to three individuals who served in the military, three generations of service members from three different backgrounds who shared the same opinion.

Bill Brooke spent 20 years of his life in the Navy. He served on board two aircraft carriers, two destroyers, and he had two overseas duty stations, as well as two in the U.S.

Bill says he loved every minute. He looks back fondly on the time he spent in the military.

We talked about his glory days. We compared sea stories and laughed about most things, spoke light of others. But we were honest in all things.

He is what I consider to be a true patriot. He stood for his country, and is someone who understands the meaning of sacrifice, someone you could learn a life lesson, maybe even two from.

This is a man who comes from a generation of Navy where orders were everything. You would never dream of speaking out. He comes from a time that is known as the “Old Navy,” where if you didn’t have the grit to stand by yourself, you would get eaten alive.

He could not say how something like COVID-19 would have been handled when he served, but he knows how it made him feel.

“If that was my ship, and I walked onboard, I would be devastated, simply devastated,” he said.

That spoke to me. As a veteran, it made me feel that the Navy was failing. No sailor, nor veteran should ever feel that way.
We discussed the mindset of the sailors on board the Roosevelt. I even contacted some of them, but they all declined to speak for fear of consequences for speaking out.

Bill and I talked about how Capt. Crozier, someone of serious authority was taken down like he was nothing, all because he spoke up.

It’s not the picture that should be painted for sailors, and that was something we both agreed on.

“I think he did the right thing, an honorable man,” Bill says. “He was a good skipper. Someone who was willing to put his crew first, and that speaks for itself.”

Matthew Patton is a few years my senior in terms of service and was wonderful to interview. It felt like I was speaking to one of my old senior petty officers.

The way he talked, he painted an image in my head of the type of sailor he was—someone I would grab a beer with and have a great time on the town. He was the most vocal of the Navy and Air Force vets I interviewed about his thoughts on Capt. Crozier.

Matthew joined the Navy out of San Jose, Calif., and went to boot camp in Great Lakes, Ill.—a place known for its wind chill and snow. In December of 2004, he sailed for Yukuska, Japan as a crew member on board the USS Kittyhawk. Over the next several years, he would spend months and months at sea.

“The Navy fit in many ways because it wasn’t the same thing,” Matthew says. “Sure, you had a routine, but being on an aircraft carrier, I’m always going somewhere, going to somewhere else on the planet, I’m traveling.”

He was quick to speak well of his time in the fleet.

“It helped shape me in the sense that I was undisciplined in the sense of having a set of skills...”

“He is trying to look after his people, that’s one of his main objectives, you can’t accomplish the mission if your crew is getting sick from a virus. I feel he did the right thing.”
and how to present myself,” he says. “It taught me to adapt to just about anything.”

Matthew says he was disgusted by the behavior of the secretary of the Navy, who traveled from Washington D.C. to the USS Roosevelt in Guam after Crozier was fired to address the crew. He ridiculed the fired captain on a loudspeaker.

“For you to degrade this man’s name in front of his previous crew,” Matthew says. “You know how they felt about him. They cheered his name and gave him a roaring goodbye.”

The Secretary of the Navy eventually resigned for his poorly chosen words, but Crozier never returned to the ship he risked his career to save.

The military is not an organization that is quick to admit its mistakes, according to Osamu.

“A lot of time people are just going to follow orders, it’s a cleanup, sometimes you gotta be smart and use common sense, the military isn’t designed for free thought like that,” he says.

We talked about the sailor who died on board the Roosevelt from complications of COVID-19. The topic sparked bitterness.

Osamu spoke with respect about the death of a fellow service member.

“It’s good it wasn’t more,” he says. “There were so many people who were infected, or at least exposed. Definitely backs up Capt. Crozier, this guy didn’t die from the enemy, he died from a virus onboard the ship he served on, he died from a virus on board his ship.”

It is my belief that this will be dragged out until it is no longer relevant and everything has quieted down. Then they can sweep it under the rug. It comes down to what we as a people will remember.

“The government’s stance was the virus wasn’t a big deal, months later it actually is,” Matthew says. “He thought about it and knew his crew was more important. Sad to say but one of his chiefs passing away proves he was right to raise the alarm. Unfortunate, but no doubt he was right, and the Navy needs to fix this.”

“IT’S COOL THEY ARE CONSIDERING REINSTATING HIM. THEY MIGHT AS WELL, HE IS WELL RESPECTED, AND HE SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY ONE WITH COMMON SENSE. HE ACTUALLY CARED ABOUT HIS PEOPLE, AND THAT’S SO UNCOMMON. IT’S GOOD THAT HE DID WHAT HE DID.

-Osamu Evbuomwan
Based off the facts alone, he should not have been relieved. He was concerned about his crew. The crew was compromised with a disease. He was right for putting his crew first, I applaud the man.

—Matthew Patton U.S. Navy Veteran


2. Navy personnel known as shooters launch aircraft from the flight deck of the aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt. Navy officials suggest routine flight operations may have been the way coronavirus arrived on the aircraft carrier.

3. An F-18C pilot receives clearance to take off from the flight deck of the USS Theodore Roosevelt in the Persian Gulf in 2005.


5. Mission Accomplished: Airman 1st Class Grant shares a light moment with his charge, Airman Osamu Evbuomwan, in San Antonio, Texas in 2013. Grant was Evbuomwan’s element leader at boot camp during Air Force Basic Training.

All Photos Courtesy of Creative Commons, License 2.0, and U.S. Navy
2020 EFFORT TAKES ‘STEPS’ TO REMEDY HOUSING SHORTAGE

For three nights, the count of the homeless began as thousands of volunteers and staff spread out through Los Angeles County. They ventured into neighborhoods. They drove and then walked through alleys, under the freeways, across bridges or underpasses and overpasses, wherever people without shelter could be found.

The goal: to do a headcount of people who live on the streets in L.A. County. Los Angeles Homeless- Services Authority (LAHSA), conducted the count of the homeless on Jan. 24, 2020.

Encampments, tarps, tents and RV’s form part of the landscape east of downtown Los Angeles. Rows of makeshift shelters are no longer limited to Skid Row.

The numbers of visible homeless have increased. The three-day count, often in the dark, stretched across 80 cities.

There are many misconceptions about exactly who the homeless are in Los Angeles, according to LAHSA. But the majority do not live on the streets. Eighty percent work jobs, but they earn minimum wage. They live in cars, at a friend’s house or even in a garage.

There are 58,936 homeless people living on the street in Los Angeles County. That includes a major increase from last year’s report of 52,765 homeless persons. That’s an increase of 12% in L.A. County. It translates into 514 people becoming homeless every month.

“This is a scary figure for anyone who lives in Los Angeles, the chances of becoming homeless are greater than any time in history,” said Fan Zhou, a Homeless advocate for LA Works organization.

On Skid Row, the most “established” homeless neighborhood in downtown Los Angeles since the 1930s, people sleep in tents and live on the sidewalks of the city. Others just wander without direction as they drag their personal belongings on a cold and rainy winter morning.

“Homelessness is an inescapable reality, and can happen to anyone,” Fan said.

The rising homelessness stems from a lack of affordable housing. The shortage of housing is regional and continues to drive thousands of people into homelessness, according to LAHSA Executive Director, Peter Lynn.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti has taken emergency steps to ensure that the pandemic does not make homelessness in Los Angeles worse.

In March, Garcetti announced thousands of shelter beds and hotel and motel rooms would be made available for the most vulnerable homeless populations.

“We are taking immediate, urgent action to slow the spread of the COVID-19 by helping people who are experiencing homelessness to come indoors,” the mayor said.

Homelessness rose 16% in Los Angeles according to the newest count by LAHSA to 36,300.

