

Mayor calls out IHOP for mask policy

Norwalk Mayor Rick Ramirez criticized the restaurant after it denied service to a family for refusing to wear masks.

By Vincent Medina
Contributor

NORWALK – The Norwalk IHOP denied service to an unidentified family of four on Sunday after the group refused to wear masks inside the restaurant for protection against COVID-19.

LA County Department of Public Health adjusted its mask policy on March 4, lifting the mask requirement for indoor public settings but strongly recommending people continue to wear them. The statement also said businesses may continue requiring masks for employees and patrons.

General manager Marisol Dominguez described the incident to her supervisor, Maria Ruiz, in an email.

"A family of four came to dine in, they were not wearing a mask so Juan Vasquez the host asked them if they had a mask. The father told them that they didn't because they don't need one anymore," Dominguez said. "Juan told him that in LA county we still can request they wear masks and if they don't have one we can provide them with one. To this they replied 'no.'"

Dominguez alleges that she arrived and continued to explain to the group that the establishment still has the right to request a mask, and offered to sit them in the patio area. However, the family left the restaurant saying they were going to report the incident.

The family notified Mayor Rick Ramirez of the incident and took to Instagram to criticize the local business.

"Has anyone experienced being denied service at Norwalk IHOP, because they were not wearing masks after CA and the LA County lifted those mandates," the mayor wrote in his caption. "No one should be denied pancakes! This is not acceptable. I received a complaint from a family that was asked to leave for not wearing masks. Put them on notice @ihop."

Ramirez declined to share the family's name but described the email they sent him detailing the incident.

"The family of four walked in there maskless, they were seated maskless, but they were denied service because they didn't have a mask," Ramirez said.

The Norwalk IHOP has three signs posted on the door stating the establishment requires patrons to wear a mask, and three additional signs requesting proof of vaccination.

The Mayor continued to say that if he was asked to wear a mask when entering a business, he would follow their rules.

"I'm a law-abiding citizen," the mayor said. "I respect the establishment. If they say I need to wear a mask then I'll wear a mask."

Golfers sought for chamber tournament

NORWALK – The Norwalk Chamber of Commerce will host its seventh annual 9-hole golf tournament, "Spring Swing," on Thursday, March 24, from 4-8 pm at the Don Knabe Golf Center.

Cost to participate is \$250 for a team of five players. The price includes golf, dinner and beverages.

The price for individual golfers is \$55.

Sponsorships are also available ranging from \$75 for a tee sign to \$1,000 to be the title sponsor.

For questions, contact the Norwalk Chamber at (562) 404-0909.

Golfers can sign up online at norwalkchamber.com.

Downey pushes back against provocative sports bar

Councilman Mario Trujillo says Ojos Locos, a sports bar that ignited controversy for dressing its waitresses in skimpy uniforms, is not welcome in Downey, setting up a potential legal battle.

By Alex Dominguez
Staff Writer

DOWNEY – The arrival of Ojos Locos sports bar received further pushback from the community this week, culminating in a protest and a clear message from Downey Councilmember Mario Trujillo: "You're not welcome here."

Ojos Locos, anticipated to take over the former Denny's property on Firestone Boulevard, has drawn the ire of residents over safety concerns and the provocative attire of its waitresses.

This caught the attention of City Council members, most of which have been open about their displeasure with the incoming business.

None have been more outspoken than Trujillo, who on Tuesday said that Ojos Locos should "take their tax dollars elsewhere."

"You try to keep your daughter off the pole," said Trujillo. "I'm offended that this corporation wants to come here because I know what they do in Texas."

Trujillo later told the Downey Patriot that he was "just not comfortable doing business with an organization that objectifies women like that."

Officials, however, remain with their hands effectively tied legally, as while they can impose mandates and regulations for businesses to adhere to, they cannot prevent a business from establishing itself in the city.

The City Council did take some action to curtail concerns on Tuesday, voting to regulate the attire of waiters and waitresses city-wide.

Under the new ordinance, food handlers are not able to expose any portion of the midriff, any portion of the chest three inches below the clavicle, and/or any portion of the leg less than three inches below the buttocks.

Violators – which could include the establishment and the employee themselves – are subject to fines of \$500 for a first offense, \$1,000 for a second offense, and \$2,000 for any following offenses.

It's a move that may draw legal action from Ojos Locos, which has said that the lingerie images seen on the chain's other restaurant social media platforms is not what they intended to bring to California.

However, the proposed uniform – likened to that of a cheerleader – would still not meet the new criteria set by the city. According to officials,



Residents protest outside Downey City Hall on Tuesday against a new sports bar, Ojos Locos, opening in the city. (Photo by Alex Dominguez)

Ojos Locos has already vocalized a willingness to sue Downey over the matter.

These comments echoed statements Trujillo made to protestors outside city hall Tuesday, where he said that while he was committed to fighting the arrival of Ojos Locos, he needed them to understand that "we're going to end up in litigation."

When asked if Downey was headed to court over the matter, Trujillo clarified, saying "it's premature at this point."

"It's going to come down to whether we enforce the new regulation against this business," said Trujillo. "If we start enforcing this regulation against them, that's the point where they may sue us."

"Based on what the attorneys have told us, it's premature to say that we're headed for court, but it's clear that we're drawing the line."

The city has also been specific about the kinds of events or entertainment it will allow at Ojos Locos, allowing for only a DJ and PPV showings.

In the meantime, Trujillo says that he plans to rally constituents.

"My next course of action is to organize the community, and hopefully through community outcry get a message to the owners that they're not welcome here, that we don't want them here," said Trujillo.

