

Coronavirus pandemic exposes Los Angeles' systemic issues

By Alexander Martinez

The COVID-19 crisis has caused extraordinary shock to the City of Los Angeles. Angelenos have been impacted by record job losses, shuttered businesses, and the uncertainty of whether our students and public education system can handle the rigors of learning that is compliant with the social distancing orders issued by City, County, and State officials.

A study released by Los Angeles City Controller Ron Galperin shows that more than 300,000 people lost their jobs in the city of Los Angeles since the coronavirus pandemic hit in March. With 20.3 percent of Angelenos unemployed, the city has a larger unemployment rate than California at 15.5 percent, and the rest of the country at 14.7 percent. According to the controller's website, "While L.A. gained back 16,000 jobs in May, the City is still down more than 252,000 jobs since the COVID-19 pandemic hit."

While we know the pandemic has impacted Angelenos of all backgrounds, it would be remiss not to underline that Black and Brown Angelenos have disproportionately suffered the negative socioeconomic effects of the virus. The pandemic has intensified the devastation felt by low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. It is painfully obvious just how much economic injustices truly exist in Los Angeles.

The data released by the controller shows that a large percentage of those jobs losses have occurred in sectors where many minorities earn a living. Those sectors include the food and service industry

(down 70,000 jobs), retail work (down 33,000 jobs), and the healthcare field (down 27,000 jobs). Sadly, neighborhoods in South Los Angeles, Harvard Heights, and the Pico-Union area all top the list of areas with the highest unemployment rate. Again, areas where there are large demographics of people of color that are low-income renters and single-parent households compared to other parts of the City. The controller noted that "Since March 2020, unemployment has reached historic heights, with more than 4.7 million Californians filing claims, including 401,000 Angelenos — a more than 300 percent increase over February of this year."

Compounding this issue is the fact that Los Angeles never fully recovered from the great recession or middle-class jobs losses that occurred over the last three decades due to the city's shrinking aerospace and manufacturing sectors. Many of the jobs lost were those held by working-class people of color. Good strong policies — such as Mayor Eric Garcetti's unfulfilled campaign promise to eliminate the city's business tax — would spur job growth, but Mayor Garcetti has halfheartedly abandoned this platform. Starting in January 2016, Mayor Garcetti's plan was for the tax rate to reduce over a three-year period, however, the tax rate will still be higher than taxes in Beverly Hills, Culver City, West Hollywood, Glendale and Calabasas, even after the reduction. Because of this plan, the people are unduly suffering as a result.

The fact that a serious proposal has not been put forward by the City to stem the tide of coronavirus-related jobs losses is astounding

and reveals that Mayor Garcetti never really had a plan to help reverse the economic fortunes of so many depressed regions in Los Angeles. In fact, according to the Los Angeles Times, Mayor Garcetti is planning to impose furloughs on nearly 16,000 civilian city workers, saving \$139 million, in order to close the budget gap for 2020-21. The leadership we are seeing out of city hall appears to be one prone to popular opinion, not what is in the best interests of Angelenos.

For instance, before the current national social justice movements against police brutality, Mayor Garcetti had proposed a seven percent increase in the Los Angeles Police Department budget. While there is a need to rightly focus on improved police-community relations and the need for accountability, Mayor Garcetti quickly joined the current movement to defund law enforcement and has proposed investing in minority neighborhoods.

Where was this plan before?

Now, amidst all the economic uncertainty, and a botched rollout of coronavirus testing sites, Mayor Garcetti has once again announced that Los Angeles may once again be subject to stricter shelter-in-place guidelines for the foreseeable future. However, without a serious plan in place to kick start our economy, Angelenos should be very wary of any promises made, and should hold Mayor Eric Garcetti accountable for his unfulfilled promises.

Alexander Martinez is a political commentator from Norwalk.

We need new antimicrobials to prevent the next infectious disease crisis

By John Rex and Kevin Outterson

Imagine if scientists had seen Covid-19 coming years in advance yet did little to prepare. Unthinkable, right?

Yet that's exactly what's happening with another infectious disease crisis -- the one caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria and fungi. So-called superbugs already kill more than 700,000 people each year. And the World Health Organization warns that by 2050 the annual death toll could reach 10 million if we don't use the time to get prepared.