Just east of downtown, a homeless man sits on the curb side of the street and asks passersby for food or money. No one acknowledges him as people rush by to their destinations.

Alberto stands nearby at a bus stop and watches. “One time I was waiting for the bus with my suitcase, and a lady stops and asked if I was OK, and I say yes ma’am, I’m OK,” he says.

“Where are you heading,” she asks.

“I said nowhere ma’am. I have nowhere to go,” Alberto says. “I’m homeless.”

Alberto says the woman asked if he had eaten breakfast and he had not. She gave him a sandwich, and she asked if he had a Metro card, and he says he did not have that either, so she gave him $20.

That was one of Alberto’s better days. He says he was homeless for two and half years and lived under a palm tree in the MacArthur Park area. Alberto is no longer a statistic in the LAHSA count, but an estimated 17 people per day become homeless in L.A. County.

The one-quarter cent tax in L.A. County, Measure H, provides support for 10 years to help LAHSA reduce homelessness. The organization found housing for more than 21,000 people in 2016-17. Of that number, 92-percent are still in permanent housing.
**PANDEMIC KILLS BUZZ FOR NOVICE BEEKEEPER**

By ANDE RICHARDS

“**The Curious World of Bugs**

By Daniel Marlos

Daniel “Danny” Schurr says he and his wife Valerie are like a modern-day “Green Acres” couple. She is a movie producer originally from New York’s Upper East Side, and he comes from Northern California.

He’s been a wildland firefighter, volunteers for a search and rescue team, works as an emergency medical technician and is a full-time nursing student at Los Angeles City College.

The couple has a small herd of cats. Moose had to be bottle-fed when he first joined the family, and there’s Bob, a 17-year-old former street cat who doesn’t let anything bother him. Then there are the three foster cats: Birdie, Tordi B and Tarzan.

Danny is an animal lover. He considered adding chickens and a pig to his household, but Valerie was not fond of that idea. She’s happy he settled on bees.

“I grew up being terrified of bees,” Danny says. “And now I hold a bee in my hands, and I just think they are the most fascinating creatures.”

Danny set out to learn more about bees. He researched and found The Valley Hive in Topanga, just northwest of L.A. They offer an eight-week series of classes in beekeeping.

The first two classes teach students about the basic tools needed to keep bees: a hive, a honey extractor and a protective suit. They also discuss the history of beekeeping and the reason for a hive’s shape.

By the third meeting, Danny says students need the requisite equipment to make contact with the hive. Unfortunately, Danny never made it beyond the introductory class because the coronavirus pandemic arrived. Now, The Valley Hive posts their classes online.

He purchased “The Backyard Beekeeper” by Kim Flottom, to help with his quest for knowledge about bees. He says it’s a big book with large print and lots of photos, so it’s easy to read and very helpful if you want to set up a hive at home.

There’s a newly cultivated green area on the L.A. City College campus between the Martin Luther King Jr. Library and the Chemistry Building, and Danny says it would be an ideal spot for a beehive. The area he has his eye on is away from the main walkway. But he needs to learn how to go about setting up a hive first. Danny insists that bees do not attack people.

“When you set a beehive up, you really have to plan it,” he says. “Once bees have a pathway, they are going to go on that pathway, so you really have to decide where you want them to fly in and out of their hive. As long as you do that in a way that’s not crossing people’s paths, it’s fine.”

Danny says a beehive would be an amazing thing to have at school and could be a teaching tool as well. It could also help build a sense of community at the college.

“People think that food comes from the grocery store, and they don’t really see that food comes from the ground or from animals,” he says. “They have the space … students could walk by and taste fresh honey [and] see what it’s like.”

While setting up a beehive at home comes with a few hurdles, doing the same on campus comes with a slew of more nuanced problems, as illustrated by photography professor Daniel Marlos, author of “The Curious World of Bugs.”

“I am all in favor of individuals keeping honeybees within the city limits,” he states in an email. “And I would very much enjoy having my own beehive at home that would allow me to harvest honey. While I think having a hive on the LACC campus would be beneficial to the environment, and might even lead to educational opportunities, I suspect it might open up the college to liabilities should a person allergic to bee stings get stung by [an] LACC tenant bee.”

It may not be obvious, but a quick study of bees reveals that they are critical to the food chain and to the financial benefit of major world economies.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, bees pollinate approximately 75% of the fruits, nuts and vegetables grown in the United States.

In “The Curious World of Bugs,” the professor makes a case for consuming local honey. Many studies indicate that consuming local honey produced by honeybees that take nectar from local flowers, significantly reduces allergies in individuals who are sensitive to pollen. A natural vaccine of sorts.

Danny never got the chance to write a proposal or talk to anyone in the college administration about his idea for a campus beehive. He says at least he can tell people not to use pesticides, which are poisonous to bees and linked to a marked decline in bee colonies.
NURSES DRESS FOR SURVIVAL ON FRONT LINES

[By ANGELA JOHNSON] [Illustrations By JONATHAN VALDOVINOS]

NURSE’S SCRUBS ARE A THING OF THE PAST FOR SOME WHILE THE PANDEMIC PERSISTS. A SPACE-AGE PROTECTIVE WARDROBE BECOMES A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH.

They look like extraterrestrial visitors when they suit up for biological warfare each day in biohazard suits.

It is something they must do to protect themselves, to protect their patients, to protect their families, and to protect their communities from coronavirus.

Thousands of healthcare professionals fight on the front line in a battle to keep communities safe from the contagious virus.

Jonathan Valdovinos attends L.A. City College, and he is an illustrator for the Collegian Times. He wondered what his sister Cathy wore at the hospital where she works, and he says he was taken aback by a selfie she texted him.

“Dressed all in white like that,” he said, “she looked just like a ghost. It looked kind of weird,” Jonathan said.

Cathy straps on the portable air-conditioner first. Then she puts the hood with a built-in face shield over her head and attaches it to the portable air unit. After she steps into a pair of shoe covers, Cathy puts the disposable apron over her scrubs. She pulls on a pair of latex gloves and gives them a snap. Now, she is ready to see the first patient of the day.

Cathy, who asked to be identified by first name only, will change her personal protective equipment (PPE), for every single patient she sees during her 12-hour shift. She has worked as a certified nurse assistant (CNA), at Huntington Memorial Hospital in Pasadena, Calif., for four years. She is studying to become a nurse.

A 12-hour shift as a CNA is not easy work. They complete a long list of duties and responsibilities. The CNA often arrives first when a patient calls for
Neither the registered nurse, nor the licensed vocational nurse would feed or bathe a patient. Those duties are reserved for the CNA.

"I'm with patients more than the nurses," Cathy says. "They have to give meds and everything, but I tend to do more. I'm cleaning, doing the vital signs and things like that. It's a little heavy I'm not going to lie."

Cathy laughs—a sign she still has a sense of humor. She goes home, takes a shower and goes to bed most days after work. The extra precautions she takes with PPE add a necessary layer of safety and another task to be performed.

"For me personally, it's just very tedious," Cathy says, "because it's a lot more extra work and care that we have to take to protect ourselves and the patients as well."

Cathy says some patients are in the hospital to be ruled out for COVID-19. So, changing PPE between rooms is important to protect patients in case they don't have the virus, and the next-door patient does.

"I'm literally surrounded," she says. "Most of the patients that I have are positive. Say, if I have eight cases, then six or seven will actually have coronavirus, and one will be a rule-out." Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a patient with a contagious disease would be placed in isolation. Cathy says there are so many coronavirus patients now, that three entire floors had to be devoted to their care. Space got tight and hospital administrators added another floor for COVID-19 care.

