

## In-person graduations return at Cerritos College

■ Commencement ceremonies return next week after a two-year break due to the pandemic.

**NORWALK** - Cerritos College will host its first in-person commencement ceremonies since 2020.

The college will honor its graduating Class of 2022. Graduates from the Class of 2020 will also participate after COVID-19 restrictions shuttered graduation plans during the onset of the pandemic.

The college hosted a drive-thru "Car-mencement" for the Class of 2021 last year.

In-person ceremonies will be held on Friday, May 20, and Saturday, May 21.

The college will present approximately 4,800 associate degrees and skills certificates to students who completed their course of study during the 2021-2022 academic year.

Students will transition to some of the nation's top colleges and universities, including UCLA, UC Berkeley, UC Santa Barbara, California State Universities Dominguez Hills, Northridge, Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Fullerton, among others.

The ceremony is free, however, graduates are requested to bring no more than 10 guests, and space is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Strollers, balloons, noisemakers, and large signs will not be admitted into the stadium for the ceremony.

Seating for wheelchair users is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. For more information, contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at (562) 860-2451 ext. 2335 or at Graduation-Accommodation@cerritos.edu.

Commencement guests will not be required to provide or verbally attest that they are vaccinated or have a recent negative test. While vaccination or a negative test prior to the ceremony is recommended, it is not required for guests.

## Resource fair for property owners

**HUNTINGTON PARK** - Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang is hosting the first in-person Homeowners Resource Fair since the pandemic hit more than two years ago in Huntington Park on May 22.

The fair, free and open to the public, is designed to connect homeowners with various topics including how to build Accessory Dwelling Units, or ADUs - the small granny flats you find behind homes - how to save on your taxes and what to do when a property owner dies, to name just a few of the topics that will be covered.

The Los Angeles County Assessor's Office is accepting registrations by going to <https://assessor.lacounty.gov/news-information/events>.

There will be elected officials in attendance along with Assessor Jeff Prang as well as representatives from various other departments ready to assist the public on myriad of issues. The entire event will be carried live on the Assessor's Facebook page.

The event is being held at the Huntington Park Community Center, 6925 Salt Lake Ave., Huntington Park, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on May 21. For more information go to [assessor.lacounty.gov](https://assessor.lacounty.gov).

# Assembly candidates differ on state solutions

■ Five of the six candidates for the 64th Assembly District participated in a forum hosted by the La Mirada Chamber of Commerce. The field includes five Democrats and one Republican.

By Vincent Medina Contributor

**LA MIRADA** - Candidates for the 64th State Assembly District explained how they would solve California's housing crisis, gas prices and address controversial senate bills during the La Mirada Chamber of Commerce's recent candidate forum.

Elizabeth Alcantar (D), Robert Cancio (D), Raul Ortiz Jr. (R), Blanca Pacheco (D) and Rose Espinoza (D) discussed their views on creating affordable housing in the 64th district.

Pacheco proposed that the main issue to housing was cost, citing her experience as the former chair of the Housing and Economic Development for the League of California Cities. She offered to provide funding for affordable housing if elected.

"I tell everyone that we are dealing with the housing crisis, but it's not just a housing crisis, it's an affordability crisis," Pacheco said. "In the city of Downey, we have created an inclusionary ordinance in the city. So this is something that needs to be done in other cities."

Cancio cited his experience working for "the largest mortgage industry company in the world," and proposed to make loans in California more accessible.

"As of 2008, and even with the COVID pandemic, we saw people's credit suffer. It was significantly difficult to have good credit scores," Cancio said. "We have to think about housing in terms of the industry market by itself and then also the housing market and construction by itself. Buying a house means building the middle class, that's how we build wealth here in the Golden State."

Espinoza proposed that each city should build affordable housing for different levels of income.

"We have to streamline the process wherever you allow people to purchase the home and make it affordable for them properly. But there is a supply and demand, there's not enough supply," Espinoza said. "The government is mandating every city to build affordable homes for medium and low income. A percentage of each home has to be identified."

Ortiz said that reducing taxes would help Californians afford homes. The La Mirada Republican said he has seen taxes increase over time and that lawmakers want to continue to increase taxes.

"The taxes were at 13.3% and legislators want to increase that to about 17%," Ortiz said. "So with all these taxes, it's becoming harder and harder for middle class Americans to go out there and look for homes."

Alcantar said the issue is the lack of homes available, which is making them more expensive.

"There are zero homes available in my city," Alcantar said. "That means homes will cost more money, and it will go that much quicker. In that we're making it so difficult to build, that it's expensive on the person that's building it."

The candidates also covered the controversial state proposal for a 32-hour work week and Senate Bill 1044, where any California employee could refuse to arrive to work regardless of health and safety precautions taken by employers.

Espinoza admitted that she was unfamiliar with SB 1044, but reasoned that if an employee could refuse to arrive at work their boss can fire them.

"Common sense that the individual leave and hire another person. I mean, this is a great renegotiation. And you're at a point where you're going to have



Assembly candidates (from left): Elizabeth Alcantar, Blanca Pacheco, Dr. Robert Cancio, Rose Espinoza and Raul Ortiz Jr. (Photo by Vincent Medina)

to negotiate with the person that you're hiring and firing," Espinoza said.

The La Habra Democrat also argued that companies should determine the length of a work week.

"For the 32-hour work week. I like local control. I like to draw where the companies can take charge of what they want. I know that in our city hall, they do work four days a week, 10 hours a day," Espinoza said.