Residents have already started to band together in a unified showing of disapproval of the business, having held two protests, including outside of this week's council meeting.

Along with the attire issue, many have raised the alarm over alleged criminal activity that other Ojos Locos establishments have attracted, as well as the restaurant's proximity to Downey schools, churches, and elderly homes.

"For some it's a moral issue, and for some it's a criminal issue. For many of us, it's both," said Jennifer Alvarez, a longtime resident and teacher in the city.

Alvarez said her biggest

concern was with the effect on children.

"Our kids are always over there; anybody who's been at the dollar tree after school or CVS [knows] our kids rush there for candy and snacks," said Alvarez. "They're going to be mixing with drunk patrons coming and going, and that's not fair to them."

Among the crowd was planning commissioner Horacio Ortiz, who was the sole vote against the project in the planning commission's decision.

Ortiz said he stood behind his vote. "I just feel like it's right next to a high school, right next to our kids and that should not be near our kids," said Ortiz. "I think that we need to prioritize our family values, and that's the core of what Downey is."

He added that it was "not safe for our community."

Archuleta honors sheriff's captain as Woman of the Year

Jodi Hutak praised as "a model of professionalism" by state Sen. Bob Archuleta, who selected her as Woman of the Year.

PICO RIVERA – In celebration of International Women's Day, Senator Bob Archuleta (D-Pico Rivera) recognized Pico Rivera Sheriff's Station Captain Jodi Hutak as Woman of the Year for Senate District 32 for her long record of public service in Los Angeles County.

"Captain Hutak's record of public service to Los Angeles County and its residents exemplifies leadership, and is a model of professionalism we should all strive to emulate," Archuleta said. "It is a privilege, during Women's History Month, to recognize Captain Jodi Hutak as Woman of the Year for Senate District 32."

Hutak, a 22-year Sheriff's Department veteran, has led the station with "a wealth of knowledge, experience and community

familiarity. These traits have been invaluable during the recent public health crisis," Archuleta said.

She directed her station in many of the city's public safety programs, such as food and personal protective equipment distribution events, as well as COVID-19 testing and vaccine programs.

"I commend Captain Hutak on her work in ensuring the safety and well-being of the community, while strengthening partnerships with the people living and working in the city, particularly during this public health crisis," Archuleta said.

"Her community looked to her and the station's personnel amid these extraordinary times, and will continue to rely on her leadership in public safety in the years ahead, in partnership with my office and other stakeholders. Congratulations Captain Hutak and thank you for all that you do in the service of public safety."

Before his election to the State Senate, Archuleta was mayor of Pico Rivera and worked alongside

the Pico Rivera Sheriff's substation on public safety and community outreach efforts. With his background in law enforcement, Archuleta said he is familiar with the immense responsibilities our law enforcement partners shoulder in the course of protecting the public's safety.

Hutak was featured in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's 100th Anniversary of Female LASD Deputies display, a tribute highlighting the history of women in law enforcement and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Along with a desire to preserve the legacy of women in law enforcement, she is a mentor to others, empowering them to achieve their career goals.

Outside of her duties, Hutak has dedicated her time coaching youth soccer in the cities of La Mirada, Whittier and Fullerton. Between her nearly four decades as a competitive athlete, coupled with undergraduate and graduate degrees in the field of Kinesiology and Sports Science, her passion is to share that knowledge to help others not only strive for top sports performance but also to live a



healthier lifestyle.

Hutak is the parent of a teenage son and an adult stepson. She resides in La Habra Heights where she spends time working out or enjoying a variety of outdoor activities including running, hiking and cycling.

Weekend at a Glance

Friday	76°	
Saturday	79°	
Sunday	71°	

THINGS TO DO



A Conversation with Bob Odenkirk
Sunday, 4 pm

"Breaking Bad" actor Bob Odenkirk discusses his memoir, "Comedy, Comedy, Comedy, Drama," with Jack Black in this virtual event. Tickets are \$40 and include an autographed copy of Odenkirk's book.

ON THIS DAY

1862: During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln removed Gen. George B. McClellan as general-in-chief of the Union armies.

1888: A blizzard struck the northeastern United States, resulting in some 400 deaths.

1941: President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law the Lend-Lease Bill, providing war supplies to countries fighting the Axis.

1993: Janet Reno was unanimously confirmed by the Senate to be the nation's first female attorney general.



2002: Two columns of light soared skyward from ground zero in New York as a temporary memorial to the victims six months after the Sept. 11 attacks.

2004: Ten bombs exploded in quick succession across the commuter rail network in Madrid, Spain, killing 191 people and wounding more than 2,000 in an attack linked to al-Qaida-inspired militants.

2006: Michelle Bachelet was inaugurated as the first female president of Chile.



2011: Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker union a measure to eliminate most union rights for public employees, a proposal which had provoked three weeks of protests.

2011: A 9.0 magnitude earthquake in Japan triggered tsunami, killing thousands of people. The quake also triggered the second largest nuclear accident in history.

2012: Army staff sergeant Robert Bales killed 16 Afghan civilians, mostly women and children, in an incident known as the Kandahar massacre. Bales was sentenced to life in prison.

2020: The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 virus a pandemic.

2021: President Joe Biden signed the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan into law.

Birthdays

Pop singer **Lisa Loeb** (54), actor **Terrence Howard** (53), actor and stuntman **Johnny Knoxville** (51), rapper **Paul Wall** (41), and Lakers center **Anthony Davis** (29).