"And we ran out of space on that floor as well, so we also use the sixth floor now," she says. "The next floor below is maternity and below that is the surgical floor. So basically, the whole building has been transformed for coronavirus patients."

Huntington Hospital opened its doors in 1892. There are more than 600 beds, and it is the only trauma center in the San Gabriel Valley.

"They even set up tents outside in the parking lot just in case," she says. "We're waiting for the surge where all these people are supposed to get sick. In case we run out of room for everybody."

Cathy seems undaunted by the threat to her health, but she says such close proximity to the virus upsets some of her co-workers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a report that stated medical workers stand a higher risk of contracting coronavirus because of exposure to patients in hospitals and clinics.

"Personally, emotionally, I'm O.K.," she says. "In the beginning, you would hear people whine and complain, some would even cry because they had to work the corona floor."

Cathy sees things in a different way.

"It is what it is," she says. "With me, I look at it like this is what we do, this is what we're prepared for ... Some people have too much fear."

In the theater of war, a moderate amount of fear may keep you out of danger's path. Coronavirus has made warriors of the healthcare workers who guard against deadly pathogens on the front lines.

"I feel like I always wanted to be in healthcare to help people," Cathy says. "And even though the job is a little more difficult and a little bit more scary ... I still really like it."

She may sound fearless, but she does not see herself as a warrior. She reserves that title for her fellow nurses.

"I've heard three nurses tell me 'Make sure you have your PPE on because you can't go to war without your weapons.'"
The burnout was real for Beatriz Vasquez as her passion for dance waned. Then, a single class led her down a path to renewal, inspiration and a personal renaissance.

By DIANA CAMPBELL | Photos By CAL

One boy dressed in blue velvet pants and a white shirt rests in second position as he holds hands with two girls in a large circle of ballerinas in training at the Hollywood Parks and Recreation Center. More than a dozen girls in pink ballet slippers and black leotard tops wear pastel-colored tulle skirts in green, yellow, pink and white.

They all await instruction from Beatriz Vasquez, their ballet teacher. The group of young dancers ready to perform their carefully-rehearsed ballet choreography on their teacher’s cue. The scene and the situation represent a long journey in the dance life of Vasquez.

When she enrolled in flamenco classes at Los Angeles City College 10 years ago, she only wanted to heal her broken heart and spirit. She did not expect a new path in her life to reignite her passion for dancing.

Vasquez attended LACC in 2010 and enrolled in dance classes with professor Dan Glickman after a six-year break from dancing.

“During my hiatus, I kept teaching and obtained my yoga certification, but I stopped dancing and performing,” Vasquez said. “I was heartbroken and my dance spirit took a toll.”

She decided that by learning the flamenco, she could make a comeback. She missed the years away from dance and performance.

“It was exactly what I needed, a professor who allowed the students to be individuals and their own person,” Vasquez said. “It was so unlike what I had been exposed to all my dance career, where I was always told what to wear, when to take classes, what to eat, and the list goes on.”

It was in one of the LACC flamenco classes that instructor Chester Whitmore saw her dance. He wanted to cast her in “The History of Black Dance in America,” a show that celebrates the history and culture of African Americans in dance in the United States. He created the show 20 years earlier, and now director-producer-writer Ron Parker would work with Whitmore as the choreographer and consultant.

“I stole her,” said Whitmore who also teaches tap and ballroom dancing.

Parker was one of Vasquez’ dance partners for “The History of Black Dance in America.” He was a guest performer with her dance company, 3-19 Dance Art. They performed together again when Vasquez choreographed a production called “Hollywood in the Hood,” for the Watts Village Theatre Dance Company. “A few years ago, I was at a performance at the Mexican Consulate in L.A. put on by Beatriz Vasquez and her dance group,” Parker said. “She spoke a bit to the crowd after the performance, and as difficult as my Spanish comprehension is, there was something she said that caught my attention. I asked her what it was she said, ‘I swim in the waters of the cultures whose dances I dance,’” Parker said.

Bea, as Parker calls her, has been a principal dancer in the show since it began in 2011. In preparing for a 2016 show, the company needed to replace the African dancer who normally danced to “Negro Spirituals” that represented the religious 19th cen-
tery slave dances of the old South. At first, Vasquez hesitated, then she took over.

Parker says she asked how she could do the dance justice since she is not African American, nor did she know African dance.

“Until she was human,” Parker said. “I implored her to reach back to the struggle for independence in her native Colombia, to look into her own heart and imagine what it would be like to yearn for freedom … Long story short, the dance she created during that year’s run of the show was breathtaking.”

Vasquez says the dance department at LACC helped her heal and recuperate. It is also the place where she found one of the most influential mentors of her career. Whitmore also became an occasional dancer in her shows and a helping hand in certain choreography projects.

“Chester became, and still is one of my most important mentors and creatives I have had the pleasure of working with. I call him my ‘dance dad’ and when I need an additional dancer or advice on a choreography project, he never fails me,” Vasquez said.

The mentee has now become mentor to dancers like the ballerinas who study with her at the Hollywood Parks and Recreation Center, and to a more advanced student named Claudia Paz. She began to study with Vasquez when she was 7 years old.

“Fast-forward to when I was 20 years old, and she invited me to join her dance company,” Paz said. “I am now 25, and to say that working with Beatriz is the purest of magic is an understatement. She has been my instructor for years, and she always stays relevant in her practice. It is incredibly impressive how she can work with any human, from toddlers, to the wisest of souls.”

Paz says her ballet teacher pays attention to details. From the costumes to the props, she credits Vasquez for excellent choreography and music selection.

“Working with her feels like she has lived many lives, and so many energies are brought together to be expressed by her,” Paz said. “Dare I say that her mind is the eighth wonder of the world.”

Life started out in Bogota, Colombia for Vasquez, but she immigrated to the United States with her parents. Her father eventually returned to Colombia, but her mother remained in the U.S. and became a nurse.

Vasquez remembers that a “wonderful education” helped her to adjust to her new life pretty fast since she could read and write in English when she arrived in Los Angeles.

Her social life was limited. She says the benefit was that it gave her the ability to focus all her time on dance lessons.

Vasquez remembers that a “wonderful education” helped her to adjust to her new life pretty fast since she could read and write in English when she arrived in Los Angeles.

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She had one friend, however, an immigrant as well, but from El Salvador, not Columbia. They met in L.A. when they were just kids and became friends. Over time, the friendship developed into a love story, and they later married.

“My husband has been an essential part of my dance career and in my moments of defeat and disappointment, he has been the support through everything,” Vasquez said, adding that her husband is also an artist, whose opinion she values in her work.

The opportunity to choreograph “Ella” led Vasquez to L.A. Union Station with her dance company in 2017. She says the Women’s March inspired her, and she describes it as one of the best experiences of her life.

“My inspiration sprouted from all the issues women, LGBTQ community, immigrants etc. were facing, especially after the recently-elected president, Donald Trump. All were my fuel to create the piece,” she said.

She remembers the way the audience reacted to the performance with tears and requests for photos with the company. It even moved some of her dancers to tears.

“I’ve seen her doing ballet, where she moves like a dream, and modern dance,” said Gabriela Crowe who met Vasquez at the Bilingual Foundation of the Arts. “She is so imaginative and creative and seems able to do anything.”

The journey continues a decade after she arrived at L.A. City College with the transformation from student to teacher, dance entrepreneur and muse.

Since the outbreak, Vasquez has moved her ballet lessons online to observe social distancing and the “Safer at Home Order.”

“In a few hours I will be teaching my ballet students through Zoom and my heart couldn’t be happier for my kids, my beautiful little souls,” Vasquez says.

