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Norwalk Softball crushes Legacy, 13-1, in non-league action

■ Nakano, Cervantes, Banda lead the team in hitting, pitching for eighth consecutive win

By John Sherrard
Contributor

NORWALK – The Norwalk High School Softball team took a break from Suburban Valley Conference action for a non-league game and the offense exploded for a 13-1 win in six innings over visiting Legacy Monday evening (April 10).

The Lancers, who improved to 14-5 overall, won their eighth consecutive game scoring 120 runs in that stretch.

They finish up their last five games against Paramount, Bellflower, Dominguez and two with Lynwood in hopes of a perfect league season. The Lancers are 7-0 as of their last game.

Norwalk, under the direction of second-year coach Fred Perez, was led by all nine starters with at least one hit.

They were led by three players with two hits each – junior shortstop Kendall Nakano (2 for 3, HR, Dbl., BB, 2 Rs, 2 RBIs), senior third baseman Cerise Cervantes (2 for 4, Dbl., 2 Rs, RBI) and junior pitcher Jalynn Banda (2 for 3, 2 Dbls., RBI, Rs).

“Hitting is definitely a big part of our game,” said Nakano, who has multiple offers but hasn’t committed yet to college. “Once a person starts hitting, it’s definitely contagious. Hitting is and especially energy is contagious. We’re also a very high-drive team.”

Banda also pitched a six-inning, three hitter and 11 strikeouts and allowed only three base runners and retired the last nine batters to end the shortened game.

“The quality pitching was good (Monday) for us and them to come up and work those counts,” Perez said. “One through nine in the lineup can hit and we have girls on the bench when we call their number they come out and do their best to produce.”

Perez, who became head coach after the passing of former coach Vic Juan last year, said of Banda, “Banda mixes up her pitches really well and Leilani (Juan) calls a good game.”

Banda has one no-hitter this year.

“I’ve played with Leilani (Juan) since I started playing when I was six years old when I started playing softball,” said Banda, of her catcher. Pitching and catching together is one of the greatest things because I have the best connection with her.

“Once I got into high school, I made sure my speed was up and then I could use my movement.”

In addition to Banda, Nakano is also successful in the circle with a no-hitter and a perfect game to her credit.

Another factor in run production was six errors by Legacy (10-7), leading to multiple runs.

Norwalk opened the game with two runs in the first inning on the first two errors by Legacy for a 2-0 lead.

In the third inning, the Lancers extended their lead to 5-0 over the Tigers.

Sophomore catcher Jezrael Acosta opened the inning with a single to center and scored on a double by Cervantes, to lead 3-0. Banda changed places with Cervantes with another double for the 4-0 lead.

Banda came home with the fifth run of the game on a sacrifice fly by junior first baseman Itzel Hernandez (R, 2 RBIs).

Meanwhile, Banda, who allowed a single in the first inning, retired the next seven batters through the fourth inning before an error led to their only run of the game for the 5-1 lead.

Nakano opened the fifth inning with a solid solo home run shot to left-center to extend the lead to 6-1. Cervantes and Banda followed Nakano’s home run with a single and double, respectively, but did not score.

My goal is to get on base and get a solid hit,” Nakano said. “I don’t really look for home runs, I just try to put the ball in play.”

Nakano has 10 home runs this season.

After Nakano retired all three batters in the sixth inning, two of which by strikeout, the Lancer offense went to work with a seven-run sixth to end the game.

Freshman center fielder Nayeli Sanchez opened the inning with an infield hit, stole second



Norwalk plays Legacy in their non-league game at Norwalk High School on Monday. Norwalk defeated Legacy 13-1. (Photo by Keith Durlflinger)

and eventually came home on an RBI single by Juan with the seventh run of the game.

Nakano, followed with an RBI double and two more runs came in on consecutive RBI singles by Hernandez and senior left fielder Kasarey Lotts for the 10-0 lead.

Three more runs in the inning led to the game being called.

What they said:

Leilani Juan, senior catcher: “We all seem to be very aggressive at the plate. We want to be the ones to strike first. We are all swingers, and we want to hit. This was an extra feel-good game.”

Banda was shutout lights, for sure. She gets ahead of the count always and she knows I have her back.”

Cerise Cervantes, senior third baseman: “(Monday) was a pretty important game for us, especially because our league games haven’t been against strong teams.”

Honestly, we’re glad we have someone like her (Banda) on the mound for us. I know she is going to go out there and throw a great game like she did (Monday).

She knows she has a solid defense behind her.”

Kendall Nakano on coach Vic: “Vic’s passing was very emotional for us and very sad times, but I think that just drove us to work harder and it hit home for a lot of girls, because we grew up with him coaching. We just wanted to do it for him.”

Coach Fred Perez on coach Vic: “Vic had a huge impact on

the girls and myself and coach Keith (Nakano) just wanted to carry the vision that (Vic) had. His vision was to make sure to create a culture here to make sure everybody feels welcome, to give them some place to play.

One of Vic’s last texts to me said, “take care of my girls.”

Editor’s note: Coach Vic died just prior to the 2022 season and Perez became the coach to carry on his legacy.

Keith Nakano, Norwalk assistant coach: “Last year we went 20-8 and it was the first year in the playoffs in six years and we made it to the quarterfinals. Coach Fred and I try to continue coach Vic’s legacy and his vision.”

State moves to force improvements at LA County juvenile halls

Calling Los Angeles County’s juvenile halls “appalling,” state Attorney General Rob Bonta said Wednesday his office has filed court papers seeking to force the county to immediately remedy “illegal and unsafe” conditions in the facilities.

The motion filed in Los Angeles Superior Court asks for an order requiring the county to comply with a 2021 judgment ordering improvements in conditions at juvenile halls, including improved staffing levels and ensuring that youth in the county’s care are taken to school and medical appointments.

“The conditions within the juvenile detention centers in Los Angeles County are appalling,” Bonta said in a statement. “Every child in our state is entitled to a safe, homelike environment. For justice-involved youth in particular, it is imperative that our institutions give them every opportunity for rehabilitation, growth, and healing. We are responsible for protecting justice-involved youth and ensuring they receive educational, health, and supportive services necessary to stop the cycle of incarceration.”