The antibiotics and other antimicrobial drugs needed to prevent such a calamity don't yet exist -- and they're years away from patients. The problem isn't a lack of willing scientists, but rather a broken marketplace that has made it virtually impossible for researchers to attract adequate funding.

Unless lawmakers take steps to jump-start antimicrobial innovation, the world will soon find itself unprepared for a global health emergency as deadly as Covid-19.

Bacteria and fungi resistant to drugs have been around as long as the drugs themselves. When a patient takes an antimicrobial, microbes generally die. But some can survive, with the potential to become immune to existing antimicrobials.

Innovation in antimicrobials has slowed dramatically in recent years, with higher rates of failure. In the last two decades, researchers have developed just two completely new kinds of antibiotics.

The window for avoiding a superbug crisis that kills millions of

people each year is closing quickly. Pulling back from the brink will require a two-pronged approach.

First, we must encourage doctors to prescribe antibiotics as smartly and sparingly as possible. We must also educate patients about what antibiotics can actually do, what they can't do, and their limitations.

Second, we need a large-scale effort to create newer, more effective antimicrobials. That will require addressing the fundamentally broken market for these drugs.

Medicines are incredibly expensive to develop, with median R&D costs for a single antibiotic reaching \$1 billion. Pharmaceutical companies can justify such investments only if they have a fighting chance to recoup their costs. But here's the rub: A new, advanced antibiotic is reserved for emergencies, meaning a company would sell relatively few doses of it and almost certainly lose money.

That's why pharmaceutical firms have moved away from antibiotic research in recent years. Four decades ago, there were 18 major drug companies pursuing new antibiotics. Today, there are only three.

Two reforms currently before Congress could help break this research logjam.

The Developing an Innovative Strategy for Antimicrobial Resistant Microorganisms (DISARM) Act would allow Medicare to pay hospitals more for using advanced antibiotics when appropriate. This would raise the demand for more sophisticated medicines, thus

giving drug makers the confidence to invest in antibiotics research.

Another bill, the proposed Pioneering Antimicrobial Subscriptions to End Up Surging Resistance (PASTEUR) Act, takes a different tack. It would allow the government to pay a subscription for unlimited access to a new antimicrobial. This, in turn, would enable drug companies to recover their costs, while ensuring that public health authorities have plenty of doses available, if needed.

America's pharmaceutical industry is also prepared to bridge the gap. More than 20 of our country's leading drug companies recently helped launch the AMR Action Fund, a partnership to invest more than \$1 billion in antibiotic research and development with the goal of supporting later stages clinical trials so that two to four new antibiotics would reach approval by 2030.

But these companies can't go it alone, and the antibiotics they develop won't be available to patients unless the companies can stay in business. Lawmakers must act to improve the pipeline of new antimicrobial drugs -- and quickly.

If they don't, the world could soon face an infectious disease crisis as formidable as Covid-19.

Kevin Outterson is the founder and executive director of CARB-X and a professor at Boston University School of Law. John Rex is the chief medical officer at F2G Limited, a company focused on treatments for rare fungal diseases, and the founder of AMR Solutions. Both Outterson and Rex are members of the scientific advisory board of the Partnership to Fight Infectious Disease.

Can Kamala Harris legalize marijuana?

By Steve Chapman

A vice president has to defer to the president's decisions on policy, but vice presidents can also help shape it. Dick Cheney pushed George W. Bush to invade Iraq, and Joe Biden gave Barack Obama a nudge to endorse same-sex marriage. Maybe Kamala Harris will convince Biden to push for legalizing marijuana.

There are reasons to think so. One was her laughing reply last year when an interviewer asked if she had ever smoked cannabis: "Half my family's from Jamaica. Are you kidding me?" Another is that as attorney general of California, she endorsed legalization of recreational weed, which the state's voters approved in 2016.

She is also the lead sponsor on legislation to lift the longstanding federal ban on cannabis. Her bill would remove marijuana from the Controlled Substances Act, leaving its status up to individual states, while authorizing expungement and sentencing review for those previously convicted of federal cannabis offenses. That Harris introduced this measure during the presidential campaign suggests she's genuinely committed to the change -- and unafraid of the controversy.

Her bill targets an exasperating anomaly. States are fully entitled to outlaw and punish marijuana use, but they have only limited authority to allow it. That's because of the federal government's ban. It can go after cannabis consumers and suppliers even in states that

have legalized pot.