Cancio shared that his siblings work in law enforcement to illustrate his feeling toward the bill and reduced work week.

"There is absolutely zero return on investment when it comes to SB 1044," Cancio said. "Just like there is zero benefit in having my brother not patrol the streets and make sure they're safe. And my sister not be at the jails and make sure that they're safe for the inmates and also safe for the other officers."

Pacheco agreed that a work week should be determined by the company. She also disagreed with SB1044, arguing the need for a reliance on first responders.

"Only, you know, as a business owner, what makes sense to you. If it doesn't make sense for you and your business, then it doesn't make sense to make it a uniform bill that would apply to all types of business," Pacheco said. "We need to make sure that people show up unless it's a health concern. And we need people for first response, health care providers and people that are employed by restaurants by our businesses, we need for them to show up."

Ortiz continued to advocate for lower taxes as a solution to reduce gas prices.

"With all the hyperinflation that's going on right now the cost of just going to the grocery store, we walk out with a bag of groceries,

Alcantar and Ortiz admitted they were unfamiliar with SB 1044, but indicated they would be against a bill that allowed employees to refuse to arrive to work regardless of health and safety.

The five candidates also addressed the issue of rising gas prices, as the cost per gallon continues to rise in the state.

Cancio encouraged companies to produce more gas and provide more jobs as a way of business innovation.

"We need to be producing more gas, so it's affordable for people to be able to fill their gas tank," Cancio said. "So we need to be able to perform, we need to be able to provide more jobs in the industry. So folks are able to have a good paying union job."

Espinoza explored the idea of utilizing clean energy, and the idea of creating homes closer to workplaces to reduce the drive or so people can walk to work.

"And we also have to look at our carbon footprint and reduce the carbon footprint we have. We have to build housing close to the workplaces and make it more walkable instead of having to drive their cars," Espinoza said. "This pandemic opened up the opportunity for people to stay at home and work at home. That's less of a carbon footprint, which means less gas demands."

Ortiz continued to advocate for lower taxes as a solution to reduce gas prices.

"With all the hyperinflation that's going on right now the cost of just going to the grocery store, we walk out with a bag of groceries,

it's \$100, because of the delivery, because the gas prices are all in control right now," Ortiz said. "To have an immediate impact on all of our lives, we need to suspend that tax right now."

Alcantar brought attention to utilizing clean energy, and encouraging Californians to use vehicles that do not rely on gas.

"We can say as much as we want that it's a natural resource in California, but the reality is that it is a finite resource. So we have to address the issue of climate change," Alcantar said. "That means also subsidizing and promoting and ensuring that our communities are able to utilize the equipment and the vehicles that don't rely on finite resources like this, that means moving forward to other types of energies."

Pacheco agreed that the state needs to move toward cleaner energy, and transitioning employees in the fuel and gas industry.

"We need to start getting away from our reliance on fuel, but we need to be mindful of all of the working class families that do have jobs in the gas and fuel industry," Pacheco said. "We need to make sure that it's a transition. We need to make sure that it doesn't impact our businesses as well."

The last day to vote for a state assembly member is June 7. Californians are already receiving their mail-in ballots, which are valid so long as it is postmarked on or before election day and received no later than seven days after election day.

"With all the hyperinflation that's going on right now the cost of just going to the grocery store, we walk out with a bag of groceries,

# County gets \$441M loan for sewer upgrades

■ L.A. County's aging sewer system is at risk of failing during a major storm, officials warned.

By City News Service

**LOS ANGELES** - Los Angeles County is getting a \$441 million loan to modernize its aged sewer system, which is at risk of failure during severe storms and earthquakes, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced Wednesday.

"Too many communities across the country rely on outdated and inefficient water infrastructure that puts public health and environmental protection at risk," EPA Assistant Administrator Radhika Fox said. "This WIFIA (Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act) investment in LA

County will help ensure wastewater infrastructure reliably serves five million customers while protecting nearby waters."

The EPA predicts construction will be completed in 2027, and 2,880 local jobs will be created by the project.

"Every family deserves access to clean drinking water and a healthy environment," said Rep. Linda Sánchez, D-Whittier. "Unfortunately, the tunnels that our community's main sewer system relies on to prevent wastewater from flooding our waterways are nearly a century old and at risk of failure during severe storms and earthquakes."

"This funding will be used to replace our aging infrastructure, preventing contamination of our drinking water while creating good-paying jobs right here in our

region," she continued. "I thank the EPA for this critical investment, and I will continue working with the Biden administration and local agencies to keep our communities safe, resilient and healthy."

The EPA said the two existing tunnels that carry effluent from the Sanitation Districts' largest wastewater treatment plant are beyond their useful life and do not meet current seismic standards. If they fail, the treatment plant might need to discharge sewage into surrounding waterways, the agency warned.

The project will combine the two aging outfall tunnels into one new 18-foot diameter, 7-mile-long tunnel designed to current seismic standards. It will have sufficient capacity for the high flows experienced during major storms, the EPA said.

## Weekend at a Glance

Friday	88°	
Saturday	92°	
Sunday	82°	

## THINGS TO DO



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## ON THIS DAY

**1888:** Brazil's Princess Isabel signed Lei Áurea ("Golden Law"), abolishing slavery and setting free all slaves.

**1914:** Joe Louis, the American boxer who was world heavyweight champion for a record-setting 12 years, was born.

**1917:** Three peasant children near Fatima, Portugal, reported seeing a vision of the Virgin Mary.



**1940:** Winston Churchill told the British House of Commons in his first speech as prime minister, "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

**1958:** Vice President Richard Nixon's limousine was battered by rocks thrown by anti-U.S. demonstrators in Caracas, Venezuela.