Invitation to the Dance: L.A. City College alumna Beatriz Vasquez (right) prepares young students for a performance at the Hollywood Parks and Recreation Center where she teaches.
CORONAVIRUS ROARS INTO 2020

Not one nation on earth found immunity from coronavirus. It began the year quietly, but became an equal opportunity, viral event by spring. Collegian Times staff chronicle experiences of family members on four continents.
"LOCAL POLICE WOULD CRUISE AROUND TOWN IN THEIR LADA CARS ALL DAY LONG, SHOUTING THROUGH MEGAPHONES TO WEAR MASKS AND STAY HOME."

By Anastasia Obis

Growing up in that part of the country meant traveling to China more often than traveling within our own country. A visit to Moscow was almost a luxury for us - the capital is too far (an eight hour flight from Khabarovsk, the closest major city to Birobidzhan) and the tickets are too expensive for regular working families to afford. So, I only visited Moscow one time throughout my childhood, but I would not be able to count the number of times I have been to China. The trip requires an hour bus ride over the frozen Amur river during winter. Once the ice melts, the trip becomes a two-hour boat ride - and you are in a small Chinese town where it’s easy to shop at various markets, enjoy Chinese food, wander around and maybe get your hair and nails done.

The railroad bridge over the Amur River has been in the works for over 10 years now. China has finished half of the bridge on their side, but the Russian side is still behind. So close to China, everyone in my hometown was concerned about our part of the country becoming the next hotspot. It is fair to say that the Russian government took this matter seriously in the beginning.

I was home for the winter break, when we learned that Russia shut down its border with China because of coronavirus, and that was back in January. The case count back home is quite low, so it’s not too far, but by a family returning from a trip to France.

Local authorities introduced drastic measures right away. Every town in the region was put on complete lockdown. Theoretically, you could drive to the neighboring town, but if your “local registration,” a stamp in the passport with your address, did not exist, you would not be able to get in.

Local police would cruise around town in their Lada cars (brand of sedan cars manufactured in Russia), all day long, shouting through megaphones to wear masks and stay home.

Police stopped my 15-year-old brother Roma, a tall, blond, athletic teenager with the disposition of a boy scout, countless times. They always asked for his registration and made sure he was not too far from his house.

It is likely that the police were targeting school kids since once they are out of school, they love to wander around town all day long, to meet with friends or play sports. However, my mom witnessed several families being stopped by the police as well. They were all asked similar questions.

The few people that tested positive for the virus had to self-quarantine, but on top of that every resident in the entire building with cases had to stay inside as well. Leaving the building was not an option, as it could end in a fine. The police were notified to patrol that specific area as often as possible.

Residents who were still working and needed to leave their apartments had to stay at the home of a relative or a friend. All the residents complied. They agreed on the fact that everyone’s safety was the priority.

Just recently my college friend Vova (short for Vladimir) who has lived and worked as an English teacher in China for the past five years, had to return to Russia to extend his work visa. He was put on an “emergency flight” that was not even heading to our region, but to Irkutsk, a city in Siberia. Even since the outbreak began in January, there has been a total of three flights from China to Russia.

Once the plane landed in Irkutsk, medical professionals dressed in protective gear intercepted everyone on the flight. They administered tests, and then officials transferred the travelers to a dormitory type of housing where they were held in isolation for two weeks. Vova is back home with his family now - but in limbo. It could be several months before he is able to catch a flight back to China and resume his normal life.

Russia was reporting a minimum number of cases in early spring, which was surprising, considering that it is the largest country in the world.

Joshua Yaffa, a Moscow correspondent for the New Yorker asked “Why is Russia’s Coronavirus case count so low?” in a recent article. He wrote: “It is unclear whether the Russian state has been lucky, smart with preemptive measures, or dangerously incompetent - or some combination of all three.” The fact of the matter is that the Russian government approached this situation with care in the beginning, but the case count started to rise because our country is, as always, full of contradictions. Every passenger who arrived in Russia from countries like China, Iran and South Korea, was placed on mandatory, 14-day quarantine. People who arrived from Europe (before the flights were canceled), had their temperature taken and were sent home with a suggested 14-day self-isolation period.

Russia is vast, and the majority of our population travels rarely, partly because of the poorly developed transit system, but mostly because the majority of people have little to no financial means to travel within the country, let alone travel abroad.

That combined with how spread out everything is, in my opinion, is the main reason why the outbreak is concentrated mainly around Western Russia (Moscow, Saint Petersburg) - a densely populated area with a better transit system. People there travel more often than in other parts of the country.

And yet, there is no guarantee that the rest of the country will not experience what Western Russia is going through right now. As my region goes, they have started easing the restrictions recently - some shops are opening back up and final exams for high school graduates are scheduled for the end of June. One thing is clear – no matter where you are in the world, we are all in the same boat, learning as we go, trying to adjust to “new normal.”
Anger took hold of my niece, Tamiko. Anger at the world’s governments for the lies, the greed, the lack of equipment, the unknown, and at people who could not abide by the quarantine laws in Spain.

Police arrested several people at a coronavirus orgy, and patients with COVID-19 escaped from hospitals. She says Spanish police will fine you, or arrest you, if you don’t obey the coronavirus lockdown.

Then, panic set in. She started to worry about money, her job — how long would the lockdown last? Her massage business, Amon Thai, is in Barrio de Salamanca, the posh area of Madrid. It’s the rich part of the city.

On a typical Sunday, Tamiko visits the nearby El Rastro flea market. It is Madrid’s largest open-air market and the longest-running — 400 years to be exact. On my last visit, I remember how we slowly walked the steep Calle de la Ribera de Curtidores, as we shopped for clothes and souvenirs made by traditional craftsmen. Tourists and locals crowded the lively area in the hunt for bargains.

Tamiko lives in an apartment in the Arganzuela neighborhood of Southern Madrid, on the banks of the Manzanares River. It features the spectacular Arganzuela Footbridge. It’s a modern cylindrical metal structure, parallel to the Puente de Segovia, an elegant stone bridge that resembles a picture from a book of fairytales.

Tapas bars, restaurants and events like underground art and graffiti tours flourish. Madrid pulses with nonstop activity.

So, it was no surprise that this hyper-social society defied a World Health Organization advisory and allowed the International Women’s Day demonstration to move through the streets on March 8, 2020. Thousands of people attended. They walked side by side as they chanted in protest. According to “U.S. News & World Report,” a protester held a sign that read “Machismo kills more than coronavirus."

The next day, officials closed down Madrid. Residents could not go to the parks or engage in outdoor activities. They could not gather or visit their families.

And the government did not close the M50 motorway. Bumper-to-bumper traffic jammed the road as people tried to leave the city for their second homes — and they took the virus with them. In the weeks to come, the number of infected people grew exponentially, as did mortality rates.

Tamiko and family hunkered down in their three-bedroom apartment. It happens to be down the street from her mother. Tamiko lives on the fourth floor and has no view of the street. She says it’s best not to take the elevator — fewer things to touch.

Shopping is difficult. There are long lines and only one designated person per family can shop. She does not own a car and found herself making several trips back and forth to the market and up and down the stairs of the apartment building.

Her elevator was broken. It occurred to her that this would be almost impossible for the elderly in her building, so she put up a sign inviting her neighbors to “WhatsApp” her if they needed help with food, shopping or anything else. She says no one has taken her up on the offer, but the sign remains.

She became hooked on watching the news — Tele Cinco, La Sexta and Antenna 3 — it was information overload. She watched the daily death count and tracked the growing number of infections.

She also settled into quarantine. She began to crochet. She cleaned the house. She created home spa treatments for herself with natural ingredients like coconut oil, honey, sugar and lemon juice. She developed home workouts, and she caught up with friends. She meditated, too.