There was no immediate

response from the county about the AG’s Office action.

The county Board of Supervisors has been struggling to overhaul the troubled juvenile justice system even as it prepares to assume responsibility for youth being transferred to counties from the state’s soon-to-close Juvenile Justice facilities.

The board recently voted to advance a “Global Plan” for the placement and care of juvenile detainees, with a goal of reducing the number of juveniles in custody and development of Secure Youth Treatment Facilities to provide a more supportive environment for detained youth.

But while those plans have been slowly advancing, the juvenile detention system and the Probation Department that oversees it have been routinely under fire from state regulators over conditions at the facilities.

In March of last year, about 140 juvenile detainees were hastily transferred from Central Juvenile Hall in Lincoln Heights to Barry J. Nidorf hall in Sylmar -- a move that the county inspector general later concluded was orchestrated to avert

a state inspection that appeared likely to fail.

Late last year, nearly 300 boys and girls filed a lawsuit alleging they were sexually assaulted, harassed and abused by county probation and detention officers while being held at juvenile facilities dating back to the 1970s.

In March, the Board of Supervisors fired Probation Department Chief Adolfo Gonzales, with board Chair Janice Hahn noting that the juvenile halls “are in crisis.”

The Los Angeles Times reported last month that state regulators were threatening to shut down Nidorf and Central halls. In the past, the state board has determined the county’s juvenile halls were “unsuitable,” but gave the county Probation Department more time to submit a “corrective action plan” to comply with state regulations.

The motion filed by the state Attorney General’s Office on Wednesday asks a judge to mandate that the county:

-- transport youth from their units in the juvenile halls to school daily;



-- deliver compensatory education services to youth who are entitled to them;

-- ensure youth have access to daily outdoor recreation;

-- document and review all use-of-force incidents, following procedures outlined in the original judgment;

-- install video cameras throughout Barry J. Nidorf juvenile hall; and

-- implement a “positive behavior management plan.”

According to a statement

from the AG’s Office, the county -- plagued by a staffing crisis at the juvenile halls -- “has not just failed to make forward progress towards compliance with the judgment, it has actually regressed away from complying with the most basic and fundamental provisions that ensure youth and staff safety and well-being.”

The AG’s Office alleged that due to low staffing levels, youth in the county detention halls have been “forced to urinate and defecate in their cells overnight,” and some staffers have been required to work 24-hour shifts.

Weekend at a Glance

Friday 66°

Saturday 74°

Sunday 85°

ON THIS DAY

1471: The deposed and exiled king of England, Edward IV, defeated King Henry VI’s forces at the Battle of Barnet, near London, enabling him to retake the throne.

1828: Noah Webster published *An American Dictionary of the English Language*; based on the principle that word usage should evolve from the spoken language, the work was hugely influential, though it was initially attacked for its “Americanism.”

1865: Just after the effective end of the American Civil War, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth while attending a production at Ford’s Theatre in Washington, D.C., and died the next morning.



1902: Businessman J.C. Penney opened his first dry-goods store in Kemmerer, Wyoming.

1939: John Steinbeck’s classic *The Grapes of Wrath*—which was set during the Great Depression and traces the migration of an Oklahoma Dust Bowl family to California and their subsequent hardships as migrant farmworkers—was published.

1952: Ralph Ellison published his debut novel, *Invisible Man*; a bildungsroman that tells of a naive and idealistic young Black man, it is widely regarded as a classic.

1986: A force of U.S. warplanes based in Britain bombed several sites in Libya, killing or wounding several of Muammar al-Qaddafi’s children and narrowly missing Qaddafi himself.

1994: In a friendly fire incident in northern Iraq, two U.S. Air Force aircraft mistakenly shoot-down two U.S. Army helicopters, killing 26 people.

2003: Researchers announced the end of the Human Genome Project; over the course of 13 years, they had successfully determined, stored, and rendered publicly available the sequences of almost all the genetic content of the human genome.

2014: The Islamic sectarian movement Boko Haram kidnapped more than 275 girls from a boarding school in Chibok, Nigeria, sparking worldwide condemnation.

2021: Hedge-fund investment manager Bernie Madoff, who operated the world’s largest Ponzi scheme, died in federal prison at the age of 82.

Birthdays

Baseball great **Pete Rose** (82), “Everybody Loves Raymond” star **Brad Garrett** (63), hall of fame pitcher **Greg Maddux** (57), actor **Anthony Michael Hall** (55), MMA fighter **Anderson Silva** (48), professional wrestler **Lita** (48), “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” star **Sarah Michelle Gellar** (46), TV actor **Chris Wood** (35), and film actress **Abigail Breslin** (27).

Downey Symphony has a Danzón of a good time

By Lorine Parks
Society Editor

DOWNEY - The Downey Symphony Orchestra concert was a contrast in Old World and New World symphonic styles, both good but differently infused.

Saturday night at the Downey Theatre patrons heard Capriccio Espagnol, an orchestral suite by Rimsky-Korsakov that imitates the sunny life in a tropical climate. Though he traveled to Spain, Russian-born Rimsky-Korsakov loved the color and variety of Spanish folk music, that earthy, sensual feeling that he set to music. Spaniard Manuel de Falla's Ritual Fire dance conveyed the passionate heat of a gypsy romance with the

buzz of the violins and the intense and increasing eerie beat.

But when the orchestra performed the New World composer Juan Pablo Contreras's Mariachitlán, and Arturo Marquez's Danzón on!, the music said, "We are here. This is our land, our culture. These are our songs."

The first was formal; the second was equally complex but with that authentic persuasion.

Composer Juan Pablo Contreras came to the stage from the audience to acknowledge a standing ovation, his youthful face set off by enormous red bow tie. "This is an orchestral homage to my birthplace, Juan Pablo said, "the Mexican state of Jalisco, where mariachi music

originated." The piece alternated between melodic canción ranchera, ranchera songs, and the competing mariachi bands.