That happens to be most of them. This year, Illinois became the 11th state (along with the District of Columbia) to allow recreational use by adults. Medical use is sanctioned in 33 states. Most Americans now live in states that provide legal access.

But we all live in a nation that doesn't. No matter what a state does, or tries to do, the federal government retains the ultimate power. And that fact hangs ominously over everything.

Under both George W. Bush and Barack Obama, the federal Drug Enforcement Administration raided state-approved medical marijuana shops and prosecuted their owners. Not until 2013, did Obama's Justice Department issue a memo telling federal prosecutors to back off.

As attorney general under Donald Trump, Jeff Sessions made a big deal of scrapping that policy. His successor also has the mindset of an undercover narc. In June, a Justice Department lawyer came forward to accuse William Barr of harassing legal cannabis companies with unjustified antitrust investigations because of his "personal dislike of the industry."

Removing the federal threat would make it much easier and safer for companies to operate in the legal pot sector, and for financial institutions to treat them like normal businesses. It would free every state to make its own choices without chronic fear of the federal hammer.

Democrats need no convincing. Almost every candidate in the presidential primaries came out in favor of legalizing pot at the federal level.

They have the public overwhelmingly on their side. A Gallup Poll

last year found that 66% of Americans -- and 51% of Republicans -- think marijuana use should be legal, period. People of every age group agree, with the exception of those 65 and older, who were split 49% to 49%.

But one candidate has yet to be persuaded: Biden. He has moved in that direction, endorsing decriminalization of recreational use, legalization for medical use and expungement of convictions. He also supports classifying cannabis as a federal Schedule II drug, which is reserved for dangerous drugs that have medical value, instead of its current Schedule I.

That's the big difference between him and Harris, whose bill would "de-schedule" marijuana -- removing it from the Controlled Substances Act and leaving the matter up to the states. Re-scheduling, by contrast, "means retaining criminal penalties for possession without a prescription," Justin Strelak, political director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, told me.

Biden may not be willing to adopt a more liberal stance before November, if only because his lead in the polls gives him no reason to change. But though the onetime drug war supporter is not there yet, he has already gone all but the last mile. If he gets to the White House, he will have Harris to escort him the rest of the way.

She, after all, has gone so far as to say of cannabis, "I think it gives a lot of people joy, and we need more joy in the world." If she can persuade President Biden to follow her lead on marijuana, there will be plenty of joy to go around.

Steve Chapman blogs for the Chicago Tribune.

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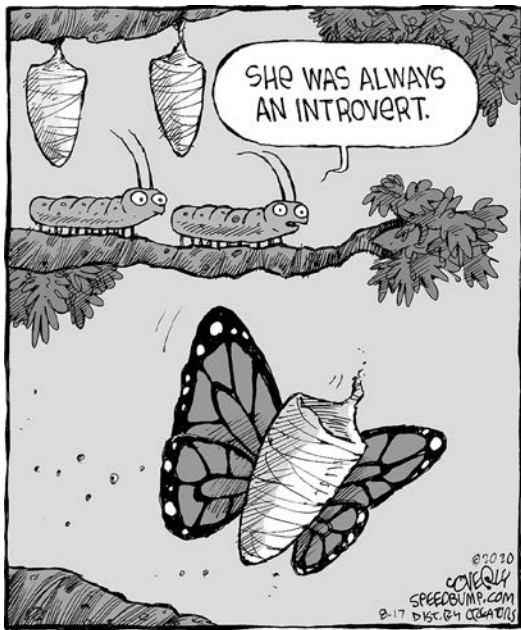
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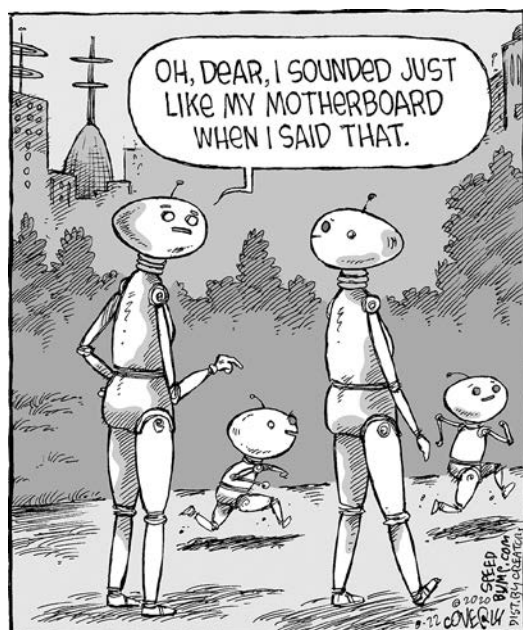
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MONDAYS