La Mirada's magical season comes to a close at CIF state playoffs

■ La Mirada falls to No. 2 seed Los Altos, 55-37, in the quarterfinals.

By John M. Sherrard
Contributor

HACIENDA HEIGHTS – The lights might have finally been turned out on the La Mirada High School Boys Basketball season, but the future looks bright for the youthful team.

The young team that grew during the season and ended just short of a CIF title and state playoff run will be back next season with a ton of experience.

The Matadores won the Suburban League championship, completing an undefeated record, had a late-season 11-game winning streak, advanced to the CIF-Southern Section Division 2A title game and made it to the second round of the state playoffs.

After defeating King/Drew of Los Angeles in the opening game, the No. 10 Seed Matadores lost to No. 2 seed Los Altos, 55-37, in the CIF State quarterfinals Thursday

(March 3) at Los Altos.

The loss was the second time La Mirada had been beaten by Los Altos this season, which defeated the Matadores, 75-33, in a December game.

"(Thursday) the shots didn't fall as much," La Mirada Boys Basketball coach Randy Oronoz said. "Again, we did another great defensive effort, holding Los Altos to 55 points, but unfortunately for us the ball didn't go in the hole (Thursday).

"Just giving these guys experience. We graduate four seniors, but we get everyone else back next year. It's not often that four freshmen that played, a sophomore that played and two juniors that played and got a lot of minutes. Not a lot of kids can say that they played in a state playoff game, let alone the second round. Experience is big for us heading into next season."

One very big problem for the Matadores was Los Altos' seven-footer, Jazz Gardner, who has been improving every year he has played varsity basketball.

Gardner finished with 12 points

in the game.

"Whenever you have a seven-footer clogging up the middle kind of takes some stuff away," Oronoz said. "We were trying to manipulate the offense to get some guys going."

Two players for the Matadores finished with double figures in the game. Junior guard Sean Cervantes had a game-high 16 points, while freshman guard Julien Gomez, who was the Suburban League MVP, scored 13 points. Gomez connected for two 3-pointers in the game.

Gomez, who was no doubt bothered by the length of the Conquerors, talked about Gardner.

"He's a really good player, man," smiled Gomez. "It was very hard to stop him. He's big, he could shoot and it was very difficult to guard him. We had to double team him and unfortunately he was able to shoot over us and make plays out of it."

Gomez reflected on their run this past season.

"We did have a good run this year," Gomez said. "We were league champs and made it to the CIF Championship and went to the second round of state. Not a lot of teams do that, so we're blessed to be in this position and able to perform."

"Definitely winning league was a highlight this season, finishing undefeated and we beat our rival Mayfair twice. That was our goal (league and beating Mayfair) from day one."

Gomez was already looking toward next season with his young teammates.

"I'm looking forward to playing with my other freshmen, Chris (Perez), Jarrett (Cole) and MJ (Smith)," Gomez added. "We're a

very young corps and looking to expand on that.

"Next year we have a goal of being league champs again and being back in the CIF Championship and from there making it back into state."

Los Altos' CJ Bellamy scored a team-high 14 points and senior forward Jordan Morales had 10 points.

Los Altos, which lost in the CIF 2AA semifinals, jumped out to a seemingly insurmountable 20-8 lead in the first quarter. Aided by that big lead by the Conquerors was four 3-pointers.

The second quarter was more of the same for Los Altos, again in double figures, as the Matadores again were only in single figures with seven points, led by five points by Cervantes. Los Altos led, 36-15 at the break.

Leading 28-15 in the second quarter, the Conquerors ended the half on an 8-0 run.

La Mirada, led by Cervantes' six points, started the third quarter with a 7-2 run that cut the Los Altos lead to 16 points, but by the end of the third, the Conquerors had the lead back to 20 points, 46-26.

La Mirada actually outscored the Conquerors in the second half, 22-19, but couldn't cut into the lead.

Oronoz took a moment to savor the moment of the season.

"I just told them I loved them, man," said Oronoz, of his close-knit team. "I felt like throughout this run I was so caught up in the next game, I barely had a chance to praise and honor all of their effort."

"Me and coach David Martinez are not easy to play for and we understand that, and we demand a lot for our kids. The reward for them is winning some games."

Oronoz, in his first year as head coach, will remember this season for many years to come.

"I told them thank you for giving us a fun ride," he said. "This team I'll forever remember. It's the first league championship that I had.



La Mirada's Chris Perez (0) goes up for a layup against Los Altos in the CIF State playoff boys basketball game at Los Altos High School last Thursday. Los Altos defeated La Mirada 55-37. (Photo by Keith Durlinger)

I told them they'll always have a special place in my heart."

Oronoz, who has been trying to keep his voice throughout the latter part of the playoffs, just knew it was time to take a breath from the season.

"I just gotta rest right now," he added. "We just had a long season. I was talking to (Los Altos) coach (Jeff) Lucas, saying we basically fit two high school seasons in one year, so as coaches we're a little tired."

"I know my fiance' (Desiree) wants to hang out a little bit more. We'll just rest right now and when it's time to get back to work, I'm sure the guys will be ready."

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Dial In Number: 669 900 6833

War is a last resort but Putin may leave us no choice

By Betsy McCaughey

The public needs straight talk about what's happening in Eastern Europe.

President Joe Biden and the United Kingdom's Prime Minister Boris Johnson need to level with their own countrymen about the rising risk of war against Russia. The public's getting double talk — praise for the Ukrainians' courage but also empty promises that what's happening in Ukraine will stay in Ukraine.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken promised Sunday that "President Biden has been clear that we are not going to get into a war with Russia."