Before the concert both the Lobby and Mezzanine Gallery level were filled. Up above, patrons viewed the Downey Art Coalition's curated show, Mother Earth. Below, in the Lobby, friends greeted each other: Joe Commodore, Bob Goldstein, Larry Lewis, along with Bill Hare, all Kiwanians who once performed in a benefit performance of Neil Simon's The Odd Couple in this same theatre.

New Downey Symphonic Society board member Linda Saldana and her teenage son; Dorothy Pemberton and Patty Rohrer. Dorothy confided that she is announcing her candidacy for City Council for the Third District, a position that will be voted on in special election in November to fill the vacant seat. You read it in the Patriot.

Roy and Barbara Beard; former DSS president Don Marshall, Hop Morrison, Adele Alexander Abruzzo and her son John. Fans and friends were happy to see Joyce Osborn, our former first violinist, and wife of conductor Tom and mother of concertmaster Carolyn. Mary Stevens, and DSS Board members Tom Hutchinson and Cindy Kovach

One patron brought a well-worn page from the Downey Patriot previewing the pieces to be heard.

The evening began with the traditional temporary "conductor" giving the downbeat. The dream job fell to Christopher Parks. His grandmother Bernice Mancio Stumps had bid for the baton last year, and Christopher led a spirited Souza March, The Star and Stripes Forever.

At intermission: 5-year-old Audrey Rumfalo was clearly inspired by the performance. "She wants to play the violin," her mother Angela said. Also enjoying the family evening was brother Aaron and father Alfred, whose names all begin with A.

After intermission Concert Master Carolyn Osborn "conducted" the bidding for next year's baton wielder.

"You get lessons in how to conduct from Maestro Sharon Lavery," said Carolyn, "a baton, and a picture of yourself in action."

Bidding began at \$1500 with a spirited offer from an orchestra member. The level progressed to \$2,000, to \$2,500, \$3,000, and inched up to and past last year's record of \$4,200.

Winner, at \$4,400, was Gladys Crespo, mother of Anthony Crespo, the president of the Downey Symphonic Society. And who did Gladys bid for? For her father, Anthony's grandfather, 93 year-old Sinfiorano Jimenez, a composer and musician who lives in Bolivia.



"We'll get him to come here next April," said Anthony.

The evening included an evocative piece, Fanfare for the Earth, by Giovanni Santos, a world premiere. It opened with percussion, a knocking on wood, then cymbals, timpani. Trumpets and violins took up the theme. It's a piece we would like to hear again. The composer, a friend and colleague of Music Director Sharon, came to the stage to receive the audience's applause.

The musical finale concluded with a smiling conductor opening her arms wide and including the entire orchestra in the audience's applause. Maestro Sharon went deep into the orchestra to single out each section, the horns,

winds, brass, the strings, and the remarkable percussion. So many different kinds of drums enlivened the evening, from timpani to bongos to small snare drums, cymbals, a harp and a grand piano. As always Sharon embraced the orchestra and the audience, "This is your Symphony Orchestra, Downey."

After the concert, musicians, artists and patrons walked the short way across the Theatre Plaza to the Embassy Suites. In the Brickstone Lounge there was room for all, to share the natural high that comes from experiencing such good music. A good time to unwind and enjoy each other's company.

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Actor-comedian Randall Park to deliver UCLA commencement keynotes

LOS ANGELES - Actor, comedian and writer Randall Park will deliver the keynote address at all three UCLA College commencement ceremonies on June 16, the school announced Wednesday.

"As a proud Bruin, I am deeply honored to be delivering the keynote address for the class of 2023," Park -- best known as Louis Huang, the father in the former ABC sitcom

"Fresh Off the Boat" -- said in a statement released by the school.

In a likely tipoff to the tone he'll take when he addresses the graduates, the comedian went on to say, "In my humble opinion, there is no one better to connect with these young minds than me: a 49-year-old man who is not on social media and still listens to Wham!"

"My hope is to inspire, uplift, encourage, stimulate and other synonyms for the word 'inspire.'"

The commencements are scheduled for 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. June 16 at Pauley Pavilion.

Park was born in Los Angeles to Korean immigrant parents. His mother worked as an accountant on the UCLA campus, and Park earned a bachelor's degree in English, with a minor in Asian American studies, from the school in 1997. He got his master's degree in Asian American

studies in 1999.

As an undergraduate, Park was a co-founder of Lapu, the Coyote that Cares Theatre Company -- an Asian American troupe that carries on to this day. In 2019, he also started Imminent Collision, "dedicated to developing comedy-forward stories from Asian American perspectives for all audiences."

Besides "Fresh Off the Boat," Park's numerous credits include appearances on such TV shows as "The Office," "Veep" and the miniseries "WandaVision."

On the big screen, he has appeared in the "Ant-Man and the Wasp" and "Aquaman" franchises, along with "The Interview," playing North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un.

He made his directorial debut with the film "Shortcomings," which premiered in January at the

Sundance Film Festival.

The June 16 keynote speeches will not be Park's first return to UCLA since his student days. He has been an alumni volunteer at UCLA UniCamp -- earning the 2016 Edward A. Dickson Alumnus of the Year award -- and also was keynote speaker at the 2017 English department commencement.

"Through his artistry and activism, Randall Park has opened countless doors for others and advocated for a more just and equal world," said Miguel Garcia-Garibay, senior dean of the UCLA College and dean of physical sciences.

"He is a true Bruin in every sense, and we know his wit and wisdom will inspire our graduating seniors to blaze their own trails and create a better future."

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Leaders from both parties should demand Clarence Thomas's resignation

By Adam Cohen

Adam Cohen is the author of "Supreme Inequality: The Supreme Court's Fifty-Year Battle for a More Unjust America."

There are two distressing aspects to the scandal of Justice Clarence Thomas's years of accepting luxurious vacations and private jet trips from a billionaire, as revealed last week in a damning investigation by ProPublica.

The first is that these gifts came from a man who seems to have strong feelings about issues that come before the Supreme Court. The second is the lack of bipartisan outrage at malfeasance that corrodes the standing of the nation's highest court.