**1960:** Hundreds of University of California, Berkeley students protested a visit by the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

**1985:** Philadelphia police dropped an explosive onto the headquarters of the radical group MOVE; 11 people died in the resulting fire.

**1998:** India carried out two nuclear weapon tests; the United States and Japan imposed economic sanctions as a result.

**2003:** The government unveiled a new version of the \$20 bill - the first to be colorized in an effort to thwart counterfeiters.

**2011:** Two suicide bombers attacked paramilitary police recruits heading home after months of training in northwest Pakistan, killing 87 people in what the Pakistan Taliban called revenge for the U.S. slaying of Osama bin Laden.

## Birthdays

R&B singer **Stevie Wonder** (72), retired basketball player **Dennis Rodman** (61), TV host **Stephen Colbert** (58), Hootie & the Blowfish singer **Darius Rucker** (56), "Girls" actress **Lena Dunham** (36), "Twilight" actor **Robert Pattinson** (36), and Disney actress **Debby Ryan** (29).

# Los Alisos teacher surprised with Milken Educator Award

■ Angelica Gunderson was chosen for the prestigious award, which comes with a \$25,000 prize.

By John M. Sherrard  
Contributor

**NORWALK** - The surprise of a lifetime took place for Norwalk teacher Angelica Gunderson Tuesday at Los Alisos S.T.E.M. Magnet Middle School.

Gunderson, who has taught at Los Alisos for 10 years, was given a \$25,000 award for her excellence in the classroom and is among only 60 other recipients around the country this year to receive the Milken Educator Award.

She is also the first educator to receive the award from the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District and only one from

California this year.

The Milken Educator Awards were created by the Milken Family Foundation in 1987. It recognizes teaching excellence publicly not only to inspire educators, but also students and entire communities about the importance of joining the teaching profession.

In attendance to give out the award was Greg Gallagher, Milken Educator Awards senior program director, along with California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond and John Lopez, N-LM USD Superintendent.

"The universal quality of Milken educators is that they always think it's somebody besides themselves," Gallagher said. "I never heard an educator say, 'I knew it was going to be me.'"

"They all are so humble and

Angelica is doing some amazing things in S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) education. Her school is benefiting from it."

In the assembly were a couple of classes of students and as soon as she was introduced, one yelled out, "that's my teacher."

"To see the students witness one of their favorite educators to receive an award, it's so joyful," said Gallagher, of the roomful of students in attendance. "Hopefully some of these students will continue on and become educators themselves, because we really need educators like Angelica."

Sitting calmly in the audience of students and fellow teachers, Gunderson had no idea of the award until Gallagher called out her name.

"The money will go back into education," said a surprised and appreciative Gunderson. "They (school officials) told me they had a sub for me for my second block (of classes), so I could be at this school assembly. I was worried about my other students and I was worried if this would go a little bit longer. I thought about going back to my classroom."

It's a good thing she didn't, as the Chihuahua, Mexico-born Gunderson was mobbed by officials and students immediately following the ceremony.

"I don't like the attention, but it's really cool to join this group (former recipients)," she said. "It was really overwhelming."

"I've always known who I am and what I love to do. I just think of how much I can progress and I look back on my own progressions."

Gunderson teaches Robotics,



Computer Science and Engineering and even runs two after-school clubs for students.

"Originally, I was a science teacher but when the Robotics teacher left, I said I'd take it, but along with the position came two clubs and I thought 'I don't know if I can do two clubs and the kids really wanted the clubs.'"

Gunderson just started teaching her new classes two years ago. "It's been really challenging," she added.

Gunderson, a mother of two young children, Amelia (7) and Keith (11), was a 2021-22 "Project Lead the Way" Outstanding Teacher of the Year, one of only 79 to achieve that award across the nation. Gunderson is a teacher in the engineering program at Los Alisos, one of the first to implement Project Lead the Way in N-LMUSD, a Femineer coach, and also a part-time lecturer at CSU Long Beach

"I wish there was a way to provide this type of gift to every teacher in our state," Thurmond said. "I think our teachers all deserve it. I'm grateful that (Tuesday) is a day to recognize one of the many incredible teachers in our state."

"Angelica has done incredible work, as evidenced by her students and their success. I'm just proud to be here and proud to witness this. Education helps you overcome barriers."

Lopez, who introduced Thurmond to the assembly, added, "it's a great moment for our district and a great moment for education. To have State Superintendent Tony

Thurmond to come down here and acknowledge one of our teachers for her amazing work at this middle school here at Norwalk-La Mirada School District and recognize Mrs. Gunderson for all of her hard work and passion she puts in to education in Robotics, Engineering and Science, we're humbled and so proud of her."

The Milken Educator Awards, established in 1987 and funded by Lowell Milken believes, "The future belongs to the educated."

Milken is a product of California's public school system, graduating Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude from the University of California, Berkeley, where he received the School of Business Administration's Most Outstanding Student Award.

He went on to earn a law degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, with academic honors of Order of the Coif and the distinction of UCLA Law Review.

The award recognizes teaching excellence publicly not only to inspire educators, but also students and entire communities about the importance of joining the teaching profession.

It has been described as "the Oscars of Teaching." More than \$140 million in funding, including \$70 million in individual \$25,000 awards, has been devoted to the overall initiative, which includes powerful professional learning opportunities throughout recipients' careers.