1st, 6:00 p.m. - Public Safety meetings - Council Chambers

TUESDAYS

8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Farmers Market - Excelsior High School
1st & 3rd 6:00 p.m. - Toastmasters Meetings - Registrar Recorder/County Clerks Office
1st & 3rd, 6:00 p.m. - City Council - Council Chambers
3rd, 5:45 p.m. - Housing Authority - Council Chambers

WEDNESDAYS

1st, 12:30 p.m. - Soroptimist International - Soroptimist Village
1st & 3rd, 7:00 p.m. - Lions Club - Bruce's Restaurant
2nd, 10:30 a.m. - Norwalk Woman's Club - Masonic Lodge
2nd & 4th, 1:30 p.m. - Alondra Senior Citizens - Social Services Center
2nd & 4th, 7:30 p.m. - Planning Commission - Council Chambers
4th, 11:30 a.m. - Coordinating Council - Arts & Sports Complex

THURSDAYS

7:00 p.m. - Boy Scouts Troop 924 - Norwalk United Methodist Church
2nd, 7:00 p.m. - American Legion Post No. 359 - 11986 Front St.
2nd, 7:30 p.m. - Golden Trowel -Norwalk Masonic Lodge

SATURDAYS

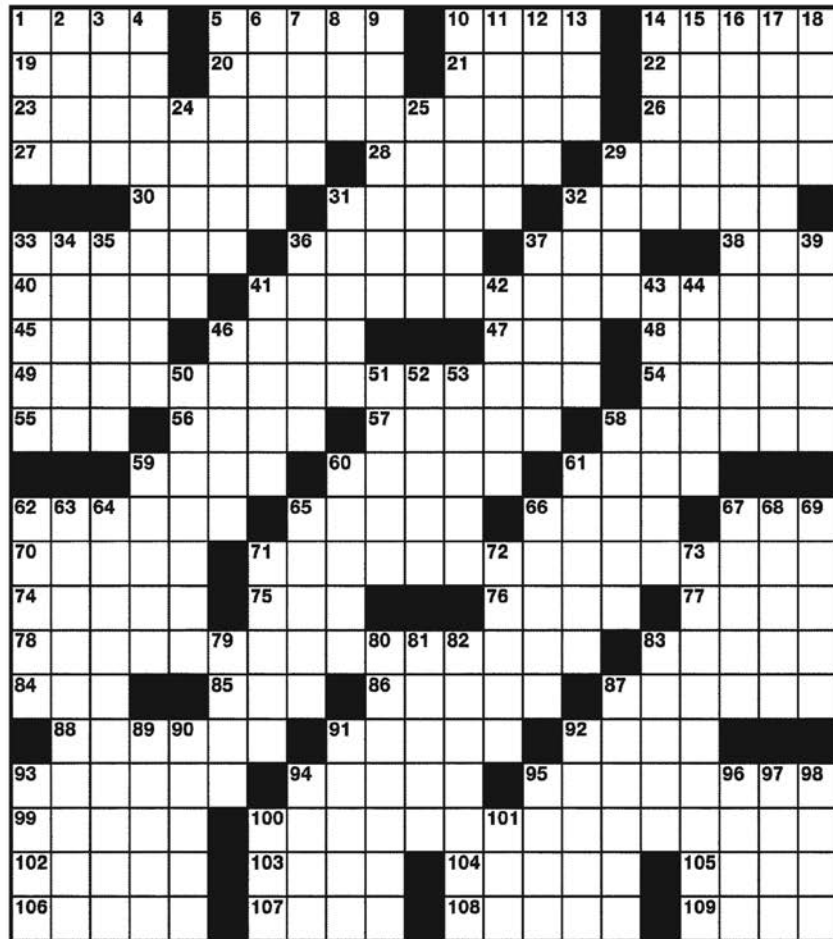
2nd, 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. - Pancake Breakfast - First Christian Church of Norwalk
Have an event you want listed? E-mail news@thedowneypatriot.com

THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com)
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by Greg Johnson