Johnson wrote in the New York Times on Monday that "this is not a NATO conflict and it will not become one."

That's ridiculous. The U.K. and the U.S. can't make that guarantee. There are too many tripwires leading to broad-scale war.

American eyes are on gruesome television images of Ukrainians huddled in the basements of bombed hospitals or running down snowy roads with children in their arms to escape Russian missile fire.

But Russian President Vladimir Putin is eyeing territory beyond Ukraine, including Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, all NATO allies once under Soviet domination.

These countries and five other NATO members have already triggered Article 4 of the NATO agreement, calling for consultations about the serious Russian threat.

In response, the U.S. and other NATO allies are moving ground troops and tanks into Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. News broke Monday that the U.S. is considering supplying air defense systems to these three Baltic countries.

On Monday, Blinken also pledged to Lithuania's foreign minister, Gabrielius Landsbergis, that "we will defend every inch of NATO territory if it comes under attack."

Putin himself is laying tripwires for a NATO conflict. Sunday, he warned that foreign countries like Romania that are allowing Ukrainian fighter pilots to use their airstrips may be viewed by Moscow as parties to the conflict. Putin could say the same about Poland's announced decision to lend fighter planes to Ukraine.

Putin even labelled economic sanctions "akin to a declaration of war."

Cowed by Putin's warnings, the U.S. and NATO allies refuse Ukraine's requests for a no-fly zone. Blinken concedes that without NATO pilots fighting off Russian bombers, Ukrainians face bloodier days ahead as the Russians "keep grinding things down," leveling city after city. A high price to pay, and for what?

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda warned Blinken, "if we want to avoid the Third World War," Putin must be stopped in Ukraine. Nausėda is worried his own country will be next, but he nevertheless is driving home a fundamental truth. It won't be easier to stop Putin after he crushes Ukraine.

It's never easier to stop a bully once he's allowed to win a fight.

Though Ukraine is not part of NATO, it's arguable that the U.S. and U.K. owe

Ukraine more than they're doing. In 1994, they pressured newly independent Ukraine into surrendering its nuclear weapons to Russia under the Budapest Memorandum with tacit assurances — now conveniently forgotten — that they would respond if Russia threatened them.

History aside, the question is, how long can Putin be allowed to continue snuffing out innocent lives in Eastern Europe? Russia's economy is tanking as corporations pull out and the half-hearted sanctions already imposed by the West take effect. If oil and gas exports were also banned, Bloomberg Economics predicts, the Russian economy would contract a devastating 14% this year. Russia may be more a more vulnerable foe now than at another time.

Is NATO ready to fight this weakened foe? Despite neglecting the Russian threat for years, NATO outspends Russia on armaments 15 to 1 and outnumbers Russian ground forces 4 to 1, according to retired Adm. James Stavridis, a former NATO supreme allied commander.

War is a last resort.

Now is the time for the Biden administration to talk honestly about what it already knows is true. The U.S. and NATO allies may be forced into a war with Russia, not because we choose to go to war but because a tyrant leaves us no choice.

Betsy McCaughey is a former lieutenant governor of New York and author of "The Next Pandemic," available at Amazon.com.

We will forget much of the pandemic. That's a good thing.

By Scott A. Small

As we approach another anniversary of the pandemic's onset, many of us are reflecting on the past two years and thinking about the ways the virus has altered our lives. More than 950,000 Americans have died. Many more have lost a loved one, and millions are still grappling with the lingering aftereffects of infection.

As we begin to move toward a postpandemic future, it is vital that we remember the toll this virus has taken. The lessons of this pandemic should be carried with us so that — unlike what happened after the 1918 flu — it doesn't fade from history, and so we can honor and memorialize those we have lost.

It is also inevitable that over time, many of our memories of these difficult years will fade. As a neuroscientist who studies memory and memory disorders like Alzheimer's, I find this fact — perhaps counterintuitively — comforting. I have come to understand, through new research, that there is a danger in remembering too much and that forgetting is not only normal but in fact necessary for our mental health.

It used to be thought that forgetting anything — from minor things like the name of a casual acquaintance to the more painful loss of cherished memories experienced by my patients — was caused, to varying degrees, by a failure of the brain's memory mechanisms. But new developments in neuroscience over the past decade or so refute this simple idea.

Neurons contain what are sometimes called nanomachines that are dedicated to the construction of new memories. But scientists have recently discovered that neurons are also endowed with a completely different set of nanomachines designed for the opposite purpose: to carefully disassemble — and thus forget — components of our stored memories.

In light of this new and growing body of research, normal everyday forgetting can no longer be thought of as a malfunction of our memory machinery; instead it should be considered a healthy and adaptive part of our brain's normal functioning. Memory and forgetting work in unison. We depend on our memory to record, to learn and to recall, and we depend on forgetting to countervail, to sculpt and to quell our memories. This balancing act is, as it turns out, vital for our cognitive functioning, creativity and mental health.

Of course, there are unhealthy kinds of forgetting. Alzheimer's disease, for one, targets memory mechanisms and causes them to fail. But in other disorders, it appears that the brain's forgetting mechanisms break down. The psychological condition that perhaps best exemplifies what can happen when people don't forget properly is PTSD. While it is often beneficial to remember the facts of a traumatic experience, sometimes even in pointillist detail, it is equally — if not more — important to the healing process to let the emotional valence of it fade. If we don't, we can get stuck in total emotional recall, reviving our distress in perpetuity.

