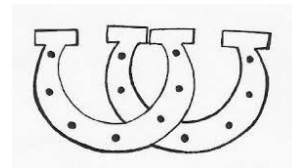




The Woodrow Wilson High School HITCHING POST

April 22, 2022



MASK MANDATE LIFTED!

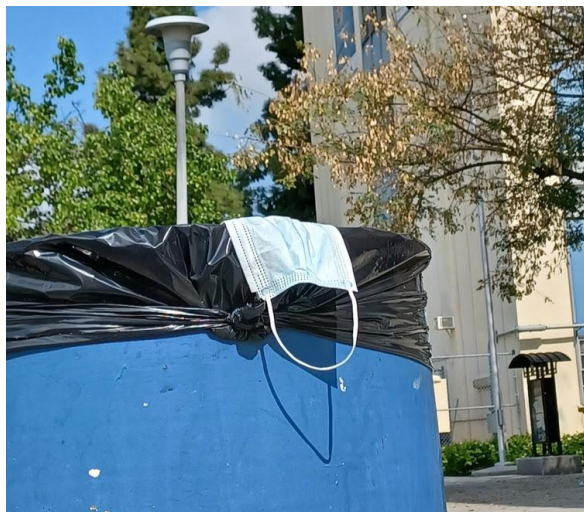


Photo by Christina Garcia, Aizan Aguinaga, Kathy Zhang

By Rafael Olivares

As of March 23, 2022, Woodrow Wilson Senior High has made wearing masks optional for all staff, faculty, and students, both indoors and outdoors. While the pandemic is still going on, fortunately new COVID-19 cases have dramatically decreased, making these new guidelines possible. This is a major turnover for everyone, considering students have been wearing masks since March 2020 until now. Students, faculty, and staff... **[CONTINUES, A6]**

VERBERA AT THE HELM

Wilson Welcomes New Principal



Photo by Nichole Espinoza

by Aizan Aguinaga

At the end of December 2021, Principal Gilberto Martinez announced that he would be moving from his role as principal of Wilson High School in order to become the Administrator of Operations for the entire Eastern Division of the Los Angeles Unified School District. As such, a new leader has come to take up the mantle as principal, and his name is Dr. Gregorio Verbera. **[CONTINUES, A5]**

INSIDE

LA Street Racing.....B2
The Metaverse.....A4
Boys' Soccer Playoffs.....C1
Rams Win Super Bowl.....C1
Winter Olympics 2022.....C2

...And Much More!

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Christina Garcia & Aizan Aguinaga

Managing Editor

Nichole Espinoza

Copy Editor

Yin Qiao "Kathy" Zhang

Produced by:

Mr. Halle's Journalism Class

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From The Leadership Team:

“I’d like to thank both our staff and contributors for taking the time to help put together our newest edition of the school newspaper again this year. Thank you to our readers as well for making it all worth it.”

-Christina Garcia, Co-Editor-in-Chief

“It has been a while since our journalism class has published a paper and this has been the first paper we published in 2022. A lot of people have put so much effort into bringing you this paper, from the students who did the research in order to bring you the most up to date news, to our teacher Mr. Halle who helped us revise our articles to make the best paper we can make. Now, a lot of you juniors and underclassmen are moving up grade levels to be given a different title, while us seniors are leaving to move on in the world. Many of us choose different types of paths- some choose colleges within the city, while others are deciding to leave Los Angeles, and others just plan to go directly to work. As long as we can reach a peace of mind for us to be happy with our decisions, then ‘you do you.’ But please, remember that you are not alone and if you ever feel stressed or need help, just turn to someone who cares.”

-Aizan Aguinaga, Co-Editor-in-Chief

“Hello everyone, hope all is well with each and every one of you. We are happy to present our first newspaper made in 2022. We hope through reading it you will be more informed and educated within our community. A special thanks to Mr. Halle and the class for their hard work. There is more to come, so stay tuned for that!”

-Yin Qiao “Kathy” Zhang, Copy Editor

From The Producer:

“Thank you for opening another electrifying issue of ‘The Hitching Post.’ I am extremely proud of the insightful articles these young journalists worked very hard to develop, and I hope you will feel the same! Any opinions found within belong solely to the individual author and do not necessarily reflect the views of any affiliated institutions, students, or employees. Please direct any questions or concerns about this newspaper to **David.Halle@LAUSD.net**. Happy reading!”