The idea for the Milken Educator Awards started in the

early 1980s when Lowell Milken, the chairman and co-founder of the Milken Family Foundation (MFF), began exploring strategies for strengthening the education profession. The first Awards were presented to a group of 12 outstanding teachers and administrators in California.

Lowell Milken also says on the Milken website, "We are looking for individuals who are early to mid-career who have distinguished themselves, but who have the potential to do so much more."

Eight previous award winners were present to see Gunderson receive the award and they all congratulated her and told of their teaching history and what some of them used the award towards. A couple of them were even current school district superintendents.

It was an unrestricted award and one awards winner used a portion of the money towards her Masters in education.

**What they said:**

Tania Magana, Los Alisos Principal: "Education isn't recognized enough and I think having one of our amazing teachers, who has so much for her students and the community, being recognized is (Tuesday) amazing."

She sets the bar for all of us and makes everyone else around her amazing. I'm so grateful that she was recognized."

John Blaydes, 1988 Milken recipient: "In the beginning we were notified by phone, nothing like this. Now, it involves the students and staff and it's much more communal and a wonderful experience."

Nicole Brisco, Los Alisos teacher: "This is amazing. I'm so proud of Angelica Gunderson. She's such an asset to our school and organization. She is very gifted in all areas and is part of our wonderful magnet program."

Emmanuel Salazar, Los Alisos ASB President: "I'm very excited for her and I do believe that she does deserve this recognition. She's an amazing teacher."

Eduwiges Ramirez, Angelica Gunderson's mom: "I'm excited and happy and she's the best. I'm very surprised and nobody told me until the last moment. My daughter is the best."

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**Are YOU interested in effecting meaningful change to the Norwalk- La Mirada School Board?**

The Teachers Association of the Norwalk- La Mirada Area is looking for interested residents to attend an informational meeting for potential School Board candidates. The meeting will be held **Tuesday evening, May 24th at the TANLA Office from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.** (A light dinner will be served)

*If you are interested in attending, please call TANLA at (562) 868-6251 to RSVP by May 23, 2022*

# Blame Biden for rising food prices

By Betsy McCaughey

Going food shopping feels like getting punched in the gut. You pick up a whole roasting chicken, hoping it will feed four, and see the price: over \$10 in many New York area stores — a staggering \$18 if the bird’s organic. Apples are close to \$3 a pound. And forget buying a steak; you might have to take out a mortgage.

The Biden administration’s woke policies are to blame for food-flation, making your trip to the supermarket sheer agony. President Joe Biden is prioritizing climate preservation over your ability to feed your family affordably.

His policies are driving up the costs of fertilizer, energy and farm-to-store transportation — add to that overall inflation driven by excessive federal government spending. The result is sky-high food prices.

There’s no relief in sight. You can expect record-breaking food-flation through the rest of 2022, according to Bank of America market analysts.

Americans have been whiplashed with a series of phony White House explanations for soaring prices. First Biden blamed profiteering oil producers, then colluding meat packers, then “Putin’s price hike.”

On Tuesday, Biden spoke to the nation on what he billed as his plan to remedy inflation. But in fact, he just repeated the same list of unsubstantiated excuses for why prices keep rising.

The president’s media cheerleaders have been covering up the actual causes. Washington Post columnist Heather Long announced Sunday that Americans are entering a “new age of scarcity” when “a lot of everyday life

remains out of control,” as if food-flation is as inevitable as lunar eclipses. Wrong.

Biden’s damaging policies can be reversed.

Start with fertilizers and pesticides, which are costing American farmers 50% more than just a year ago. Chemical fertilizers are made largely from natural gas.

Ending Biden administration restrictions on domestic natural gas production, including opening up exploration and production on federal lands and offshore, will help bring down fertilizer prices, according to Heritage Foundation agricultural experts Daren Bakst and Joshua Loucks.

Biden’s war on fossil fuels pushed up the cost of fertilizer before Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine. True, Russia is a fertilizer producer, but the war in Ukraine is merely making a self-imposed problem worse.

Reducing fertilizer costs is critical to making fruits and vegetables affordable but also meat. Feed prices for livestock and poultry went up 12.7% last year, largely because of soaring fertilizer prices. If feeding beef cattle costs less, steaks will, too.

Energy inflation drives up food prices in another way. Shipping goods within the U.S. costs nearly 25% more than a year ago, according to St. Louis Federal Reserve data, thanks to the trucker shortage but also fuel prices.

You’d think Biden would be bending over backward to tackle the food price crisis. Instead, he’s doubling down on climate extremism. Food shoppers be damned.

The federal Conservation Reserve Program pays farmers to leave farmland idle. Agricultural groups asked Secretary of Agriculture Tom

Vilsack for permission to cultivate idle land, but Vilsack said no, predicting a “detrimental impact on ... efforts to mitigate climate change.”

Not all the factors pushing up food prices are within Biden’s control. Avian flu is ravaging poultry and egg producers. Drought is curbing production in California. Putin’s war is diminishing wheat production in Ukraine. But Biden has the power to tame food-flation by standing up to the climate extremists in his own party.

He should also curb overall inflation by calling for tight monetary policy (the Federal Reserve’s job) and halting out-of-control federal spending, including shelving even a pared down Build Back Better.

Sadly, the president offered none of these remedies in Tuesday’s speech.

What can average Americans do? Shop smart. Those precooked supermarket chickens are loss leaders — a bargain designed to lure you into the store. They actually cost less than uncooked chicken, though they tend to be smaller.

You can vote smart, too. There’s a direct relationship between who governs in Washington and what you’re paying at the checkout.