Suggesting that Democrats and Republicans agree on anything involving the Supreme Court these days sounds like the ramblings of a madman. But it is worth recalling that the last time such serious allegations were made against a sitting justice, Congress did respond firmly and in bipartisan fashion. Justice Abe Fortas's departure from the court in 1969 is both a blueprint for how lawmakers could respond today and a benchmark of how far we have fallen.

Fortas, a Democratic appointee, got caught up in a scandal that involved much smaller dollar amounts than the lavish trips Justice Thomas took, even factoring in inflation. Fortas accepted \$20,000 to consult for a foundation working on civil rights and religious freedom. Justices consulting for nonprofits was once not so unusual: William O. Douglas had a paid position with the Albert Parvin Foundation, and Warren Burger had one with the Mayo Foundation.

Unfortunately for Fortas, the businessman who started the foundation that had retained him, Louis Wolfson, was investigated by the Justice Department for financial improprieties and eventually convicted of securities violations. In 1966, Fortas quit the foundation and returned all the money he had accepted.

There were other clouds around Fortas. His contract with the foundation was originally for \$20,000 in annual payments for consulting work for the rest of his life, and there was an earlier controversy over a course he was paid \$15,000 to teach at American University while on the court. He also had an unfortunate habit of continuing to offer advice to President Lyndon Johnson, whom he had long advised, even after joining the court. But it was his involvement with Wolfson that forced him off the court.

In 1969, Life magazine reported on Fortas's long-extinguished ties to Wolfson's foundation and on the money he had returned,

and a scandal ensued. We now know the Nixon administration was helping Life with its investigation, including with some improper leaks, in an attempt to drive Fortas off the court.

When Life's revelations appeared, Republicans in Congress demanded that Fortas resign. That was not surprising — the liberal Fortas was appointed by Johnson. What was remarkable by today's standards is that Democrats demanded his ouster, too. Walter Mondale of Minnesota was the first Democratic senator to do so, and Senator Joseph Tydings of Maryland, a liberal Democrat who had been one of Fortas's biggest supporters, soon followed. It packed a real punch when The New York Times reported on the front page, "Tydings Declares Fortas Must Resign Immediately."

These Democrats called for Fortas to step down, even though President Richard Nixon, a Republican, would appoint his successor, which would help to flip the court from a liberal majority to a conservative one. They made clear that they were more concerned with the court and the country than with their ideology or their party. "The confidence of our citizenry in the federal judiciary must be preserved," Tydings declared.

With his own party turning against him, Fortas was in danger of being impeached by the Democratic-controlled House. Fortas insisted he had done nothing wrong, but he stepped down, explaining in his resignation letter to Chief Justice Earl Warren that "the welfare and the maximum effectiveness of the court to perform its critical role in our system of government are factors that are paramount to all others."

Justice Thomas's conduct has been far more egregious in scale than Fortas's. ProPublica reported that a single nine-day "island hopping" trip by Justice Thomas and his wife, which included a 162-foot superyacht, could have cost him over \$500,000 if he had chartered the private jet he flew on and the yacht himself. Justice Thomas did not report the largess he received on his financial disclosure forms, which appears to violate federal law, according to ethics experts ProPublica spoke to. (Justice Thomas issued a nonapology of the "there is nothing to see here" variety.)

The defenses being made on Justice Thomas's behalf hardly pass the laugh test. It was just, as Justice Thomas put it, "personal hospitality" among close friends? That would be a nice meal at a friend's home, not an invitation to travel the world like royalty on a plutocrat's dime. And about that friendship: ProPublica reports that Justice Thomas's rich benefactor, the real estate developer Harlan Crow, befriended him after he became a justice. It is hard to believe

that if Justice Thomas started voting like Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the friendship or the free island hopping would continue.

ProPublica reported that neither Mr. Crow nor his firm has had a case before the court since Justice Thomas joined it. But Justice Thomas and his conservative allies have been catering to the interests of the ultrawealthy for years, from striking down campaign finance limits to making it harder for workers to unionize. Mr. Crow also serves on the board of the conservative American Enterprise Institute, whose website makes clear that it takes a keen interest in cases before the court.

Justice Thomas's windfall has "no known precedent in the modern history of the U.S. Supreme Court," according to ProPublica. It is also part of a climate of growing ethical rot. He has been voting in cases in which his wife, the conservative activist Ginni Thomas, has ties to the parties involved. Justice Antonin Scalia died in 2016 in a free room at a luxury ranch owned by another very rich man.

The harm all of this does is incalculable. According to Gallup, trust in the federal judiciary is at a record low. But the impact goes beyond the court, damaging American democracy itself. Behavior like Justice Thomas's plays into the popular belief that across government, the fix is in — that the rich and powerful are buying off decision makers to get what they want.

Democrats have been screaming foul. Representative Bill Pascrell Jr., a New Jersey Democrat, called Justice Thomas "corrupt as hell" and demanded that he resign — one of several Democratic Congress members urging resignation or impeachment. Democrats in Congress are also pushing for a code of ethics for the justices who, unlike lower court federal judges, are not covered by one.

Republicans, however, have been deafeningly silent. Fox News has filled the void by locating an "expert" to declare that the story about Justice Thomas is "politics, plain and simple." Influential Republicans in Congress are reported to be working behind the scenes to block the push for a code of ethics.

If our body politic were as healthy today as it was in 1969, leaders of both parties would be demanding Justice Thomas's resignation, and he would be as worried about being impeached by a Republican House as Fortas was by a Democratic one. And we would hear Republicans in Congress say, as Tydings once did, that what matters most of all is not party or ideology but that "the confidence of our citizenry in the federal judiciary must be preserved."

It's time to end the five-day isolation guidance for covid

By Shira Doron, Elissa Perkins and Westyn Branch-Elliman

Shira Doron is chief infection control officer for Tufts Medicine, hospital epidemiologist at Tufts Medical Center and an associate professor at Tufts University School of Medicine. Elissa Perkins is an associate professor of emergency medicine at Boston University School of Medicine and the vice chair of emergency medicine research at Boston Medical Center. Westyn Branch-Elliman is an infectious-diseases specialist and associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School.