She even refereed the occasional outburst between family members. Tamiko’s mother, three younger sisters and two daughters all live close to one another in Madrid.

Inside her apartment, a household emergency interrupted her tranquility. She became anxious in the aftermath of an electrical fire in the apartment. Beni is considered high risk because he has diabetes and underwent triple bypass surgery a few years ago. Workers had to enter the apartment to make repairs.

The Spanish government predicts several more months of social distancing, so Tamiko is switching gears and is studying for a taxi license.

The government warns that it may take six months until life returns to “normal.” They will allow people back into society — slowly.

This summer, Tamiko and family plan on internal vacationing — no in, no out.
One of my cousins experienced a major move when he was a young boy. At 10 years old, Mark arrived in Calgary with his brother, Andrew and his parents Jean and David Reckord. They left the warm days and cool nights of Mandeville, a hilly town in the mountainous South Central region of Jamaica, for an up-and-coming oil town in Alberta, Canada.

One day he was kicking a soccer ball, the next, skating across a field where the snow had melted and then frozen solid.

Mark grew up in Calgary. He became a Canadian citizen, married Heidi and had two children, Nicole and Meghan.

Winters are long, cold and windy in Calgary with an average of 56 inches of snow per year. So, a trip to a tropical location is a welcome break.

In early March, Mark and Heidi took their second annual vacation to the Riviera Maya, a stretch of Caribbean coastline in Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula. They boarded a direct flight from Calgary to their favorite resort in Cancun and went from minus 28°F to 86°F in five hours.

This was their first trip alone. Other trips included their daughters, or friends, or Heidi’s parents. They stayed in a sprawling, all-inclusive resort with immaculate grounds and two miles of beachfront amid crystal blue water and white sand.

They thawed out in a happy bubble that did not include the news. When it got too hot, they retreated to a cozy air-conditioned room with a view of the gardens and a fully stocked fridge. Fresh fruit was plentiful at the breakfast buffet: mangoes, cantaloupe, honeydew melons, papayas, bananas, grapes. As were the various types of fish and salads the resort served for lunch and the traditional Mexican cuisine that was on the menu for dinner. Their daily snorkeling ritual revealed a colorful reef that displayed splashes of brightly colored coral, turtles, fish and even a spotted stingray.

Little did they know that people in Canada were clearing out grocery shelves in a manic search for toilet tissue and antibacterial gel. The new coronavirus was making its way from Asia and Europe to the North American continent and people were beginning to panic.

Nicole met them at the airport when they returned from Mexico. She threw their car keys to them to maintain a safe distance, then jumped into her boyfriend’s car who had driven to the airport to drive her back in a separate car. She was taking no chances.

Mark’s younger daughter, Meghan, moved in with friends before they got home because she did not want to risk being stuck with her parents if they were infected. And, although school was suspended at the time, it was not known when it would be back in session, and she did not want to miss school. Mark and Heidi were jolted back from their tropical escape and into a new reality — a pandemic.

Mark and Heidi are both back at work in their regular jobs. The surge of COVID-19 patients is anticipated to come around mid-May in Calgary and Mark and Heidi are still on-call should any additional support at the hospitals be required. They will be ready when the time comes.
AS SOCIETY GRINDS TO A HALT FOLLOWING THE OUTBREAK OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS, GOVERNMENTS WORLDWIDE RUSH TO CONTAIN, CONTROL, TREAT AND POLITICIZE THE VIRUS.

-Richard Martinez

El Salvador is no stranger to disasters, neither natural nor man-made. It’s the kind of place where a deadly tropical storm rolls in only days after thousands flee a shower of car-sized rocks and floods of boiling mud and water following the eruption of the Santa Ana volcano, 40 miles west of the capital. It’s the kind of place where earthquakes rend the land, killing 1,200 people and leaving another million homeless.

It’s also the kind of place where a 24-hour period without any reported murders makes the news.

The people there know how to deal with tragedy. They assess the situation, do the best with what they’ve got, and send a prayer to their favorite saint.

On Sunday, May 24, thunderclouds rolled in over the capital city, hanging heavy in the air, just as the threat of COVID-19 loomed over the people in the small Central American country.

As society grinds to a halt following the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, governments worldwide rush to contain, control, treat and politicize the virus.

Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele banned travelers from high-risk countries, sanitized the international airport and demanded incoming passengers have their temperatures taken upon arrival as early as March. Then, he shut down the country. The president suspended schools for three weeks, halted gatherings of 500 or more and prohibited foreigners from entering the country. He also imposed a 30-day quarantine on Salvadorans who returned from abroad.

All before the country had even reported a single confirmed case of COVID-19. Looking back, it was probably a good call since the first reported case of the coronavirus belonged to a person who entered the country after they spent time in Italy.

And in the tradition of Latin American leaders, the country’s warring political factions would not let a good tragedy go to waste.

Bukele acted swiftly, decisively and, admittedly, with a heavy hand. This sparked outrage from political opponents, the nation’s highest court and human rights groups. Critics worry that in a region where authoritarianism is no distant memory, Bukele’s actions might set him up for a power grab down the line. After all, this is a man who sent armed soldiers to the National Assembly to surveil as lawmakers voted on a $109 million loan request to better arm police and the military. They declined.

He also happens to be battling the Supreme Court over the legality of the shutdown and lawmakers in the National Assembly who want to reopen the country much sooner than Bukele’s proposed date of June 6.

But in a country where, according to the CIA, nearly a third of the population lives below the poverty line, swift action saved lives. The 38-year-old leader’s decision to promptly close the country before any cases of the virus manifested could be the reason the rate of infection is so low: 1,915 confirmed cases and 35 deaths as of May 25, according to the World Health Organization.

Now, the people assess the situation and make the best with what they’ve got.

“Cuando salimos, pues lo que vemos es que están bastante solas las calles,” my uncle José tells me over the phone from my childhood home in San Salvador. The streets are empty. Stores are not crowded. The Salvadoran government built a system in which people are allowed to leave their homes for groceries on certain days based on the last number of their national ID.

“No se ve mucha gente,” he says. “Y se está respetando el distanciamiento social.” People are not out and they’re following social distancing guidelines.

But are people up in arms, calling for the government to lift restrictions?

“Las protestas que hay son mas bien en lo que es la política,” he says. “Porque el gobierno de durno es el que esta tratando de mantener a la gente en quaranta para que no salgan y no se enfermen. Pero en los partidos políticos, que son la oposición del gobierno, están queriendo que la gente salga. Cosa que si hacen eso, se propagaría mas la enfermedad. Entonces mas que todo, las protestas son políticas.”

It seems protests against the lockdown in El Salvador have taken place mainly in the political arena and among lawmakers. As the current administration tries to maintain quarantine, opposition parties want people to get back to work. And should that happen, as my uncle says, the disease will spread.

But how do José and my aunt Claudia feel about the forceful lockdown?

“Si nos queremos mantener saludables, es conveniente no estar muy fraternizado así con muchas personas,” he says. If we want to stay healthy, it’s best not to fraternize with too many people. “En lo normal, en lo necesario, de lejos. Y si, sentimos así bien mantener las normas de seguridad para no enfermarnos.” Life goes on and they get what they need — from afar — and, yes, they feel good following safety measures so they don’t contract the virus.

A refreshingly matter-of-fact approach as many in the U.S. rush toward reopening the country. But El Salvador and its people are used to overcoming tragedy, and they’ll overcome this as well.
IMAGINE THE CLIPPERS’ NEW STADIUM IN INGLEWOOD

[By WILL PENNINGTON] [Illustration By CREATIVECOMMONS]

It is hard to think of a more effective way to spread COVID-19, than a fully attended professional sporting event.