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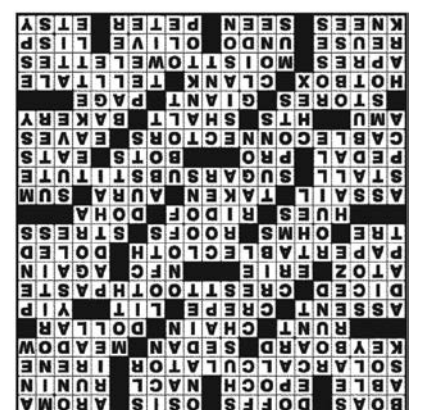
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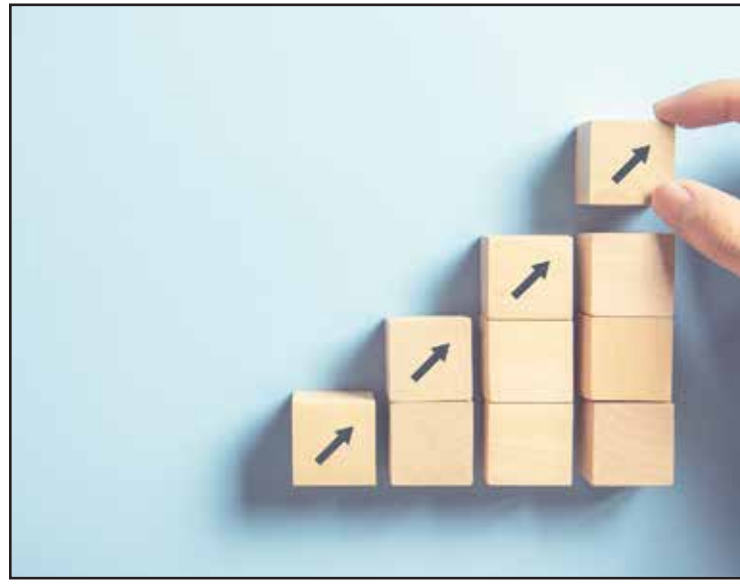
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ABCs of investing every beginner should know



(Getty Images)

Short-term investments vs. long-term investments. A failure to understand the distinction between short-term and long-term investments is responsible for a large portion of consumer unhappiness with investments, Kaye says. Examples of short-term investments are savings accounts, certificates of deposit, or fixed accounts. "Usually, any place to put money with a guaranteed rate is a short-term investment," he says. "This is because you do not usually want money to fluctuate in value if you need it soon." Kaye draws the line of demarcation between short term and long term at about five years, and he puts stocks in the latter investment bracket. "Due to the frequent ups and downs of stock investments, they are usually only a correct investment for the long term," Kaye says. "Historically, after five years, the market may be up or even, but not significantly down."

Financial literacy in America has long been lacking, spanning the generations. It's well-documented the problem begins with a lack of education on personal finance in youth and extends to the autumn working years, when many people are ill-prepared for retirement.

etc., are complicated, and a simpler approach to learning them is needed. At the same time, there are conflicting theories, opinions and data in the investment field, and those factors can be detrimental to someone trying to plan for retirement."

Yet, it's never too late to address this shortfall of important knowledge, and for those trying to formulate a retirement plan, it starts with grasping some basic investment terms that many people find slippery, says Bob Kaye (www.bobkaye.net), a personal wealth manager and the author of *How to Avoid Not Having Enough Money To Live On After Retirement: Making Smarter and Simpler Decisions for Stress-free Retirement*.

Kaye explains some key investment terms and how knowing them can help one avoid mistakes in retirement planning:

Risk. People sometimes think an investment is risky if its value can go down. But Kaye says that logic may get you in trouble. "The stock market, which goes up and down, might be less risky over the long term than a savings account, which never goes down," Kaye says. The reason: Based on historical averages, the stock market can increase eight times its value in a 20-year period. "A savings account might increase only twice its value in the same period," Kaye says. "That's a big loss on the potential return for the person who chose the savings account. Often, the definition of risk to most people does not include short-term or long-term loss, which it should."

"In my work with investors who are planning for retirement, I have found there is generally a limited understanding of investment terminology," Kaye says. "They don't want to appear unsophisticated, so they will not ask the questions they should ask."

"The many types of retirement plans, tax statuses,

Pandemics, politics and the impact of women in leadership roles



Kamala Harris (<https://www.harris.senate.gov/about>)

Despite enormous strides in business, government and other areas, women don't always get the respect men do for their leadership abilities, even when they can boast greater accomplishments.