Forgetting protects us from this debilitating anxiety not by deleting memories but by quieting their emotional scream. The same is true for more run-of-the-mill emotions. Intuitively, it makes sense that we sometimes need to "let go" of hurt and resentment to preserve close friendships and that we need to forget in order to forgive. "Letting go" is just one of the many colloquialisms that implicitly nod in recognition and gratitude toward our brain's forgetting mechanisms.

In patients with PTSD, the area of the brain that stores fear memories is highly active, suggesting that the individual cannot properly engage the brain's fear forgetting system and therefore cannot let go of the high anxiety associated with the memory of the traumatic event. Complex disorders should not be oversimplified, but it is possible to think about PTSD as a disorder stemming from too much memory, caused by an inability to forget a traumatic experience in a healthy way.

Turning down activity in this brain region effectively induces a healthy ability to forget feelings of fear. Drugs like MDMA do just that and are being tested as a treatment for PTSD. Some couples therapists have even used MDMA to accelerate the "forgetting and forgiving" process in their patients. From the testimonials of recreational users, quieting fear-related memories is apparently so potent in its "prosocial" effects — making people friendlier, more compassionate, even more loving — that it underscores how unchecked fear memories can make people antisocial and miserable.

Of course, we won't — and shouldn't — forget the pandemic. In addition to memorializing the loss of our loved ones, we should commemorate the selfless commitment of our fellow health care workers, and rewrite our government and medical manuals so that we are able to respond better and faster next time. But for many of us, particularly those on the front line, some degree of emotional forgetting will be a natural part of living in and moving forward from the pandemic.

As a society, one of the most beneficial things we can do to move forward in a healthy way will be to resume safe socializing. Several studies have shown that social isolation exacerbates the negative effects of trauma. Because this particular pandemic required us to socially isolate, we couldn't make use of the most psychologically beneficial coping mechanism: gathering together.

One of the greatest risk factors for PTSD in soldiers is when, shortly post-trauma, they find themselves socially isolated, their minds exposed without a social fabric to protect them from the lashing loops of their fear and dread. Not every observation about the mind needs a neurological explanation, but it is nevertheless true that socializing causes our brains to secrete endogenous chemicals like oxytocin, which — similar to MDMA — induces fear forgetting. Gazing into one another's eyes is all that is needed for oxytocin to be simultaneously secreted in the gazer and the gazed-upon, a feedback loop that induces a socially uplifting pas de deux. Preventing social isolation has become part of the standard of care for those returning from the battlefield and deemed at risk for PTSD.

We can predict that when it's safe to do so, relaxing the recommendations for social isolation, encouraging people to get together at work, in schools and other social venues, will reduce the risk of long-lasting distress.

With luck, in the months and years ahead, the threat of the virus will abate and we will be able to let go of the fear that for many of us has been a near-constant companion over the past two years. With hope, the terrifying images of the pandemic's ravages — the empty streets and crowded hospitals, the funeral pyres and freezer trucks — will cease to loom so large in our collective memory.

Forgetting some of this fear will allow us to more clearly recall the details we want to remember. For me, those include the astonishing resilience, bravery and sense of collective spirit that emerged two years ago this week as my hometown became an epicenter of this pandemic. Those memories make me hopeful for the future.

Scott A. Small is the director of the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at Columbia University and the author of the book "Forgetting: The Benefits of Not Remembering."

Corporate greed is to blame for rising inflation

By Jim Hightower

It seems like the price of everything from used cars to ground beef is up these days, and right-wing politicians and pundits are all over President Joe Biden for failing to stop the pain. But one wonders: What would these GOP squawkers do if they were in charge?

Just look back to 1974, when families were pummeled by a one-two punch of raging inflation and crushing joblessness. Price spikes then topped 12%, nearly double what we're enduring today — and President Gerald Ford and his Republican contingent in Congress met the challenge head on with a new program of economic uplift: "WIN"! But, in fact, "Whip Inflation Now" was just a political slogan and a magic button with no magic and no action behind it. Price controls? Jawboning? Antitrust action? No, no, that would've been so FDR/HST/LBJ-ish, and GOP, Inc., didn't want to offend, much less punish, corporate titans for a little profiteering.

Ford went on national TV to sell WIN. "I pledge to my fellow citizens," he solemnly intoned, "that I will buy, when possible, only those products and services priced at or below present levels." The core of the Republican "program," then, was telling hard-hit wage earners to battle the monopolistic behemoths of Big Oil, Big Pharma, Big Food, et al., on their own by simply refusing to pay inflated prices for the gasoline, medicines, groceries and such that — heilloooooo — they had to have.

In exchange for that economic gut punch, everyone who signed a form promising Gerry Ford they would be an "Inflation Fighter" received a nifty WIN button, indicating their patriotic participation. Sure enough, Americans responded enthusiastically — with an avalanche of ridicule. Even Ford's own top economic adviser, Alan Greenspan, who was in a White House meeting when the WIN

initiative was first revealed to senior advisers, joined the skeptics: "It was surreal. ...I said to myself, 'This is unbelievable stupidity. What am I doing here?'"

So, here we are 48 years later, caught in another fog of inflationary surrealism, with Republican leaders (abetted by a couple of Democratic senatorial flakes) doubling down on unbelievable stupidity. But this time we don't even get a button. What we are getting is a pot of warmed-over right-wing political mush boiled down to a talking point: "It's Biden's fault."

Last July, several GOP senators combined their 5-watt intellects to charge that inflation was rising because of the "insane tax and spending spree of President Biden and the Democrats." Never mind that the "insane" spending was for such sensible and enormously popular national needs as child care and jobless benefits; Sen. Mitch McConnell's rabidly partisan flock saw the chance to weaponize the public's legitimate worries about rising prices. "You poor consumers," they wailed, "are being made to pay more for basics like groceries and gasoline because of 'Socialist Joe's' investments in grassroots people."