Getting thousands of people into one room where for hours they scream, chant, sing, laugh, cry and God knows what else together with complete strangers seems so dangerous now, that it’s difficult to believe we did that with regularity.

Sports has a long history, and public spectatorship has survived plagues and pandemics before COVID-19. However, when spectator sports do return, it seems like changes will have to be made to the product, or at least the facilities in order to protect the fans, the players and everyone else in the building.

When Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert became the first NBA player to test positive for the coronavirus on March 11, the NBA season was immediately suspended. The league’s future became a subject of intense speculation. Despite the uncertainty, the Los Angeles Clippers and owner Steve Ballmer are forging ahead with plans to construct the NBA’s flagship arena in Inglewood.

The Clippers have shared a Staples Center residency with The Lakers and The Kings since the arena opened in Downtown Los Angeles in 1999, but they have pursued a plan to construct their own arena in Inglewood for some time.

The Clippers’ current lease at The Staples Center runs through the 2024 NBA season, and at this rate, it is difficult to imagine what the world, much less sports, will look like when their new arena opens. When it does open, the Clippers’ arena may usher in a whole new era of sports attendance as the first stadium designed and built after the outbreak, that is likely to irrevocably change life at spectator events as we know it.

On May 8, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver organized a conference call with league personnel to discuss a plan moving forward. Silver painted a grim picture of the financial challenges faced by the NBA. According to Shams Charania of The Athletic, Silver suggested that more than 40% of league revenue came from ticket sales or other in-arena commerce. In other words, the league is scrambling to find a solution.

One possible option is to increase the use of virtual reality broadcasts. Since the 2017 season, the NBA has been experimenting with virtual reality technology to broadcast their games, to provide the fan at home with something resembling the enveloping, exhilarating, in-arena experience. Maybe that is what attendance will look like in the future.

With a single game price of $49.99 the NBA-VR experience is pricier than some teams’ general admission tickets. However, it does not allow for concession or merchandise sales. No parking revenue would be generated, and local businesses would likely not benefit.

Furthermore, virtual reality technology remains relatively expensive, and that cost would likely be a barrier to many fans who already feel the financial strain of a global economic catastrophe.

If the NBA’s budget depends to such a great extent on butts-in-seats, it is difficult to imagine the league could resume in any meaningful way without fans in the arena.

Getting fans back into sports stadiums is first and foremost a matter of safety. If that safety cannot be provided with the current arena model, the new Clippers arena could be a model not just for the NBA, but for the sports world as a whole.

Maybe we will see seats with more social distance (and hopefully more legroom).

Will infrared cameras take our temperatures as we enter, or will matching masks be provided at the door?

Whatever the future looks like, there is a good chance the sporting world and Los Angeles will see it first in the Clippers’ forthcoming Inglewood home.

Take Me Out to the Ballgame
Take Me Out to the Crowd
Buy Me a Face Mask and Cracker Jacks
I Really Hope that We Someday get back To the Root, Root, Root for the Home Team
If They can’t Play it’s a Shame
It’s Been 1,2,3 Hellish Months
Since the Last Ball Game
How does one become a giant in a landscape of excess?

Four million people from diverse groups call Los Angeles home. It is known for its arid and Mediterranean weather.

Then, there are the icons, the giants of the entertainment industry, the movie stars and celebrities.

Los Angeles represents lifestyle extremes. One of the great things that brings pride, escape and unity to this city is the love of sports and sports heroes. Los Angeles is the home to many storied franchises: the Dodgers, Kings, Rams, Sparks, Chargers, the Clippers, and the Los Angeles Lakers.

Kobe Bean Bryant entered the NBA in 1996, straight out of high school. He reached amazing heights in the sport of basketball as a Los Angeles Laker. The future Hall of Famer would retire in the 2015-2016 season as a five-time NBA champion and two-time NBA finals MVP. Off the court Kobe the man was confident, bigger than life, an erudite man who loved his family and his adopted city.

After retirement, Kobe excelled as an entrepreneur and an author. He became an Oscar-winning filmmaker through the same work ethic and dedication that made him a standout in the NBA.

His death stunned people on January 26, 2020. Almost immediately, makeshift memorials began to form around the city. None larger than those near and around the Staples Center. Soon, another form of honor and appreciation would begin to emerge. Artists began to paint tributes. They appeared from the Eastside to the Westside, in the Southbay to the San Fernando Valley and on the walls of busy streets and quiet alleyways.

The murals and tribute walls and buildings keep popping up. So far, more than 100 murals in memoriam to Kobe Bryant adorn buildings throughout the city of Los Angeles according to KABC News.
1. A projected image rises toward the skyline in memoriam to basketball icon Kobe Bryant on Figueroa and 12th Street on a giant LED display at the Circa LA Apartments building in downtown Los Angeles on Jan. 28, 2020.

2. Pedestrians encounter a portrait of Kobe Bryant at eye level by the artist MYKES on a junction box in the West Los Angeles, Mar Vista neighborhood near Venice Boulevard.

3. Kobe Bryant holds his daughter Gianna Bryant when she was a toddler in the mural “Legends Are Forever,” by artist Chris Chanyang Shim aka RoyyalDog in the Los Angeles Arts District on Alameda and Fifth Streets.

4. Images by mural artist Sloe_Motions of Kobe Bryant and the late Tejano singer Selena Quintanilla dominate adjacent walls on a building at the corner of Jefferson Boulevard and Fifth Avenue in the South L.A., Jefferson Square neighborhood.

5. A single mourner seems lost in the moment as fans gather to honor Los Angeles Lakers star Kobe Bryant at the Staples Center near L.A. Live on Jan. 28, 2020.

6. Hundreds of personal tributes include purple and gold flowers, basketballs, T-shirts, candles, photos and balloons that mourners leave at the Staples Center in honor of Kobe Bryant who died in a helicopter crash on Jan. 28, 2020.

7. Bright blue sky is the backdrop for a billboard that features Kobe Bryant on the basketball court wearing his number 24 jersey on the corner of La Brea Avenue and First Street. Bryant also wore the number 8 early in his career but decided to switch to the number 24 to symbolize his changing role from self domination to team leader.
Don’t forget to be fashionable. Wear what makes you happy. Fashion has so much more power than you might expect. It should help you to feel special. Wear whatever makes you feel great or lifts your spirits!

Maintain acceptable social distance from others. Put on protective gear to go grocery shopping, even after the "Stay at Home" order is lifted. Otherwise, the virus will spread.

Model: Nozomi Mori
Styling: Mami Yamamoto
Dress: Zara
Shoes: “ROSEBUD”
Glasses: from Target and customized by M. Yamamoto
Gloves: Mr. Clean
"My idea is to show that even the obstructed view of art at a gallery or museum can create yet another work of art. I always get curious as to what people examine or find interesting in a piece of art, and this has further fueled my voyeuristic style of photography. I have found it enlightening and rewarding to be able to, in some way, experience the artwork and that of a viewer in more ways than one. It has been a wonderful experience to revisit the images."

Photos from Hauser and Wirth Museum in the Arts District
“I began to see the beauty of being a viewer of the art and also of those that admire and appreciate the art. To me, the scene that is created was just as beautiful and worth remembering, like the art itself.” - Andrew Giorsetto
FOOD SEEMS LIKE SOMETHING EVERYONE CAN AGREE ON. HOWEVER, FOOD TRENDS AND CHOICES CAN ACTUALLY SHAKE UP AN AREA AND ULTIMATELY DRIVE RESIDENTS OUT.