-Mr. Halle, Journalism Teacher

CONTENTS

Front Section.....	A
Local News.....	B
Sports.....	C

Biden Delivers 1st “State of the Union”

First Year in Office Contained High Highs and Low Lows



Photo: NYPost.com

By Ariana Uribe

On March 1, 2022, in the U.S. capitol building, United States President Joe Biden delivered a “State of the Union Address” that touched upon many subjects across his hectic first year in office and made some predictions for the years to come. Not only did Biden take office during a once-in-a-generation worldwide pandemic, but he has also made history by making Kamala Harris the first biracial and female Vice President. As Mr. Biden is the oldest person to ever take office as president, he always seems to have something up his sleeve, whether good or bad. From expanding health care, to vaccinating over 200 million Americans, to ending the Afghanistan War, to responding to the Russia/Ukraine crisis, there has been no shortage of opportunities for him to show America and the world what kind of leader he really is. So, the time has come to ask the question: how good a job has Biden truly done in his first year as president?

As COVID cases fluctuated, Biden’s team created the new website “Covidtests.gov” that allows all Americans to order free at-home COVID tests. Not only did Biden make COVID tests more accessible to all households, he also issued a vaccine mandate for all healthcare workers that want to accept government health insurance, however this has caused an issue with many employees not wanting to receive the vaccine. Many people lost their jobs over refusing to get the vaccine which made unemployment numbers go up. One Wilson High School teacher who did vote for Biden, not because he wanted to but because he wanted “anyone but Trump” in office, said, “a lot of things are out of his control, like the pandemic,” which is very much true. No matter how many times Biden says to stay home, to wear a mask, or to get vaccinated, there will always be people who do not comply with his voice. Is it because he is weak? This Wilson teacher also added that, “Biden is too old for the job,” which a lot of people would not disagree with considering that he is now 79 years-old. Or maybe many people disobey his recommendations because they simply do not want to listen to orders from anyone outside their political party? Earlier this year, Biden lifted the mask mandate for fully-vaccinated people in most places (they are still required for things like public transportation and hospitals) and many states, like California, have now made masks optional for the unvaccinated too. Only time will tell whether this decision was too soon or just right.

Though tensions were growing for months, full-on war between Russia and Ukraine broke out just days before Biden’s “State of the Union” speech. He addressed the topic with, “we’re cutting off Russia’s largest banks in the international financial system, preventing Russia’s central bank from defending the Russia Ruble, making Putin’s 630-billion-dollar war fund worthless.” Biden not only cut off the bank funds to Russia, but is also no longer allowing flights from Russia to the U.S. Biden has said that he will not attack Russia with soldiers because that would create “World War III,” but he is attacking Russia’s wealth through these new rules called “sanctions,” which make it so almost no countries can trade with Russia anymore. Since so many countries, including the USA, are used to relying on Russian business, this has messed up the whole world economy... [CONTINUES, A7]

EDITORIAL

Beginning of a New Era: “THE METAVERSE”

By Noah Wright

The first “metaverse” was introduced in 1992 by Neal Stephenson as an idea about virtual reality in 3D. Mark Zuckerberg, the creator of the massive social media platform “Facebook” and owner of the popular app “Instagram,” decided to make his own take on the idea by updating Stephenson’s idea by about 30 years. On the 29th of October, 2021, Mark Zuckerberg unveiled “The Metaverse,” saying that this “will reshape our lives.” Zuckerberg was apparently so confident in this new venture, that he changed the entire name of his company from “Facebook, Inc” to “Meta Platforms, Inc,” or more casually, simply “Meta.”



Photo: CNET.com

The Metaverse is a fictional world that users can log-in to through a virtual reality (VR) headset and can be used to socialize with other people throughout the world. It is meant to be a more futuristic and immersive way to communicate than anything else on the internet. People can find more ways to connect in a world that everyone dreams about- a world of escape. Are we ready for this next big step in humanity? Is the world ready for NFT’s, crypto-currency, and augmented reality? Are we leaving behind a world that will cease to exist if we keep this up? Escaping the world we live in and going into someone’s “La La Land” seems to be the goal of many people these days, but what makes someone want to escape?