Thanks to vaccines, post-infection immunity and effective treatments for covid-19, most of society has returned to normal. The United States is set to end its public health emergency in May, and the World Health Organization has indicated it will also declare an end to the pandemic soon.

But there is one lingering residual: the five-day isolation period following a covid diagnosis. We believe it's time for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to retire that policy and move to an alternative guidance: Stay home when sick; return to work and school when you are better.

This is especially important for kids. Extensive evidence shows that time away from school due to covid has worsened learning loss, screen addiction, the teen mental health crisis and obesity rates. Schools are playing catch-up not only for academics but also social and emotional learning. While many schools have been open for in-person instruction for more than two years, the mandatory five-day isolation period means educational disruptions continue.

It is incumbent upon health officials to keep the number of days that children have to be out of school to an absolute minimum. We also must recognize that it's not only children who are harmed by the five-day isolation requirements, but also the caregivers of children who are too young to stay alone at home. During this time

of staffing shortages across many industries, especially in health care, we must consider this negative impact on society.

Why is the isolation period for covid five days (plus five more days of wearing a mask when indoors) when for other viruses, we advise a "stay home when sick" policy? For most diseases, people can return to work and school when their fever has resolved and they are feeling well enough. Is there something inherently different about the coronavirus that makes it contagious for longer?

The answer is no. In fact, influenza is often contagious up to seven days after becoming sick. People with respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) can be contagious for up to eight days. Those with these viruses are not required to isolate after their symptoms have improved.

Well, you might say, covid is not the flu. In fact, the severity of covid has been steadily dropping. Hospitalizations due to the disease are rare, and the risk of death from it has dropped below that of the flu. It's also true that many people have simply stopped testing when they have mild symptoms, so many covid cases are never diagnosed. Because those individuals do not isolate, the community and school-level impact of requiring extended isolation only for diagnosed cases is likely negligible.

The United States is actually an outlier when it comes to restoring normalcy for kids. Health authorities from around the world have been messaging for months that covid should be thought of like other respiratory infections. Ontario dropped its five-day isolation policy last August. Denmark did the same in December, as did Britain in February.

Testing for the coronavirus should also be limited to those who would qualify for treatment, which is based on risk factors and does not include otherwise healthy children. This is the same approach

physicians use for other endemic respiratory viruses, such as flu and RSV.

For most people, it simply doesn't matter which virus is causing their symptoms. And with federal funding for certain covid services ending on May 11, including free testing, changing from a "test everyone" to a "test only those at high risk" approach would conserve resources and prevent burdensome costs, which disproportionately affect those with lower incomes. This would follow the example of the Netherlands, where health authorities recommended against routine testing in February.

Not everything should go back to normal. All Americans should receive paid sick leave, including time to care for a sick loved one. Vaccines, tests and treatment should be widely available at low or no cost for those who are high risk. Better ventilation in schools, workplaces and other public venues, as well as free high-quality masks for the immunocompromised, should be the goal. And the health-care system needs a serious overhaul: We need more flexibility to scale up capacity during surges. And people need more access to primary-care physicians so that underlying health conditions can be properly managed to improve outcomes from all unexpected ailments.

We have been through the unimaginable, and our kids have borne much of the burden. Now we must do everything we can to ensure they are where they belong: in the classroom. As the emergency phase ends across the United States, it's time to shift our covid policies to match those of other endemic respiratory viruses: Stay at home when sick and, whether it takes a week or a few days, come back when you are feeling better.

Students are not too young to make a difference in their communities

By Joseph Trevizu

Joseph Trevizu is a student school board member for the Norwalk – La Mirada Unified School District, and the youngest elected Latino in LA County.

Many students can care less about what happens at school board meetings, but those are the same students who complain about literally everything happening in our schools. If students really want the change they so passionately talk and post on social media about then it's time to step up to the plate and serve!

I was 14 when I started advocating for change in my community. By 16 I was speaking at School Board Meetings and at 17 I am serving on a school Board as the Student Member.

I serve on the Norwalk – La Mirada Unified School District's Board of Education being the first duly elected Student Member in the district, making me the youngest elected latino in Los Angeles County. I never thought I would be a board member but I knew that if I was really about the words I spoke I had to find a way to become a solution.

Prior to my election I did some digging and found that the State of California allows for "Pupil Board Members". Even better, my district had a unique policy in place but it was buried deep and unheard of until I brought it to the attention of others. I asked to be appointed to the Board. My request was rejected on multiple occasions, until I got an email and my efforts of advocacy started paying off.

The Board President at the time told me via email that the district would undertake an election in August 2022 just a month

late from state set standards. Nevertheless I took advantage of that opportunity and the students of the district elected me with over 50% of the vote.

It is vital that students start doing the research and figuring out how they are going to be about the change they speak of. Let's be clear; It's not only on the students, this is on elected officials to give thier largest stakeholders a voice at the table. Often we hear electeds say they care about kids and that they want to advance the promise of democracy. Really? From a student perspective if you really want to advance the experience of students throughout the district you serve then you're really going to have to start proving it through substantive and tangible driven change, like giving students a seat on the school board with the rights to vote preferentially and motion.

My grandfather who was raised in Compostela, Nayarit came to America under the pretense of better opportunity and today I live under his American dream. I have always known that I wanted to go to work to fix my community but these opportunities are the ones that children who come from middle class families like mine are not aware of.