Family members gather to mix Napa cabbage in deep red pepper brine, with garlic, scallions and oysters to make kimchi, a staple of Korean cuisine that can be eaten with almost every meal.

Kimchi’s aroma can offend. At one time, Westerners frowned when people ate it in public. As Korean culture became more popular, kimchi became tolerable.

Costco and Whole Foods began to stock it in their aisles, and the price of kimchi skyrocketed. Food gentrification complete: Kimchi became less accessible to low-income Korean families because of the higher price of Napa cabbage.

Food gentrification occurs when cheap accessible food becomes harder for low-income families to obtain. As food prices surge in a neighborhood, people who depend on certain ingredients can no longer afford them. Food gentrification displaces locals from their community. People who live in a gentrified area are pushed out.

Trends cause food gentrification. A cultural fascination demanded more kimchi, and it became inaccessible to a group of consumers who purchased it previously.

Different trends arise and it displaces community members from gentrified areas.

Organic Does Not Mean Better

Organic grocery stores sprout up in gentrified neighborhoods and reshape what is healthy. Gentrified neighborhoods like Echo Park, which is a 10-minute drive from L.A. City College, suffer from food gentrification. Locals replace healthy food with fast food.

Angel Aguilar lives in Echo Park, and he says he struggles to eat “healthy” food. He looks for organic, but it is too expensive. Each ingredient matters in his food budget. Aguilar says the expensive price does hurt his wallet, and he has to make choices when he shops.

“I resort to [eating] fast food like Little Caesars and McDonalds because it is cheaper than cooking,” Aguilar said. “I have three brothers and it is hard to feed them organic food.”

However, organic is nothing more than a label and a trend. People assume cage-free eggs are more beneficial and organic vegetables are healthier. Unfortunately, the benefits are minuscule.

“Organic is a label,” said Wing Leung who earned an M.A. degree in health education from Chico State University and is now enrolled in a program for dietetic interns. “Organic is ‘better’ in the sense that there is more regulation. However, ensuring that you wash your fruits and veggies is more important than focusing on buying organic.”

The ingredients are the same, and the nutrients are the same. The markup price on organic food stickers can vary. A survey by the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association shows the mean price of organic foods versus nonorganic can be as high as 68 percent.

There are some benefits to organic. Leung says she will try to buy organic ingredients for dishes that do not have to be cooked. There is more likelihood of ingestion of pesticides in uncooked foods.

As more organic grocery stores pop up, the accessibility of ingredients decreases for people in low-income families. Aguilar can commute to other stores for a cheaper price, but this is not an option. He does not have a car.

“[I have] trouble with transportation,” Aguilar said. “Taking groceries in public transportation is not ideal.”

The idea that organic foods are healthier is false. These beliefs affect lower-income communities, which are then deprived of healthy food and basic ingredients because of the influx of organic grocery stores.

Diets Drive up Cost of Food Staples

Being “fit” is a trend and diets play a big role. People substitute “unhealthy” ingredients for an
alternative to losing weight. Ketogenic diets arise when people substitute sugar and carbohydrates with protein and fat. The price of these ketogenic “friendly” ingredients increases as people who rely on them suffer.

There are many cuisines with cauliflower being a staple. At a 99 Ranch Asian Supermarket, the average cost of a pound of cauliflower is $2.29, and Whole Foods costs about $3.99. The $1.70 cent difference can be minuscule, but it affects people. These ingredients are a staple in both Chinese and Indian cuisine. While people enjoy cauliflower pizza, some families struggle to purchase staple ingredients.

Lower-income families have to pay more to please people who follow the trend. However, the ketogenic trend might not even work. Leung says people go on Keto to lose weight fast, but it seems unhealthy. She says people should not cut out a whole group of food. Affordable ingredients are traded off to “healthy” diets.

**Trends Displace Community Culture**

As consumers demand healthier or “exciting” food, the restaurants meet the demand to survive. The restaurants will hop on any bandwagon the trend has to offer. Many new restaurants, bars and cafes open catering to the higher class in the gentrified area.

Shane Esmundo earned an MPH (master’s degree in public health), from Cal State Northridge and loves to eat. She does feel that the gentrified restaurants are overpriced.

“A community might see that they cannot afford the prices, which will just result in them not trying that restaurant,” Esmundo said. “A community will suffer if that restaurant is the only restaurant in their neighborhood.”

Thai restaurants in Echo Park mark up their food prices to compete and take advantage of the people who are willing to pay. Sticky Rice Restaurant in Echo Park sells their pad thai for $13.00 while Ocha, a restaurant four miles away, sells their pad thai for $7.00.

“The pad thai is expensive around my area,” Aguilar said. “I would go out of town for pad thai ... but I do not have reliable transportation.”

Community members like Aguilar are limited in their neighborhood. He does not have the leisure of eating out or experiencing his community. If he does eat out, then he can eat unhealthy fast food.

Stacey Sutton is an assistant professor of urban planning and policy at the University of Chicago, Illinois. She says that gentrification is pushing out community and culture. The community members do not have access to their own neighborhoods.

“Exclusionary displacement refers to people’s feelings from the influx of high-end restaurants and boutiques they can’t afford,” she said. “Yeah, it is good that the neighborhood looks aesthetically pleasing, but it doesn’t feel so good.”

Sutton says gentrified neighbors displace low-income people and fundamentally alter the culture and character of a neighborhood.

**Ingredients**

- 1 oz. tamarind pulp, soaked in 2 tbs hot water
- 4 oz. dried rice sticks, soaked in hot water for 30 minutes until soft. Drain, set aside
- 2 tbs dark brown sugar
- 2 tbs fish sauce
- 5 tbs vegetable oil
- 2 small shallots, thinly sliced
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 3 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1 box (6 oz) extra-firm tofu, cubed
- ½ lb large raw shrimp in the shell, peeled and deveined
- 6 green onions, cut into 1-inch lengths
- 2 cups mung bean sprouts
- ¼ cup finely chopped preserved radish, optional
- Lime wedges, for garnish
- Red chili powder, for garnish
- 3 eggs

**Directions**

Combine the tamarind, sugar, and fish sauce in a bowl. Set aside.

Add 2 tbs oil to a wok over medium-high heat. Add shallot, onion, garlic, radish, tofu, and shrimp. Stir fry for 1 minute. Set aside.

Add 3 tbs oil to a wok, then add the noodles when the oil is hot. Cook for 1 minute, then add the sauce. Stir fry for 1 minute to coat the noodles with the sauce.

Push the noodles to one side of a pan, add the shrimp mixture back to a wok. Mix well and set the noodles to a side.

Add the eggs and scramble and shred them with the tip of the spatula until the egg bits are cooked through, about 1 minute. Fold in the green onions and bean sprouts. Once everything is ready, remove the pan from the heat.
NOW PLAY, LIKE A MILLIONAIRE

BETTER BRING YOUR ‘A’ GAME!

[By DIANA CAMPBELL | Photos By CREATIVE COMMONS]

If you’re hip to the term esports, you’re probably aware of the lucrative world where exceptional competitive video gaming skills can lead to millionaire status.

Esports is one of the fastest-growing sports in the world and it’s played on a computer. Short for electronic sports, esports are team-based video game competitions.

Fans watch in person or online on Twitch, the platform that streams competitive gaming. Twitch is like the ESPN of live video gaming, but it is not alone. YouTube and Mixer are competitor platforms.

Like traditional sports, players wear team jerseys, and they compete in arenas and communicate with teammates and coaches as the game unfolds. They just do not break a sweat. Theirs is a no-contact sports world. Totally virtual.

Prospective college students who think they have the talent to become student athletes may head for ncsasports.org, the National Collegiate Scouting Association. It’s where some students may go for recruitment opportunities in baseball, softball, tennis, lacrosse, golf, volleyball and varsity esports.