In an article titled “The Impact COVID-19 Had On The Entertainment Industry In 2020” by Forbes Magazine, the author says that during the pandemic, “digital media had accounted for over three-quarters of total theatrical, home/mobile entertainment revenue. There are now 1.1 billion online video subscribers worldwide- up 26% from 2019.” There is historical precedent for an increase of escapism during dark times for our country. The Great Depression of 1929-1939 was a “golden age” for Hollywood, as the film industry started gaining more attraction for its films. Although money was scarce, many used what little they had to see how the film companies created illusion on the screens, making stories and tales come to life. An article by Digital History called “The Movies Meet The Great Depression” states that, “at the movies, they could forget their troubles for a couple of hours. Depression films, one left-wing critic maintained, were a modern form of bread and circuses, distracting Americans from their problems, reinforcing older values, and dampening political radicalism. Yet movies were more than mere escapism.”

With the impact of COVID-19, people have gained a fear of the world that they once used to know, but with the help of the Metaverse, they can go back into a world where they feel safe, distract themselves, and feel happy once again. A German newspaper titled “Süddeutsche Zeitung” wrote the article “Microsoft’s billion-dollar risk,” discussing how the company Microsoft is wanting to purchase the platform used to create the Metaverse so they can make something similar of their own. They talk about big corporations are using VR worlds to lure “people into golden cages.” What if they are right? These companies all want to move to the next big thing. Technology is changing, and we are going too fast to where we cannot enjoy the true meaning of life. We want to discover so much and build an empire with dreams and imagination, but we all need to be realistic for one second in our lives. If we continue to grow the Metaverse, we might not be able to stop it. We may soon reach a point where we will not be able to tell what is real or not, and we will not wake back up. Face-to-face interaction will be no more. Are we slowly going into the stage of no actual human contact? If we’re not careful, we might all lose ourselves in a golden cage.

Verbera Leads Wilson Into New Chapter



Photo: IBWilsonMules.com

[From “VERBERA,” A1] Dr. Verbera graduated college at the age of 21 and spent 16 years of his life working at various schools to become a principal. Dr. Verbera is a father of two children, a two-year-old named Neftali and a four-month-old baby named Samuel.

Dr. Verbera was a few years old when he immigrated to the United States with his parents from Agulta, Mexico, where his parents raised him, his two sisters, and his brother. They chose to move to California to allow their children to gain a proper education in the United States, making the big sacrifice of leaving their family home. They began preparations when his father moved to East Los Angeles in 1986 to work as a maintenance worker at the White Memorial Hospital, where he would send money back to his family so that they could save enough money to immigrate as well. His mother also worked to provide for the family by becoming a seamstress. After a year, the family was finally reunited in the U.S. when they all moved to the neighborhood of South Gate, Los Angeles, living in a small one-bedroom apartment, which they were able to rent out thanks to some family members who already lived in L.A. Sadly, it was not a

perfect life since not everyone in the neighborhood was accepting of those who were immigrants, with Verbera reflecting, “I think that as immigrants we always faced some discrimination. Not speaking English sets you apart. In school, I remember being told that I shouldn’t speak Spanish, so I was silent for many years, never asked questions in class, much less volunteered answers. I sat by myself for years, never even attempted to make friends, because I felt I was different and that I didn’t belong. My siblings and parents faced similar experiences.”

Everyone has a story of where they were before they reached a certain point in their life, whether it is stepping into the life of adulthood or to onto your final chapter. It took Dr. Verbera sixteen years to reach where he is now, and his life journey shows no sign of slowing down. It began when he graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where he later received his Doctor of Education degree in “Educational Leadership and Policies.” He spent a few years as a classroom teacher at Hosler Middle School before becoming a coordinator (a teacher who works outside of classrooms) for 5 years at Gage Middle School. After that, he worked as an instruction specialist (a person who directs better ways to instruct in a classroom setting) at Lincoln High School, where he would soon become the assistant principal. He finally became a principal in his own right at Griffith STEAM Magnet Middle School, which would lead him to finally becoming the principal of Woodrow Wilson High School in 2022.