As they say "you can't be what you don't see" my position really just defines that. I was raised by two loving parents in different parts of LA County but primarily in Cudahy, Santa Fe Springs, Norwalk – La Mirada, and Whittier. My father's mom, my grandma Beverly, used to watch me as a kid in Cudahy and it was then that I realized the real harm gangs do to communities those things taught me the truth about what happens to most young hispanic men that can't find a place in society because they weren't properly equipped

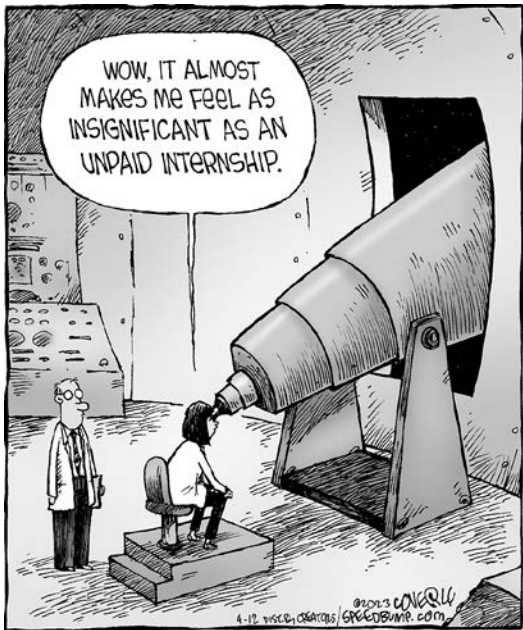
or simply lack the motivation to succeed.

I have a passion to end the cycle of generational gang trends and to educate young hispanic children on our history, our culture and the power we have to change the world.

I lost my Grandma Bessie, my mother's mom, to cancer my junior year of high school, in my hands. She was a janitor who never stopped working even after retirement, caring for the elderly. She taught me the truth about tenacity, about never giving up. Before I lost her I promised that I'd fight for my community. I hope I'm serving her well.

Are you ready to teach our generation the way this game works? If so reach out to me at jottrevizu2@gmail.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

SUNDAYS

12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Food Pantry - 12201 Firestone Blvd., Norwalk, CA 90650

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

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PUZZLE OF THE WEEK

THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com)

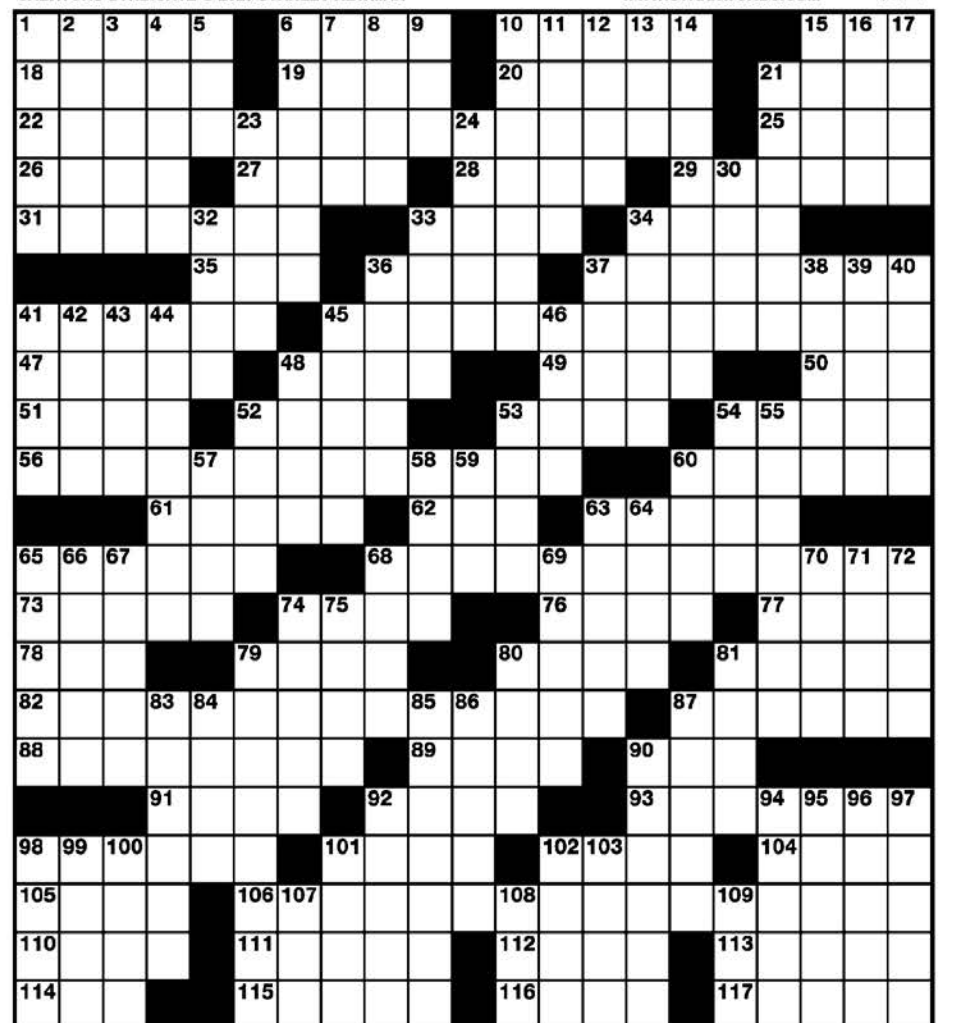
POPULAR PAIRS: With the same starters
 by Mark McClain

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 | 76 Brownish purple | 10 Anne of Green Gables town |
| 1 Spot for a carnation | 77 Avoid doing | 11 "Father of Science Fiction" |
| 6 Soapy residue | 78 Far from cordial | 12 Ship of Greek myth |
| 10 Sailor's "Stop!" | 79 She, in San Juan | 13 Compass reading |
| 15 "___ asked you?" | 80 Srta., in France | 14 Deep-fried bit brand |
| 18 Manage to avoid | 81 Put (together) | 15 Took one's turn |
| 19 Start to drag | 82 Amazingly intense | 16 Have no use for |
| 20 Vice ___ (conversely) | 87 Needs renewing | 17 Distinctive scent |
| 21 Heavy metal | 88 Export of 86 Down | 21 Blow a fuse |
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| 26 You, of old | 91 Munich mister | 30 Food thickener |
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MORE OF STAN'S CROSSWORDS! Play FREE from Stan's archives of Easy, Hard and Sunday puzzles at: tinyurl.com/stan-newman-crosswords



California weighs proposal that would set aside \$300 million for low-income schools

The California Legislature is weighing a proposal by Gov. Gavin Newsom to set aside \$300 million for low-income schools, but some education advocates say it won't do enough to improve educational outcomes for Black students.