But the combination of a pandemic, a recession and an election that 2020 brought could be the impetus for changing the way people view women and their leadership styles, a development that many would argue is long overdue, says Andi Simon (www.andisimon.com), a corporate anthropologist, founder of Simon Associates Management Consultants, and author of the upcoming book *Rethink: Smashing the Myths of Women in Business*.

"It's time we started seeing women leaders through a fresh lens," Simon says. "When we do, we will all benefit from their styles and their successes."

Because presidential candidate Joe Biden picked U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate, the country potentially could have its first female vice president on Jan. 20, 2021.

Meanwhile, around the world,

many countries led by women have fared better during the COVID-19 pandemic than those led by men, with New Zealand's Jacinda Ardern, Germany's Angela Merkel and Taiwan's Tsai Ing-Wen among those being hailed for their strong leadership.

Simon says anyone surprised women have what it takes to emerge as great leaders may have fallen for myths that surround both men and women when it comes to taking charge.

"Men communicate a myth about women that emphasizes their soft sides, their kindness, and their weakness, not their decisiveness, strength and ingenuity," she says. "Women might lead differently, but they can and are achieving remarkable results through collaboration, coordination, and creative communication, as opposed to the command-and-control methods men often employ."

Simon offers a few observations about women, leadership and where things could be headed:

Research shows women score better on leadership qualities. Research published last year in

the Harvard Business Review showed that, over several surveys that asked the same questions, women ranked higher than men on almost all key factors measuring leadership capabilities. "Managers, even male managers, saw women as more effective than men in virtually every area, including areas typically viewed as male strongholds such as IT, operations and legal," Simon says. Women ranked high in taking initiative, acting with resilience, practicing self-development, driving for results, and showing high integrity and honesty.

More female mentors and role models will mean more female leaders. As more women gain leadership roles, the number of women in such roles will build on itself, Simon says. "The script on women changing male-dominated workplace culture is still being written," she says. "But one thing is for sure: The more women become leaders and assume positions of authority, the more they can help other women on their way up."

An anthropological approach can help. Simon is both a business consultant and an anthropologist, and she believes mixing the two is beneficial. "My career advice for women in leadership roles is to be a little anthropological when you are trying to find your own way in your job or business," she says. "Do some observational research. Experience your product or service from your customer's point of view, or your employees' point of view. You'll be amazed at what you discover, and the innovative ideas that come to you for solving unmet needs."

"Our cultural biases lead us to believe that something created by a woman is not as good as something created by a man," Simon says. "For us to see the work of women as at least equal to that of men, those biases must change. The question for all of us is: Can we change them?"

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Whittier resident was “Rosie the Riveter”

By Alex Dominguez
Staff Writer

Melba Brecht overcame a childhood of hardship to become one of WWII’s patriotic “Rosie the Riveters.”

WHITTIER - It should come as no surprise that Melba Brecht was the last original person in her neighborhood; having moved to Whittier in 1949, she was likely one of the city’s longest standing residents.

Still, it was quite the road to get to that point.

Brecht was born in 1929 in Crosby, Texas, amid what her daughter Kimla describes as “backwoods” living conditions with no running water.

The first and only surviving child to a teen mom and a 40-year-old homeless man, she would find herself orphanage-bound by age 6, due to her mother’s departure and her father’s inability to care for her during the Great Depression.

“Melba’s mother left and started another family,” said Kimla. “When the Great Depression started in 1929...her relatives could no longer feed her and her dad, so they asked Child Services to take her.”

She would stay at Faith Home Orphanage until the age of 13.

During her time in the orphanage, Brecht would earn an allowance by taking on certain responsibilities. However, her father would “visit” her and ultimately take her earnings.

Her mother would never visit.

A faith in God was also encouraged during this period, previously planted by her deceased grandmother.

Finally, she would be adopted by her aunt and uncle who owned a ranch.

The story wasn’t much



Left: Despite working on the wings of planes during the war effort, Melba Brecht never saw a completed P38 until 2011.



Right: Glenn “Butch” and Melba Bracht. Photos Courtesy of Kimla Bracht

better, however, as Brecht would now have to endure verbal and physical abuse.

“Melba had scars from his belt buckle,” said Kimla. “She remembered heated arguments that included plate throwing.”