In describing his experience at Wilson so far, he remarked, “It’s been really great... the people here, staff and students, they’ve been very warm and very welcoming... which is really important coming in brand new because there’s always nerves involved, right? Let’s say, even though you’ve been in school forever, you’re still coming in and the experiences are new, and that creates a certain feeling of maybe a little bit of anxiety or nervousness, you know? I’ve also experienced that... What makes you kind of get past that is the fact that people are welcoming. People are attentive. People take a genuine interest in getting to know you. And that’s something that I try to do with students as well... because I realized that students are... coming in [to] a new environment, a huge school, lots of people, lots of programs- very complex! So, the more that we try to kind of connect with people and be supportive of people the better. And that’s what people here have been for me. So, so far it’s been great. I love the place. The school has a lot of history, a lot of tradition, a lot of people that want to see it be more successful. And that’s very, very promising for me as a principal to know that there’s such... love for this school.”

Dr. Verbera is a happily married man with a wife who also works in the education field and two young children who he focuses on when he is not working. When asked about what he likes to do in his free time, Verbera remarked, “I have two kids. One of them, he is three-years old. The other one is four-months... [CONTINUES, A8]

Mask Mandate Waves Goodbye



Photo: UofMHealth.org

[From “MASKS,” A1] ...were given the option to wear a mask or not while outdoors on February 22, 2022, yet many chose to remain masked. This mentality seems to have not changed very much, with the vast majority of the student body still choosing to remain masked in their classes even with the relaxed restrictions. A possible reason for this could be to maintain their own safety precautions, while another reason might simply be a sort of “herd mentality” among student culture. With the mask-wearing mandate being with us for so long, it is also possible some students stay masked just because they are used to it. There could be many other personal reasons as well for why individual students want to stay masked.

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) required all students ages 12 and over to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by January 10, 2022. For student-athletes, their first dose vaccination deadline was on October 3, 2021 and their second dose was no later than October 31, 2021. Beginning on March 12, 2022, regardless of vaccination status, all students, staff, and faculty were no longer obliged to wear a mask indoors at most schools and childcare facilities. However, Wilson still had to wait for approval from LAUSD and the United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) union before officially allowing removal of face masks indoors on campus. With the mask mandate being lifted and COVID cases declining nationwide, this could also be an encouraging sign that the worldwide pandemic might finally be on its last legs. Although the Daily Pass screenings and COVID-19 testing every Friday will still continue at Wilson, many in the community are now expressing hope that, soon one day, everything will be able to go back to the way things were before COVID-19.

While COVID-19 was a concern as early as 2019, most did not realize how serious it was until March 13, 2020, when essentially all public schools across the USA closed their doors to students and began transitioning to online-only classes. With all the obstacles COVID-19 brought, Wilson responded in turn by forming a “COVID Task Force,” led by one of Wilson’s assistant principals, Mr. Vargas. Formally known as the “COVID-19 Compliance Task Force,” this 7-member team keeps a close eye on the school to make sure that all the health and safety guidelines are adhered to. The decision-making process doesn’t take one person, but the whole group in order to make sure they are properly enforced. Considering Mr. Vargas is a new arrival to Wilson, he felt that heading the task force endeared him to become “closer with the students and staff because I wanted to ensure [their] safety... we are working together in order to resist adversity within our community and stick together.” One of the main challenges faced during COVID-19 was the vaccination mandate. According to Mr. Vargas, thanks to all the students and staff’s strong efforts, “before anyone knew it, Wilson became one of the highest-ranking schools in vaccination rates in the entire district.”

According to Mr. Vargas, a return to remote learning last winter did come to mind due to COVID-19 cases rising nationwide. LAUSD expanded their remote learning program, called “City of Angels,” making it an option for all students regardless of vaccination status. That way, any individuals who feel unsafe on campus are still more than welcome to learn remotely. It has been quite a rollercoaster going through this pandemic, but fortunately, Wilson has done a great job in maintaining the guidelines set by the district as well as its own health and safety protocols. Under the leadership of the COVID Task Force, there is little doubt that Wilson will persist in fighting obstacles and enforcing all rules and guidelines, so that the entire community will remain safe and healthy.

Biden's First Year in Review

[From "BIDEN," A3] ...causing food shortages and record-high gas prices. A Wilson teacher that did not vote for Biden had this to said about his decision: "I believe our country is independent." That teacher elaborated that the USA should not rely on others for help, or be scared when two other areas of the world go into a conflict. That Wilson teacher also said that Biden's "family is corrupt and his parenting is a reflection to our country." Some will say that his response could have been better or worse, but this is another example where history will ultimately be the judge.