Follow the ricocheting pinball of the GOPs logic:

No. 1: They say that helping hard-hit families induces them to refuse to go to work; No. 2: this creates blockages in the global supply chain; No. 3: this causes shortages of everything; No. 4: this "forces" corporate bosses to raise all prices; which, No. 5: slams the middle class and poor; so, No. 6: lazy workers cause inflation.

Whew! Rube Goldberg couldn't have dreamed up a more fantastical diagram for obscuring a straightforward economic power grab. In reality, America's inflation

problem is actually a corporate greed problem.

Of course, the greedmeisters and their apologists are deeply offended by this charge, huffing that their pursuit of corporate profit has not driven any price surges. In our economy of free market competition, they snap, consumer prices are established by the Holy Law of Supply and Demand. They lecture that when shortages occur, prices naturally rise, and that incentivizes additional production, which magically establishes a new supply/demand balance. Even if one producer or a monopolistic cabal of producers tries to overcharge consumers, these theoretical new competitors will draw customers from the gougers and keep prices in check. In the sanctuary of this concept, the free market is a virtuous, self-regulating circle of competitive fairness.

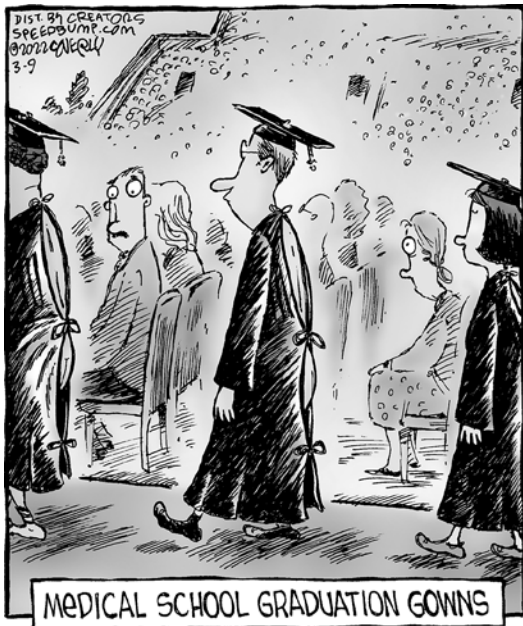
But there's one big problem with their virtuous circle: It's a fraud that implodes when it hits the hard reality that our economy doesn't remotely resemble a competitive marketplace. Nearly every economic sector in the U.S. (from high tech to farm and food) has been locked down by a handful of overpowering corporate giants. For some 40 years, corporate-directed government policies have intentionally promoted (even subsidized) megamergers; gleefully greenlighted anticompetitive business tactics; and aggressively inculcated and celebrated the economic lie that bigger is better. Thus, in short order and with practically no public awareness, much less discussion, America has been transformed into Monopoly Nation.

Jim Hightower is a syndicated columnist and talk radio host.

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SPEED BUMP DAVE COVERLY



Norwalk Community Calendar

MONDAYS

1st Mon., 6 pm - Public Safety meetings - Council Chambers
 2nd Mon., 7 pm - Relay for Life meetings - Mr. Rosewood Family Restaurant

TUESDAYS

9:00 a.m. - 1 pm - Farmers Market - Norwalk City Hall
 1st & 3rd Tues., 6 pm - Toastmasters Meetings - Registrar Recorder/County Clerks Office
 1st & 3rd Tues., 6 pm - City Council - Council Chambers
 3rd Tues., 5:45 pm - Housing Authority - Council Chambers

WEDNESDAYS

1st & 3rd Wed., 7 pm - Lions Club - Bruce's Restaurant
 2nd Wed., 10:30 am - Norwalk Woman's Club - Faith Church
 2nd & 4th Wed., 1:30 pm - Alondra Senior Citizens - Social Services Center
 2nd & 4th Wed., 6 pm - Soroptimist International - Via Zoom
 2nd & 4th Wed., 7:30 pm - Planning Commission - Council Chambers
 4th Wed., 11:30 am - Coordinating Council - Arts & Sports Complex

THURSDAYS

7 pm - Boy Scouts Troop 924 - Norwalk United Methodist Church
 2nd Thurs., 6 pm - 605 Kiwanis Club - Mr. Rosewood Family Restaurant
 2nd Thurs., 7 pm - American Legion Post No. 359 - 11986 Front St.
 2nd Thurs., 7:30 pm - Golden Trowel - Norwalk Masonic Lodge

SATURDAYS

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Farmers Market - Norwalk City Hall
 2nd Sat., 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. - Pancake Breakfast - 1st Christian Church of Norwalk

Would you like an event listed in the community calendar?
 E-mail news@thedowneypatriot.com

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PUZZLE OF THE WEEK

THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com)
LOOKS EASY: In seven answers
 by Mark McClain