Biden must be channeling Marie Antoinette, who dismissed public anguish over the price of bread by saying, “Let them eat cake.”

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

# Reproductive rights are constitutional rights

By Jamie Stiehm

Now comes Justice Samuel Alito, the Princeton man and Eastern elitist who never met a woman he liked, save colleague Justice Amy Coney Barrett on the Supreme Court. He’s a “justice” sitting in judgment on us.

Known for his sharp and sour edge, Alito authored a 98-page “draft” opinion that takes away human rights, a rarity in American history.

Reproductive rights are constitutional rights, and you can’t take them away. But in condemning the law of the land for two generations, Alito praises a cruel judge who sent women to hang for witchcraft in 1662.

You can’t make that up.

The Court is up in arms about the draft’s leak. Most members wanted to strike down a landmark 1973 decision in dark silence, not the light of day. Republican senators play the same game, trying to distract us from defending our rights as they near their goal.

Anonymous leaker, thank you.

Now the public outcry comes to the courthouse door. The Court fenced itself in, a wonderful visual metaphor, after peaceful chants and protests. I know, I was there.

(Note: this column is not for the faint of heart. Forces opposing reproductive freedom are not “pro-life” in the war of words and shall not be called by that name.)

The 6-3 Supreme Court is clearly captured by the far Right, with former President Donald Trump’s fingerprints on the crime scene.

Yet Alito was named to the high court by former President George W. Bush. Like Trump, Bush lost the popular vote.

This makes Alito’s standing with “we the people” a farce. Here’s how bad things are behind the fence on First Street. Five of nine justices were nominees by a Republican president who lost the popular vote.

Five makes a reckless majority that represents a minority of the American body politic.

Bush also named Chief Justice John Roberts, who cultivates the mien of a reasonable man. Then the Trump Three tarnished the institution in four years: Barrett, Neil Gorsuch and crybaby Brett Kavanaugh, who “busted (his) tail” at Yale.

Democratic leaders are fighting mad, feeling deceived by the Trump Three’s testimony that they would accept settled law. There’s no pretense of comity left, a word seldom spoken in the halls of power.

Shaped by all-male institutions, the Ivy League and the Army, Alito, 72, was championing to overturn Roe v. Wade. The 1973 decision came in an era of expanding civil and women’s rights, causing no controversy at the time.

There is no judicial restraint laced in Alito’s language, denouncing the decision as “egregiously wrong.” The 98 pages are full of sound and fury.

Alito argues that reproductive freedom (“abortion”) is not framed in the 1787 Constitution. A harsh reminder that women had no rights then, literally locked out of the Philadelphia room.

Listen up, this is not just about “bodies.”

On this side of the fence, it’s about our life, liberty and pursuit of

happiness. Life chances are much greater with equality, freedom and autonomy. The court would contract such rights and destinies and put women and girls in harm’s way.

A Catholic Republican, Alito made no secret of his scorn for former President Barack Obama — and disrespect for Congress across the street.

Sadly, in 2016 Obama played into enemy hands by retreating from Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell’s, R-Ky., vow not to fill an empty court seat.

Obama shrugged and failed to fight for his own nominee, Merrick Garland. “Hillary (Clinton) was going to win anyway,” so he thought.

That grave mistake left one place open for the incoming Trump.

Roberts does not want his name on an infamous decision, so the gauntlet is in Alito’s chamber. Nice try. The Roberts court will be remembered in the same league as the Taney court’s 1857 incendiary Dred Scott ruling.

Chief Justice Roger Taney, a virulent racist, ruled that Black people could never have rights that “the white man was bound to respect.”

Public opinion was outraged. Taney’s words were a catalyst for the Civil War.

On Wednesday, the 50-50 Senate will vote on reproductive rights. Senators will be put to the test and on record in an election year. While the bill will come up short, how useful to see who’s on which side of the fence.

**Jamie Stiehm is a Washington journalist and public speaker who writes a syndicated column on national politics and history**

# How the tobacco industry hooked black smokers on menthol

By Keith Wailoo

As regulation of the tobacco industry has grown more and more extensive in recent decades, menthol cigarettes have been an exception. They account for more than one-third of cigarette sales in the United States and are especially dangerous because the menthol enhances nicotine’s already potent addictive effects.

Now the Food and Drug Administration is moving to ban these cigarettes, smoked by more than 18 million people ages 12 and over. Among Black smokers, 85 percent smoke menthol cigarettes, compared with 30 percent of white smokers. Banning them in the United States is a crucial step in the decades-long effort to reduce smoking, especially among young people. The toll is enormous: Nearly a half-million people die every year from smoking-related illnesses.

From the start, the marketing of menthol cigarettes, targeted at Black people over the past half-century, was built on an underlying, deeply cynical deception: They were healthy and restorative.

First promoted in the 1920s and 1930s, menthol cigarettes were trumpeted by the tobacco industry with a false therapeutic promise that they would relieve what was called “smoker’s throat.” In the 1940s, regulators with the Federal Trade Commission ordered the makers of Kool menthol cigarettes to cease linking its product to deceitful health claims such as “doctors know the beneficial head clearing quality of menthol.”

The fortunes of menthol brands nevertheless rose in the 1950s. As the tobacco industry was buffeted by studies directly linking smoking and cancer, industry psychologists concluded that menthol cigarettes, masquerading as a healthful choice, were gaining in sales because they signified security for anxious smokers. Menthol’s therapeutic messaging became the basis for huge growth in cigarette sales in the 1950s and 1960s.