Of course, we all remember how Biden dealt with the Taliban last August, which did not end in a good way. The Taliban were a ruthless terrorist group that ruled the country of Afghanistan and gave shelter to Osama Bin Laden, the mastermind of 9/11. The U.S. went to war with the Taliban right after September 11th, 2001 and were still fighting them in 2021, making it the longest war in American history. Even though the Taliban still were not defeated, Biden ordered all the military to pull-out, abandoning thousands of Afghan people who had been on our side, knowing they would most likely be killed. So, in many ways, you could say that America lost the Afghanistan War under Biden's watch. Though many will say that giving up the war was the right call, it is hard to see this as a good mark on his record.

Biden is a controversial president in many eyes, but whether you voted for or against him, the future of our country is now in his hands. With many people saying that he is too old for office or that he is just not capable of running the whole show, his actions and words will ultimately prove one way or the other. Before Biden stepped into office he said, "our nation is shaped by the constant battle between our better angels and our darkest impulses. It is time for our better angels to prevail," but has he really lived up to those words? His first year in office has had several big successes, but plenty of dark moments too. It is too soon to say whether the decisions he has made so far will cause him to be remembered as one of our worst presidents or as one of the greatest.



Photo: NewYorkTimes.com

Biden Tours The National Institute of Health



Photo: MilitaryTimes.com

U.S. Troops Withdraw from Afghanistan



Photo: NewYorkTimes.com

Pro-Ukrainian Protest at Russian Embassy

Verbera's Long Career Prepared Him For Current Position



Photo by Christina Garcia

[From “**VERBERA,**” A5] ...old. I really kind of try to dedicate all my time to them outside of work.” When he does manage to find that elusive free time, however, Dr. Verbera enjoys watching films and reading literature, but does not have favorites. It is an interesting trait about him that he does not choose “favorites,” as he stated, “It's like when people ask you what's your favorite food? I enjoy so many of them. I shouldn't even have to compare them... Maybe what I really want to eat right now is pizza, it's not necessarily my favorite but it's just something I like today, and that's what I'm craving. And the same thing with favorite authors, movies, music, or song[s]... You have a spectrum of tastes... [and] that's kind of where you fall.”

With his experience as a teacher, he truly understands the struggles of making a lesson plan for students and has described it as making a film; while we see the end results of the hard work that many people have done for months, sometimes years, we forget that these teachers have spent so much time making these lessons that can be used for years with just small adjustments to them.

Everyone has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and Dr. Verbera is no exception, since everyone in his family has had a positive COVID case. Luckily, most of them were totally asymptomatic, but this experience has made him more empathetic towards people who have been affected by the virus. Sadly, he has also known individuals who have died from COVID, which will be remembered in memory like many others during our times of grief. As principal of Griffith Middle School when COVID broke out, Verbera was faced with the challenge of turning a brick-and-mortar school into a digital one, even though not everyone could easily access the online resources. Dr. Verbera's advice now that the pandemic seems to be winding down is “to be patient with yourself, give yourself the time and the space to transition back. It had a different impact on all of us. Some of us barely felt it while others really, really felt it. So, give yourself the grace to be able to transition back [and] also recognize that what we missed the most during the pandemic was being connected with other people... We kind of got used to being disconnected. Now, we have to intentionally make sure that we try to connect with others [while] we're in school. You have a great opportunity to connect with people, to connect with groups... to connect with staff members here. And if you need help, need support, [then] reach out. Start with your teachers, we have counselors, we have administrators, we have a whole lot of people here that can help you through these things... The other thing that I'm noticing is that a lot of students [are] not sharing with their parents or their family members what they're feeling, what they're going through... So look out, connect with those people... in your personal lives, in your home, your family members, all those things I think are really important. Give yourself the patience and the space to get better, to transition back ‘in-person,’ to transition back to society, connect with people intentionally, ask for help, set goals for yourself. Have a sense of direction, a sense of purpose in your life, and where you want to be. Not just in a few months, but in a couple of years, and go for it. Push yourself outside of your comfort zone. Demand... the most of yourself, expect the most of yourself, and really go for it.”