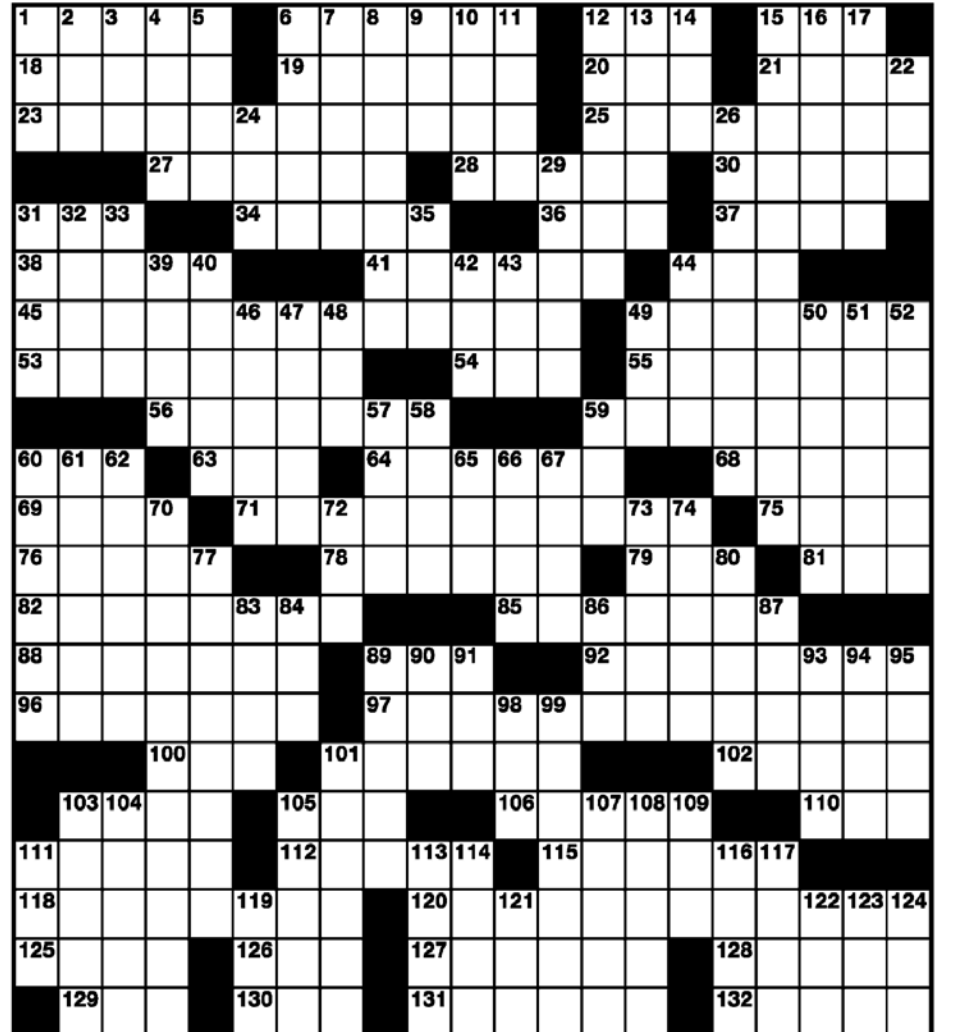
You can contact puzzle editor Stanley Newman at his e-mail address: StanXwords@aol.com. Or write him at P.O. Box 69, Massapequa Park, NY 11762, Please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you'd like a reply.

You can contact puzzle editor Stanley Newman at www.StanXwords.com

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ACROSS | 1 Startles severely | 81 Certain offspring | 15 Ivy League school cofounder |
| 6 50-50 chance | 82 Matinee time | 16 Martial arts fitness regimen | |
| 12 Nonprescription: Abbr. | 85 Deteriorates a lot | 17 Former UN head | |
| 15 LAX stat | 88 Painter's studio | 22 To date | |
| 18 Gallic goodbye | 89 Bottom-line amount | 24 35mm purchase | |
| 19 Winter spike | 92 Military pilots' posts | 26 Readies, as a range | |
| 20 "Which of you ..." | 96 Trivial amount | 29 Hid, with "up" | |
| 21 Madcap | 97 Elevated circus star | 31 Fiscal execs | |
| 23 Protective jewel mounting | 100 Double-twist shape | 32 "Rule, Britannia!" composer | |
| 25 Synthetic rubber | 101 Reach, in a board game | 33 Tom Sawyer assent | |
| 27 Omani leader | 102 Keep an ___ the ground | 35 Unnamed person | |
| 28 Barbecue residue | 103 Big galoot | 39 Cruise line traveler | |
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| 31 Bahamas isle | 106 98 Down's forename | 42 November honoree | |
| 34 Cheyenne Frontier Days event | 110 Arboreal "blood" | 43 Verb-forming suffix | |
| 36 Bismuthite, for instance | 111 Western Pacific nation | 44 Viral social media post | |
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| 38 New and interesting | 115 Misprint list | 47 Justice Kagan | |
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| 44 Electrical unit | 120 City beside El Paso | 49 According to | |
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| 55 Arise (from) | 129 GPS reading | 58 Alien-seeking acronym | |
| 56 Former Spanish money | 130 Hide ___ hair | 59 Energy | |
| 59 False front | 131 Lunar feature | 60 New York college | |
| 60 DVD recorder ancestor | 132 Ability to move fast | 61 Dream up | |
| 63 Strong desire | DOWN | 62 Carried on loudly | |
| 64 Part of a compass | 1 Inoculation, informally | 65 List-shortening abbr. | |
| 68 ___ a fox (crafty) | 2 Laudatory verse | 66 Bit of residue | |
| 69 Give ___ (care) | 3 Designer Claiborne | 67 Mislay | |
| 71 Jet set destination | 4 Pro shop purchase | 70 French Post-Impressionist | |
| 75 Twitter's bird, e.g. | 5 Star Trek officer | 72 Campus climber | |
| 76 Upper house of France | 6 Make a connection with | 73 Nickname akin to 3 Down | |
| 78 Chorus members | 7 Group of eight | 74 Serengeti equine | |
| 79 Article in <i>Le Monde</i> | 8 Share a table with, say | 77 Tests | |
| | 9 Poli ___ (college major) | 80 Lord Nelson weapon | |
| | 10 Below-elbow bone | | |
| | 11 Pins of violins | | |
| | 12 Proprietors | | |
| | 13 The things right here | | |
| | 14 Dove sound | | |



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| 86 Bugs Bunny's "devil" adversary | 103 Boy Scouts founder ___-Powell | 114 Layer of a cake |
| 87 Computer input | 104 City southeast of Buffalo | 116 Pulls with effort |
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Reach Stan Newman at www.StanXwords.com

Paging Dr. Frischer...