It wasn’t until the 1960s that these false health appeals were specifically aimed at Black consumers. Facing threats of regulation for its youth-oriented advertising and seeking new opportunities for growth, the tobacco industry turned from aggressive college marketing campaigns to building markets in Black communities.

Industry documents from 1967, for example, describe influence campaigns among young Black men in St. Louis: handing out free samples to those who were the “kingfish” in the community and building brand following through barbers, bellhops and taxi drivers, who also distributed free samples. Class was also at play in the industry’s strategy. Industry documents described Newark, for instance, as a leading “poverty market” for building menthol sales.

When Congress voted in 1970 to ban national television and radio ads for cigarettes beginning in 1971, industry records reveal how tobacco companies gradually pivoted to Black periodicals and intensified urban billboard advertising. The documents also outlined how to reach public transit riders in Pittsburgh with Black-themed ads (but only on the inside of certain buses carrying large percentages of Black commuters, and not on the buses’ exteriors since they traveled through majority-white neighborhoods).

Industry efforts to cultivate influencers in the Black community extended to local media dependent on advertising revenue, organizations seeking tobacco industry funding and politicians reliant on campaign contributions. Menthol’s web expanded from the 1960s through the 1990s — even as Black communities suffered and rallied in opposition.

In the 1990s, this targeting of Black communities reached a turning point with R.J. Reynolds’s ill-fated Uptown, a new menthol brand test-marketed in Philadelphia’s Black neighborhoods. A fierce backlash ensued as Dr. Louis Sullivan, the secretary of health and human services in the George H.W. Bush administration, joined grass-roots activists in denouncing the scheme as “slick and sinister.”

This resistance halted the Uptown campaign, but not before the industry called on some of its allies for support, among them the N.A.A.C.P.’s executive director, Benjamin Hooks. The civil rights group had grown reliant on tobacco industry support, and Mr. Hooks was keen to defend the industry’s right to use urban billboards or sell Uptown as an exclusively Black brand. Mr. Hooks also lambasted industry critics as themselves racist and paternalistic for suggesting that Black people needed “guardian angels” to make consumer decisions for them.

In the end, Dr. Sullivan’s argument prevailed against Uptown’s “promoting a culture of cancer,” as he called it. Efforts to ban tobacco billboards in the name of safeguarding the public’s health also prevailed, incorporated into the 1998 agreement between 46 states and the major tobacco companies to pay the states billions of dollars in compensation for the costs of smoking-related diseases.

Yet, new shrewd and deceitful practices allowed menthol cigarettes to flourish. Big Tobacco’s strategy of supporting civic causes, organizations, cultural events and politicians in the Black community paid off when Congress gave the F.D.A. authority to regulate tobacco products in 2009 but exempted menthol from the flavors that would be banned. At the time, the Congressional Black Caucus was split on the menthol question, with some beneficiaries of industry dollars opposing a ban while other caucus members voiced deep concerns about the health toll of targeted marketing on Black communities.

The exemption was seen as a way to win broad support in Congress for the bill. Lawmakers instead authorized the agency to study the additive and ban it if the findings supported such a step.

The F.D.A. sought to move against menthols twice since then, facing opposition from the industry as well as the influencers they financed. In recent years, those influencers have trafficked in fears that banning menthol cigarettes will produce bootleg menthol products, ramped-up police surveillance and more tragic episodes like that of Eric Garner, who was strangled in a police chokehold while being arrested for selling loose cigarettes on a street on Staten Island.

In making the case against the menthol ban, such figures are working from an old tobacco playbook. Relying on industry funding, they use legitimate civil rights concerns about biased policing and racial discrimination to help Big Tobacco defend its lucrative menthol markets. Their argument, like menthol itself, is a cynical distraction.

The truth is that menthol cigarettes and the death of Mr. Garner are linked by his plaintive cry of “I can’t breathe,” part of a long history of systemic targeting of Black people. The story of Big Tobacco and menthol is a rolling tragedy where the violence occurs off camera. It is a slower extraction of health and wealth, playing out not over minutes but decades and generations. But make no mistake, menthol cigarette smoking often leads to decimated lungs, emphysema, cancer and a range of other ailments, ending too often in a tragic plea for air.

After decades of outcries from communities and public health experts about the health inequities and dangers posed by menthol marketing (with the N.A.A.C.P. now urging a ban), the F.D.A.’s proposed rule that would impose the ban, announced April 28, is a long-awaited step that will save hundreds of thousands of lives in the decades to come. The agency is now accepting public comments and will hold two hearings before finalizing its rule.