Assemblymember Akilah Weber, a Democrat from San Diego, introduced a bill last year aimed at ensuring more education money reaches Black students. But she pulled the bill after conversations with Newsom, citing concerns that it could violate the state or U.S. Constitution because it focused on one specific racial group, even though it didn't specifically use the word "Black."

Weber and other members of the Legislative Black Caucus worked with the Democratic governor to come up with the new approach that instead targets money to schools with a high concentration of students who qualify for free lunch under a federal program.

Weber called the proposal and guidelines to hold districts accountable for using money to improve student outcomes "game changers for closing persistent opportunity and outcome gaps in California."

"This proposal is exactly what our state needs to work toward repairing the longstanding harms of inequity in education and ensuring our schools are more fair and accessible for all students," she said in a statement.

While Newsom's proposal is racking up support from Weber and other lawmakers, some advocates who backed Weber's bill from last year say California must come up with a more targeted solution to benefit Black students. They are concerned about the stark disparity between Black students' academic performance and that of their peers. The Black in School Coalition, which backed Weber's prior bill, led a rally of thousands of advocates and students outside the Capitol on Tuesday following a legislative hearing on the new proposal.

The coalition wants the \$300 million to be targeted at schools with a large portion of students who perform poorly on at least two of the following indicators outlined by the Department of Education: academic performance, chronic absenteeism, college or career advancement, English learner progress, graduation rate, and suspension rate.

"For 10 years, we've had a

funding formula that has done nothing in particular for Black students, and it's time for that to change," said Margaret Fortune, CEO for a network of charter schools aimed at closing the achievement gap for Black students.

Fortune was referring to what is known as the Local Control Funding Formula, which dictates how school districts are funded.

The educator previously brought the issue to the state's Reparations Task Force, a group studying how the state can atone for the legacy of slavery and policies that discriminated against African Americans.

About 70% of Black students failed to meet state testing standards for English Language Arts in the 2021-2022 school year, compared with less than 40% of white students, according to state data. About 84% of Black students didn't meet math standards, compared with about 50% of white students.

Under Newsom's proposal, the money would go to elementary and middle schools with at least 90% of students qualifying for free meals under the program and high schools with at least 85% of students qualifying for free meals.

"Governor Newsom's proposal is a monumental shift in California's longstanding fight to close persistent achievement gaps and deliver on the promise of an equitable education for all students," Izzy Gardon, a spokesperson from Newsom, said in a statement.

Students from majority-Black districts would also benefit from the accountability portion of Newsom's budget proposal, which requires districts to implement strategies to improve academic outcomes, Gardon said.

The proposal as it was originally written gives wide latitude to schools on how to spend the money but would require them to report how funds are used to the state.

Less than 26% of Black students attend a school that would qualify under the plan, CalMatters reported.

Tinsae Birhanu, a student and health ambassador for the Black Students of California United, said the state needs to do more to improve outcomes for Black students, including making sure the makeup of teachers is more diverse and combating high expulsion rates.

"Our education system should be nothing less than what we

deserve," Birhanu said.

At the budget subcommittee hearing, Assemblymember Kevin McCarty, a Democrat representing Sacramento suburbs and the committee's chair, expressed his support for the proposal but noted that increasing funding for schools isn't a cure-all for ending academic disparities.

"So much of these are outside of the classroom," he said.

He noted other factors that contribute to poorer performance from students, including coming from a family that has experienced intergenerational poverty and is living in an under-resourced neighborhood.

Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi, a Democrat who represents the Los Angeles

suburbs, questioned the Newsom administration during the hearing about how funding would be used to specifically benefit students and improve their performance in schools, such as by hiring literary coaches or tutors.

Representatives from Newsom's administration didn't have clear answers. Department of Finance officials said the proposal aims to ensure transparency in how the money is spent.

Newsom's administration released its initial budget proposal in January. As the administration continues to testify before budget subcommittees, they can make changes to the language in the budget. They have until May to continue making changes, and the Legislature must pass a budget by June 15.

California getting \$175.8M in settlement with e-cigarette maker Juul

By City News Service

LOS ANGELES — Juul Labs Inc. will pay \$462 million to settle multiple lawsuits, including one filed by Los Angeles County, accusing the maker of flavored-nicotine products of violating state laws by targeting young people through its advertising and promotional campaigns, officials announced Wednesday.

California will receive \$175.8 million of the total amount, the highest amount of any state settlement yet reached with Juul, according to California Attorney General Rob Bonta.

The money will help fund research, education and enforcement efforts related to e-cigarettes. Juul will also be prohibited from targeting youth in its advertising and promotion under the terms of the deal, Bonta said.

"Today is another step forward in our fight to protect our kids from getting hooked on vaping and nicotine," Bonta said in a statement.

"By using advertising and marketing strategies to lure young people to its products, Juul put the health and safety of its vulnerable targets and the California public at risk. Today's settlement holds Juul accountable for its actions and puts a stop to its harmful business practices. What's more, it will bring millions in funding to help California abate and prevent the harms of e-cigarettes and nicotine addiction."

"As a father and as our state's top law enforcement official, I remain committed to protecting the health, quality of life, and future of California's children," the AG said.

In November 2019, the California Department of Justice, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office and the county of

Los Angeles sued Juul for allegedly violating multiple California laws and regulations, including those on privacy rights of minors, unfair competition and false advertising.

Austin Finan, a spokesman for Washington D.C.-based Juul, said that with the settlement, "we are nearing total resolution of the company's historical legal challenges and securing certainty for our future."

Finan added that underage use of Juul products has declined by 95% since 2019, citing the National Youth Tobacco Survey.

According to Bonta, researchers looking into Juul's sales between 2017 and 2019, during the height of its popularity surge, found that the company's growth was primarily driven by users under the age of 21.