By Dr. Alan Frischer

I love milk. For as long as I can remember, cow's milk has been a daily part of my diet. Through the years, more and more milk alternatives have become available, and yet here I am, still drinking the same old thing. It helps that I have no problem with lactose intolerance, as so many do. (Nearly 50% of people in this country are felt to be lactose intolerant.) A number of sources have suggested that milk is not good for me. Should I rethink my milk habit?

While consumption of cow's milk has been declining gradually over the past few decades, it remains by far the most popular form of milk in the United States. Recent statistics show that over three billion gallons of cow's milk are consumed annually, as compared to roughly 340 million gallons of plant-based alternative milk.

Some researchers have recommended that children over the age of two and adults should not drink cow's milk. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association strongly disagree. Cow's milk and other dairy products are excellent sources of calcium, and calcium (together with vitamin D) is proven to be critical for good bone health. Most of the calcium consumed by adults and by children comes from milk and other dairy products. Children who do not drink milk show lower height, body weight and bone mineral content when compared with those who do. Milk also contains phosphorus, which increases calcium retention; protein, which plays a key role in muscle growth and immune function; and other vitamins and minerals. (Other great sources of calcium include seeds, some fish, beans and lentils, some nuts, and leafy green vegetables.)

What are the downsides of drinking milk?

Cow's milk is not

recommended for a baby's first year, due to possible intestinal bleeding and anemia. Research does not show any significant long-term impact.

About 2% of children are allergic to the protein in cow's milk. For them, milk products may cause hives, diarrhea, wheezing, or other allergy symptoms.

Some children and many adults are lactose intolerant, meaning that they cannot digest the sugar found in milk. Consuming dairy products results in bloating, gas, and diarrhea. Taking a lactase supplement along with the dairy replaces the missing enzyme. Those with mild lactose intolerance can often consume limited amounts without experiencing symptoms, so most people with lactose intolerance need not completely avoid dairy products.

One of the more unusual but effective claims against milk is that it contains pus. There is NO pus in milk. There are, however, white blood cells, which are the body's infection fighters. The level of white blood cells rises when there is an infection, but they are always present, in cow milk as well as in human milk. White blood cell levels are monitored by dairy farmers and by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Some within the scientific community feel that cow's milk

is not meant for humans, and that it leads to inflammation and can exacerbate arthritis. They point out that we in the United States consume huge amounts of dairy, yet still have very high rates of osteoporosis. Note that there are many different factors responsible for osteoporosis, in addition to the amount of milk consumed.

For those at high risk of heart disease or who have high cholesterol levels, low-fat or non-fat milk are safe choices. They contain the same nutrition without the same fats. However, recent studies show that regularly consuming even full-fat milk and other dairy products does not increase the risk of heart disease. In fact, it may have a protective effect.

My conclusion? The preponderance of evidence overwhelmingly indicates that milk from cows is safe and beneficial. I will continue to drink my daily glass of milk. However, if because of lactose intolerance or other reasons, you do not consume dairy, I urge you to be very deliberate in finding replacements for calcium, vitamin D, and protein. Fortunately, there are now shelves full of dairy alternatives.

Dr. Alan Frischer is former chief of staff and former chief of medicine at Downey Regional Medical Center. Write to him in care of this newspaper at 8301 E. Florence Ave., Suite 100, Downey, CA 90240.

Hospitalizations drop below 700 in LA County

■ Covid hospitalization rates have declined steadily as health officials promote at-home medication.

By City News Service

DOWNEY — Los Angeles County reported another 55 COVID-19 deaths Wednesday, while the number of hospital patients with the virus fell below 700.

The 55 new deaths gave the county an overall pandemic death toll of 31,138.

According to state figures, there were 666 COVID-positive patients in county hospitals as of Wednesday, down from 706 on Tuesday. The number of those patients being treated in intensive care units was 122, down from 133 a day earlier.

County health officials said they were working to increase the number of providers who can offer residents access to anti-COVID therapeutics, while also striving to raise awareness about their availability.

According to the Department of Public Health, the oral medications are Paxlovid and Molnupiravir are

prescription drugs that must be taken within five days of COVID symptoms developing.

Paxlovid is available for anyone age 12 and older who weighs more than 88 pounds. Molnupiravir is available for anyone 18 and over.

A third medication, Evusheld, is given through an injection and is available for people 12 and over who have not been exposed to the virus and are unable to get a COVID vaccine for medical reasons.

"Given that the new therapeutics can save the lives of residents who are at elevated risk, Public Health is working closely with partners across the county to make sure they are accessible to those who are most vulnerable to severe illness from a COVID infection," county Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said in a statement.

"Having sites where residents can both get tested and receive appropriate medications if they are positive is essential and we look forward to working with federal and pharmacy partners to expand availability of 'Test to Treat' programs, especially in our under-resourced communities."



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