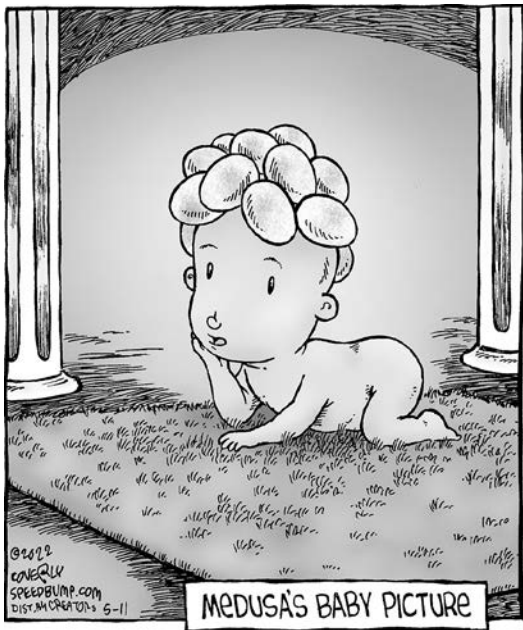
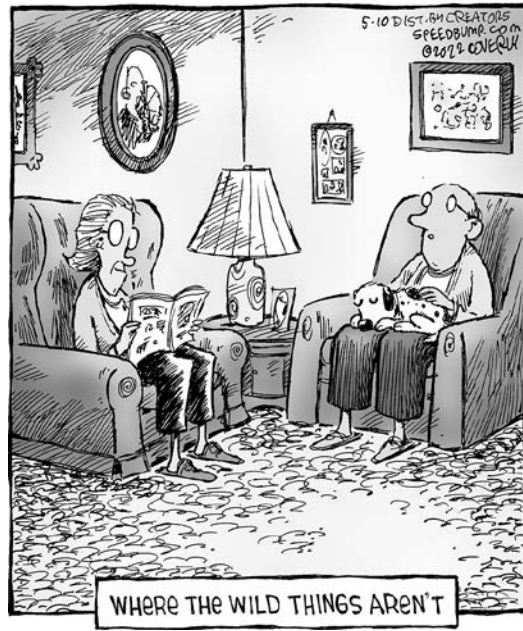
We should not be distracted by those who work on behalf of the tobacco industry while claiming to speak for Black health and well-being. They are part of the web that has maintained the stranglehold, enticing consumers with deceptive promises.

**Keith Wailoo is a professor of history and public affairs at Princeton University and the author of “Pushing Cool: Big Tobacco, Racial Marketing, and the Untold Story of the Menthol Cigarette.”**

## Visit us at:

# www.TheNorwalkPatriot.com

# 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)  
"FREEDOM" FOREIGNERS: Presidential Medal recipients  
by Mark McClain

- ACROSS**
- 1 Perignon
  - 4 The Caine Mutiny author
  - 8 Red Muppet
  - 12 Ponder, with "on"
  - 16 Put into force
  - 19 Trade fair, for short
  - 20 Become undrinkable
  - 21 Summary
  - 23 Polish president (1989)
  - 25 Roloids rival
  - 26 Some House of Lords members
  - 27 In a fickle fashion
  - 28 South African archbishop (2009)
  - 30 Big name at Tesla
  - 31 Fast
  - 34 "That's amazing!"
  - 35 Post-op area
  - 36 Fruit cover
  - 37 Tuning pins
  - 39 Difficult situation
  - 42 Ultimate degree
  - 45 Albanian missionary (1985)
  - 48 \_\_\_-lacto vegetarian
  - 49 Eugene is there
  - 51 Poetic contraction
  - 52 Austrian landscape
  - 53 British bloke
  - 54 Window adjunct
  - 55 Work period
  - 57 Badlands bovine
  - 59 Golf great's nickname
  - 60 Most comly
  - 62 Bagpipers' attire
  - 63 Email icon
  - 64 Coal industry org.
  - 65 British prime minister (2009)
  - 69 Brewpub designation
  - 70 Wonderland cake message
  - 72 Partner of Royce
  - 73 Apprehend
  - 77 NFC North team, in headlines
  - 78 Actor Willem
  - 79 \_\_\_ Andreas fault
  - 80 Ran in the washer
  - 81 Spanish love
  - 82 Off-white shade
  - 83 Fashion monogram
  - 85 Making bales
  - 87 "Uh-uh"
  - 88 German chancellor (2011)
  - 92 Suffix for suburban
  - 93 Largest MO airport
  - 94 "Uh-huh"
  - 95 Dolphin family member
  - 96 Umpire's call
  - 104 Spanish cellist (1963)
  - 109 Currents that follow the wind
  - 111 Blue part of a globe
  - 112 "Ciao!"
  - 113 Egyptian president (1984)
  - 115 Frisbee company
  - 116 Mideast sultanate
  - 117 Penn in pictures
  - 118 Prefix meaning "first"
  - 119 Blissful place
  - 120 Fix
  - 121 Lock inserts
  - 122 Negative connector
  - DOWN**
  - 1 Dig (into)
  - 2 Hoops great Shaq
  - 3 "Large" prefix
  - 4 Effectively worded
  - 5 Type of daisy
  - 6 FedEx rival
  - 7 RVer's stopover
  - 8 Name that means "star"
  - 9 Dreadful
  - 10 Quiet-sounding Champagne brand
  - 11 Estimation ending
  - 12 Articles of faith
  - 13 Shrubby wasteland
  - 14 Very light brown
  - 15 Creator of Mickey and Minnie
  - 17 Place for a goatee
  - 18 Bygone international airline
  - 22 Keystone State sch.
  - 24 Sneaks off
  - 28 Nutritionist's concern
  - 29 One meaning of E
  - 32 Dueling sword
  - 33 Actor Laura or Bruce
  - 35 Texter's "I believe..."
  - 37 House Speaker after Ryan
  - 38 Major sports channel
  - 39 Pope (2004)
  - 40 Be of use
  - 41 In a glum mood
  - 42 Do some snacking
  - 43 Threesome
  - 44 German chancellor (1999)
  - 46 "You there!"
  - 47 Wearer of dreadlocks
  - 50 Slight light
  - 53 Passed very slowly
  - 56 ABA member
  - 57 Book at inaugurations
  - 58 They're not good
  - 59 Make \_\_\_ in (tear)
  - 61 Lamb watchers
  - 62 \_\_\_ Ren of the Star Wars series
  - 66 Sherbet flavor
  - 67 Gratis
  - 68 Former NBC owner
  - 70 Country singer Sara
  - 89 Broad valley
  - 90 Mars alias
  - 91 Citizens of two states
  - 94 Attach, as some patches
  - 97 Fondue feature
  - 98 Symbol of evil
  - 99 Broncos Hall of Fame quarterback
  - 100 One not to be trusted
  - 101 Something extra
  - 102 Retro "Way cool!"
  - 103 Early American fur tycoon
  - 104 "Bam!"
  - 105 Belly woe
  - 106 Moccasin decoration
  - 107 Place for protons
  - 108 Unvarying
  - 110 Recipe amt.
  - 113 Seek info
  - 114 Separator of two surnames