The National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE) lists 151 of the best colleges for computer sports across the nation. The group helps student recruits work with coaches to identify the college that is the best fit.

In 2019, the global esports industry reached $1.1 billion and captured a fan base of over four billion players. This year, revenue from global eSports is projected to exceed $1 billion without broadcast streaming, according to market researcher Newzoo.

Video games have become big business over the last few decades. The top publishers regularly release bestselling products to a demanding market, and revenue in the sector is expected to reach $156 billion by 2022.

Cash Rolls in for Gamers

Gamers are now getting in on the act too, with esports – professional video game competitions that have evolved into a lucrative industry in itself. As player participation and spectator interest increases, the concept has attracted major sponsorship partners and financial backers.

For professional gamers, the end result of all this means one thing: There’s money to be made and lots of it.

Johan “NOtail” Sundstein is an example of a video game competitor who became a millionaire from competing in esports tournaments all over the world. He reached millionaire status six times over last year.

The Danish Dota 2 (Defense of the Ancients), veteran became the top earner in all of esports after he led his team to victory at The International for the second year in a row.

Whether through competing in individual tournaments, or as part of a team, elite players are able to attract similar base salaries and endorsement deals compared to those earned by traditional athletes with their worth only set to rise as the popularity of esports soars.

Anyone who is bored with sitting in their mother’s basement and trouncing their buddies on “Call of Duty,” could consider a move up to the big leagues. Those hours of endless practice might pay off.

Claytano Catches Fire

Consider the case of video game superstar Claytano. He is known in the esports world as a gamer and a “lesser creator.”

“Even though this is my full-time job now, and I make a decent living from it, I’m no Ninja,” he says in reference to the high-profile gamer. “I am still able to walk down the street without being recognized or maybe have the occasional person come up to me and tell me they watch my videos.”

The “Ninja” who might have trouble remaining anonymous on a city street is Richard Tyler Blevins, aka “Ninja,” and he is considered a “rock star” in the esports world.

Blevins lived up to the hype in 2018. That’s when 635,000 individual viewers in live streams on Twitch became the largest concurrent audience outside of a tournament for the platform. He played “Fortnite,” by
Richard Tyler aka “Ninja” Blevins

Epic Games with Canadian rapper Drake, American rapper Travis Scott and Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Juju Smith-Schuster. Blevins’ net worth is an estimated $12 million.

Blevins had over 14 million followers on Twitch before he left the platform for Mixer, a rival platform. Claytano, however, seems quite content with his level of popularity at the moment.

“But size is relative,” he says. “I have around 200,000 followers across my various social media platforms, and some people would view that as a lot. But in comparison to the biggest names in gaming, it’s actually rather small.”

It may sound too good to be true, but Claytano says success is within reach for the exceptional gamer, and the sky’s the limit for anyone who wants to become a millionaire.

“In 2019, I earned around $250,000,” he says. “For a small creator, this is actually unheard of. The main force that’s driving this number up for me is my amazing talent agency, Ader, that’s been working with me since I started.”

Ader signed Claytano to an exclusive management contract, and he says it was one of the best decisions of his life.

He says he could never have earned his current salary without the agency. And while he says there are “kids” who succeed overnight, he is candid about the reality of making it to the top of the esports industry as a career goal.

“Anyone can do this,” he says. “But that’s the same as saying anyone can be a professional hockey player.”

Money does not appear to be the sole motivation. There’s a social dimension to work and play as a gamer-creator according to Claytano. He values the relationships and bonds he has formed. He says he has met some of his most cherished friends in gaming, and he doubts he would have found them in professional hockey.

“Almost all of my really good friends live in other states and countries. I feel like it has made me a better person because I’ve been exposed to so many cultures and ways of life outside of America that I find absolutely fascinating,” he says.

There is no application process to become a creator or gamer. Claytano worked at it for two years. He says he posted a video every single day before he gained the confidence to make it a full-time job. But he warns that those who do not enjoy gaming or creating content will find the experience is no different from any other job.

“I would go to work from eight to five, come home, record a video from six to eight, eat dinner then esports until midnight,” he says. “You really have to be passionate about what you’re doing in order to succeed. There’s no other way around.”

Claytano and his wife live in a two-story custom-built house in Chesapeake, Virginia with their dog. His wife works as a high-risk obstetrics diagnostic medical sonographer. The gamer has also started his own clothing line.

Gamers Go as World Locks Down

He addressed the current pandemic’s effect that has reportedly increased the number of people who are confined and looking to combat boredom by playing video games. Some creators are making a profit. Claytano says that creators are influential, so he has removed the donation button from his Twitch channel, or anything else that gives viewers information about how to subscribe or donate.

“I know of others who have actually stopped streaming during this horrible pandemic in order to stop people from subbing to them because they feel like it’s immoral,” Claytano said. “I’m also encouraging my viewers to unsubscribe during these times and donate the money to COVID-19 relief foundations that help provide masks and tests to our healthcare workers who are on the front lines of this.”

Today, there are women who compete in esports competitions and tournaments, and they seek recruitment by colleges with the best esports programs. More women than ever smash through the tech boys’ club to create inventive, engaging, downright fun video games. Their mission?

“We can turn anyone, of any gender, at any age, into a gamer,” Claytano says.

Their headsets are ready. Hands are on the joysticks, and they are here to play like it’s 2020.

—James Duffy V contributed to this story.
Color Theory of JOAN MAO

ANALOGOUS:
SOAK UP 1980s
EDGY VIBE OF BLUE & MAGENTA
A Blue Leather Skirt, set off by a dark blue tone-tone building waiting for its next graffiti scrawl.
A monochromatic fashion statement speaks volumes in front of a two-tone yellow building on Beverly Boulevard. The warm and cool yellow palette pull it all together as model calmly hails a cab.
MONOCHROMATIC

RED CAN MEAN ANGER OR PASSION.

Model argues on a payphone in front of a red building on Catalina and Third Street.
Color has a psychological effect on everything we do.
Many restaurants are red because studies say that red makes you hungry.
ANALOGOUS:
GREEN & YELLOW

Model jumps for joy outside after the weeks Angelenos spent in quarantine at home. The building is covered with greenery, which provides a different texture for the background.
**COMPLEMENTARY COLORS**  
**BLUE & YELLOW ARE OPPOSITE ON THE COLOR WHEEL.**

Opposing colors attract the most attention. The shadow of a palm tree hits the building and creates a "nose." The yellow building fills the scene and makes the blue sky and the model’s blue dress pop.

Model: Felix Fang
Families stroll through Central Park in New York City on March 14, 2020. The warm and bright winter day proved to be one of the last times that people could enjoy being outside with their fellow city dwellers. Soon they would be confined to their homes if deemed non-essential workers.
Visitors to Times Square take photos and linger on the steps above the TKTS Discount Broadway Ticket Booths on March 13, 2020. This area is where tourists go to buy theater tickets, but Broadway officially went dark that day as officials implemented shutdowns to combat the spread of the coronavirus.
1. Students from New York University socialize in tight-knit groups in Washington Square Park, which sits in the center of their campus on March 13, 2020. The following week, all universities would close their doors for the duration of the semester, and students would take classes online.

2. One pedestrian sports a mask as she crosses 34th Street and Sixth Avenue on March 13, 2020. Home to the iconic Macy's flagship department store, Herald Square is a major shopping district and constantly bustles with activity. This was the scene, days before the governor issued a shelter-in-place mandate.
Watchdogs:
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we never sleep...
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* COVID-19 Outbreak May Prevent the Physical Hands-on Sessions with Drones

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