"The company opted to illegally

market its products to our children and now Juul is going to pay a steep price for its mistakes," Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascon said in a statement.

"Educating our youth about the harms of these types of products is essential to improving our communities," he said. "We hope that Juul and other companies understand that risking the health of our youth will not be tolerated and we will ensure that they follow the law."

The DOJ said the \$175.8 million received by California will be used to support, among other things, programs to educate youth about the harms of vaping, and to help them quit its use, enforcement work carried out to implement California's ban on sale of flavored nicotine products, and research into the health effects of the use of

e-cigarettes by youth.

Under the terms of the multistate settlement, Juul will also be required to stop targeting youth in its advertising and promotion, ensure retailers are complying with restrictions on selling to minors, establish minimum price requirements, and make its internal documents accessible to the public.

The settlement -- which must be approved by a Superior Court judge in Alameda County -- was negotiated by California, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Mexico and New York.



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Hispanics face unique challenges with MS

By CNN Health

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is on the rise in the Hispanic community and racial disparities in healthcare can add obstacles when People of Color are seeking treatment. Taking advantage of local and national resources and learning as much as possible about the disease can often improve the quality of life for people with MS and their families.

For many Hispanic people with MS, language hurdles, socioeconomic barriers, and limited access to MS specialists and other medical services make it difficult to receive optimal care. Pursuing a proactive approach can help you increase the odds of a healthier long-term outcome.

1. Understand how MS affects Hispanic people

MS is an autoimmune disease that affects the brain and nervous system, often leading to weakness, coordination difficulties, vision problems, and many other health complications. Your experience with MS can vary based on several factors, including your racial and ethnic background.

However, Hispanic people with MS have been poorly represented in clinical trials, which means less is known about disease progression and the effectiveness of various MS treatments in this population, according to the MS Minority Research Engagement Partnership Network.

There is some existing research, although more is needed and studies are ongoing to further understand how MS affects the Hispanic community. At this point, research suggests

that even though Hispanic people may be less likely than white people to develop MS, they are at higher risk to be diagnosed at a younger age and have a higher risk for disability earlier in the course of the disease.

Understanding the specific risks facing Hispanic people with MS can help you be prepared to manage your health.

2. Turn to national and local resources

Recognizing the healthcare barriers and underrepresentation in clinical trials facing Hispanic and Latino people, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society has committed to providing more resources, support, and information specifically for MS patients and families in those groups.

The organization maintains a vast, updated list of local

support groups organized by zip code. Support groups, some of which are conducted in Spanish, can provide emotional and psychological help, as well as offer a place where helpful medical and lifestyle tips can be exchanged. Many social media platforms are also good places to find online support groups and resources.

3. Control your blood pressure

High blood pressure, also referred to as hypertension, is much more common in people with MS than it is in the general population. And having high blood pressure can exacerbate MS symptoms and accelerate disease progression.

A 2021 study of hypertension severity in Hispanic/Latinx people with MS further suggests that high blood pressure is too often underdiagnosed in

these populations and that it is associated with severe disability affecting walking and gait. While there has been no study to show that treating high blood pressure may help prevent disability and slow disease progression, it's a good idea for your overall health to control your blood pressure through a combination of exercise, diet, and other lifestyle adjustments, as well as medications if necessary.

4. Find doctors who understand you

Community hospitals and public health agencies sometimes have social workers on staff to help individuals – particularly those who may face language or socioeconomic barriers to optimal care – navigate the healthcare system and find reliable doctors and other professionals.

Turn to social workers or MS navigators to help you find

culturally competent doctors, physical therapists, and other healthcare professionals who have received training in the nuances of how one's racial and cultural background impacts their health and their experience in the healthcare system.

5. Turn to family and friends

Although it's normal to have different emotions about the need for help, those close to you want to provide support, and relatives and friends play important roles in your MS journey. Be vocal about your needs and what makes you feel more comfortable when asking for help.

Living with MS will require you to make adjustments, but by taking a proactive approach to care, following your doctor's recommendations, and creating a support system, you can choose to live an empowered life.

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Paging Dr. Frischer...

By Dr. Alan Frischer

Recently, my daughter introduced me to Wordscapes, one of the many



free addictive word games that we can play on our phones. The goal is to unscramble letters and

fill in a crossword-type puzzle, and apparently, there are enough levels to keep a player occupied for years. I am now in a tight competition with my wife, daughter, and sister. We convince ourselves that these time-consuming games are good for our brains. Are they?

Word games are nothing new. Crossword puzzles have been popular since the 1920s, and Scrabble since the 1950s. Our phones, however, have

given us a very convenient way to access them, anytime and anywhere. They are fun, challenging, and actively engage us.

So, what do scientific studies say about word games and brain health?

We have learned that exercising our brain is as important as exercising the rest of our body, and that regular brain exercise has indeed been shown to maintain cognitive function, grammatical reasoning, and working memory (also known as short-term memory) as we age.

They also improve how long we can keep our focus on a task. Those who spend an hour a day on mentally challenging activities maintain their ability to

effectively reason or think longer than those who do not. However, studies have not specifically shown that these activities reduce the risk of developing dementia. More research is necessary to better define the benefits.

Of course, studies have long shown that physical activity is incredibly beneficial for our brain. Physical exercise improves cognition, memory, and sleep, as well as reducing anxiety and depression. It reduces the risk of dementia as well as stroke and heart attack.

My conclusion is that, unless you do it while walking or driving, there is no downside to playing these word games, and it sure is a great way to pass the time while waiting in line. If you enjoy them, by all means continue. It provides that satisfied feeling when a task is completed, which makes us want to continue playing. Whether or not studies have

conclusively proven short- as well as long-term benefits, it makes sense that actively using our brain is better than passively staring at a screen.

And, if these word games are combined with interaction with others, such as a game of Scrabble or conferring over a tough task, then we add the benefits that socializing brings.

Research has clearly demonstrated that when we take care of ourselves physically and mentally, our general health improves. I urge you, as always, to make physical exercise a habit, to eat a healthful diet, to maintain your mental health, and yes: to exercise your brain.

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.

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