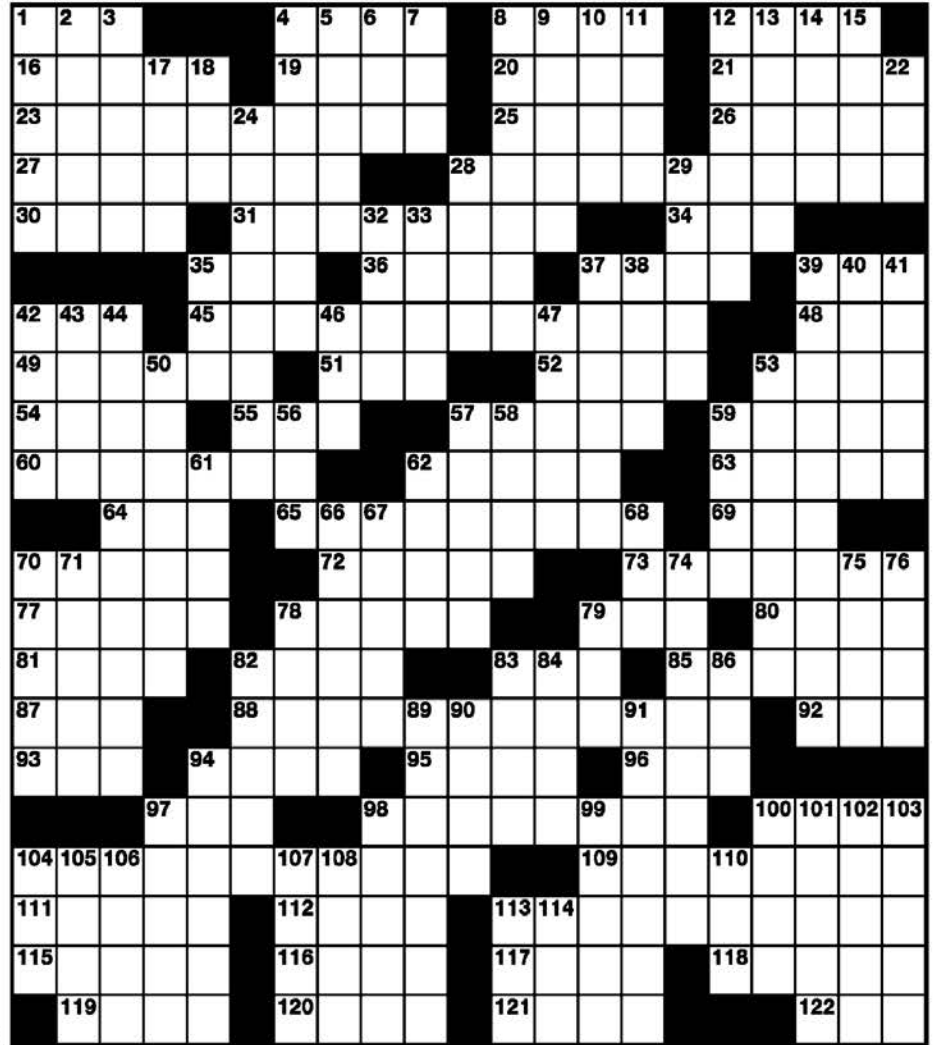
You can contact puzzle editor Stanley Newman at his e-mail address: StanXwords@aol.com. Or write him at P.O. Box 69, Massapequa Park, NY 11762, Please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you'd like a reply.

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

Herman WOUK (4 Across) was inspired by his own experiences aboard a minesweeper during World War II to write The Caine Mutiny. Auto dealer Charles ROYCE (72 Across) and engineer Henry Royce founded their company in 1904. Other foreign-born recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom include Willem de Kooning (1964), Aung San Suu Kyi (2000) and Nelson Mandela (2002).



CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2022 STANLEY NEWMAN WWW.STANXWORDS.COM 5/8/22



- 71 Strive for
- 74 Busch's brewing partner
- 75 Cost of tenancy
- 76 Perimeter
- 78 Ready to serve
- 79 Pro's camera
- 82 No-frills
- 83 Urban recreation ctr.
- 84 Bicycle part
- 86 PC key near the space bar
- 89 Broad valley
- 90 Mars alias
- 91 Citizens of two states
- 94 Attach, as some patches
- 97 Fondue feature
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- 110 Recipe amt.
- 113 Seek info
- 114 Separator of two surnames

Reach Stan Newman at www.StanXwords.com





















# Mother's Day tea time at the Norwalk Senior Center

Photos courtesy City of Norwalk



## Mother Nature's Water Bill – Spoiler Alert, It's Free

Join us for our free, virtual rainwater harvesting workshop to learn about rainwater harvesting, the benefits of rain barrels, installing rain barrels, and water conservation techniques.

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