By her senior year in high school, World War II had broken out.

Brecht would work at an ice cream parlor, saving up her earnings so that she could attend riveting school upon graduation.

“She just had a love of country,” said Kimla. “Things started out hard for her...She valued the fact that you can make your own choices and become whoever you want.”

“That’s a really good question, of, ‘Why would someone be

so patriotic after such a rocky childhood...I think she felt like it was more than a graduation; it was a life graduation, not just a high school diploma.”

After graduating, Bracht would save \$300 and earn her riveting diploma.

With \$22 left in hand, she would make her way to California.

Brecht would work on P38 plane wings in a vacated Hollywood studio that was “aerial camouflaged” to protect the workers from the potential threat of Japanese bombers.

“She only saw the wing; she never saw the plane together,” said Kimla.

What she did find, however, was her eventual husband, Glenn “Butch” Brecht.

Brecht was cunning in her courtship of the ever shy Butch, often asking to borrow tools from him in the hopes that he would ask her out.

It worked. He would propose six weeks after their first date. They would marry in January of 1944.

The couple would work five years to save for a home before starting a family.

Of course, the couple would end up picking a home in Whittier, which was still being built at the time.

Butch would find work at a detergent factory. Sticking to a budget and a strict policy of saving a dime of every dollar earned, Brecht was able to be a full-time homemaker.

They’d go on to have three children.

Melba was very active both in the community and with her kids, including as a Sunday school teacher, Girl Scout troop leader, and PTA member.

She even ran for a seat on the School Board.

Along with being able to provide many luxuries and opportunities to their children (much in part to their saving policy), the couple also agreed to never fight in front of their kids.

“My friends say, ‘This can’t be true, it isn’t possible,’” said Kimla. “But my parents kept this agreement.”

Butch passed away in 1981. She would never remarry.

After her husband’s passing, Brecht remained very active and involved; she even finally got to see a completed P38 plane in 2011, while at the Yanks Air

Museum in Chino.

She would live to see the birth of four grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

At the end of her life Kimla says that her mother wanted to be remembered most for “her friendship with God.”

She prioritized this relationship, treating the Bible like love letters from God,” said Kimla. “She knew how she was treating others through her choice of words and actions was how she was treating God Himself, and she hoped to inspire her family and friends by growing her love and knowledge of Him.”

Brecht passed away in 2019, and was interred next to Butch at Rose Hills.

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2,000 high school grads enter Cerritos Complete Promise Program

NORWALK - As public health concerns rise over COVID-19, students heading back to Cerritos College for the fall 2020 semester will take their classes online. The College will open a limited number of Career Technical Education (CTE) labs on campus for students in programs like culinary arts, dental hygiene, nursing, automotive, welding, among others, that cannot be offered 100% online.

Approximately 2,000 new high school graduates will begin their fall semester in the College’s award-winning

Promise Program Cerritos Complete. Cerritos Complete offers two years of free tuition and early enrollment to students who are committed to achieving success. The program offers personalized support to help students graduate from college in less time. Since its inception in 2015, Cerritos Complete has benefited 6,852 students. Cerritos College is approximately one of a dozen California community colleges that offers two years of free tuition.

While the campus remains limited for in-person instruction,

the College transformed its gymnasium into a Study Hall to allow a restricted number of students to utilize the facility to focus on their studies in a quiet environment. The Study Hall is equipped with Wi-Fi and is available to all currently enrolled Cerritos College students by appointment on a first-come-first-serve basis. The Study Hall operations will strictly follow all Los Angeles Department of Public Health requirements with social distancing, face coverings, and disinfection practices.

Students enrolled this fall will also see a wide selection of new 100% online programs. The College launched five fully online degree/certificate programs in business administration, commercial music, cloud computing, cyber security, and network/system administration. The college also introduced a new Social Justice: Africana Studies Associate of Art for Transfer (AA-T), Hospitality Management and Film, TV, and Electronic Media Associate of Science for Transfer (AS-T) degrees, and an accelerated crossover Esthetician certificate program.

“We are excited to welcome new and continuing students back to school this fall semester. Although most of our classes will be held online, it is still critical that we provide our students with as many resources as possible to ensure their success during these unprecedented times. We remain committed to developing innovative programs and services in an online environment that will help support our students through their educational journey,” said Dr. Jose Fierro, president and superintendent.

For more information, visit www.cerritos.edu/online.

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