While it may be just the beginning of Principal Verbera's time in office, he has already shown that he has plenty of experience, a great temperament, and is ready and able to shoulder the heavy responsibilities that comes with leading a school as large as Wilson. Hopefully, all the students and staff can come together to help him make Wilson a school that is better than anyone can dream.

Local News

EL SERENO MAN SLAIN BY POLICE

Community Protests Organized as Parents Seek “Justice For Chavez”

By Yin Qiao “Kathy” Zhang

Leonel Chavez, a 24-year-old male, was shot multiple times in his hometown of El Sereno, California, on September 28, 2021. This incident started with a car collision at the corner of Medfort Street and North Indiana Street, which is near the USC Keck School of Medicine. As usual, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) responded. When they arrived to the scene at 3:15pm, witnesses said that Chavez was complying with the officers. They also said that he seemed a bit intoxicated because he was struggling to get out of the car and was acting “a little sloppy.” Apparently, Chavez’s erratic movements caused an officer from CHP to tase Chavez out of fear that he might have a gun. Following the tase, the officers’ body cams showed Chavez acting agitated before he lunged towards the police. This... [CONTINUES, B4]



Photo: FightBackNews.com



Photo by Christina Garcia

WHS Hosts Blood Drive

By Christina Garcia

On March 7th, 2022, Woodrow Wilson Senior High School hosted a blood drive with UCLA to give students the amazing opportunity of donating blood to help people in need. Most students either made appointments or came on the day of as “walk-ins.” This blood drive helped to not only boost school spirit, but also the pride of our students both individually and as a community. Thanks to the leadership team, it was a very successful and well-organized blood drive for many to remember as well as appreciate. Although not everyone who went was able to donate or contribute a full pint of blood, the effort is always appreciated.

The overall outcome of the blood drive was a success both from the views of the participants and leadership staff. Leadership student and member of the publicity committee, Endre Cattouse, revealed, “The outcome of the blood drive went well because we had many people who didn’t have an appointment come and donate blood... I feel like the best part of this event was just being able to do it... not every school gets opportunities like this, and we were fortunate to.”

Endre has the... [CONTINUES, B5]

LA Cracks Down on Street Racing

Inside the High-Octane World of “Car Meets”

By Nathan Castaneda

On Sunday, March 6, car enthusiasts took the spotlight on Mansville Street in the City of Compton, California. Numerous stunt drivers, including Hoodlumz, Block Boyz, and Wedaones, tore up the asphalt in their BMWs and Dodge Challengers. The results of the street takeover were countless loops of black skid marks and shredded tire treads left at the intersection. Many fans came out to enjoy the event, saying it is a great way to meet new people and show off their skills behind the wheel. However, others described it as a dangerous activity with high chances of serious injury or total damage to their cars. Street takeovers, also known as “car meets,” are a very common activity in Southern California that generates a lot of controversy because of the different opinions about it.

“BRZ” is a driver from the club “Block Boyz,” a group known to put on a show for everyone. He says that the Car Meets are all about community. “We’re just here to have fun and we’re here to have a good time,” said BRZ, “yeah, we have our own club, and we’re here to make a name for ourselves, but we’re not trying to bother anyone else, this is just what we do for fun. Just how you have your hobbies. This is our hobby.”

One driver described it as “dopamine running through your brain that makes you forget about everything.” BRZ commented, “Once the smoke clears out, then that’s when that whole rush of chemicals goes to your brain, it’s just a feel-good moment.”

BRZ also understands the dangers, but he says that the observers who are willing to come out are aware they do so at their own risk. “Yeah, people get hurt, so you know the risk that you’re running when you’re coming out,” he continued, “the only difference is we’re not trying to go out there and hurt anyone, we’re just here to have fun and we’re here to have a good time.”

California Highway Patrol (CHP) officials say they could soon start cracking down on illegal racing and street takeovers as the City Council is expected to approve a new ordinance that would make it illegal to participate at such events. California Governor Gavin Newsom recently signed a bill to suspend licenses of people convicted of being part of illegal car events. That law goes into effect in 2025. At the moment, CHP is currently deploying additional officers to combat these issues and they are now utilizing their “Street Racing Task Force” in conjunction with surrounding law enforcement agencies.

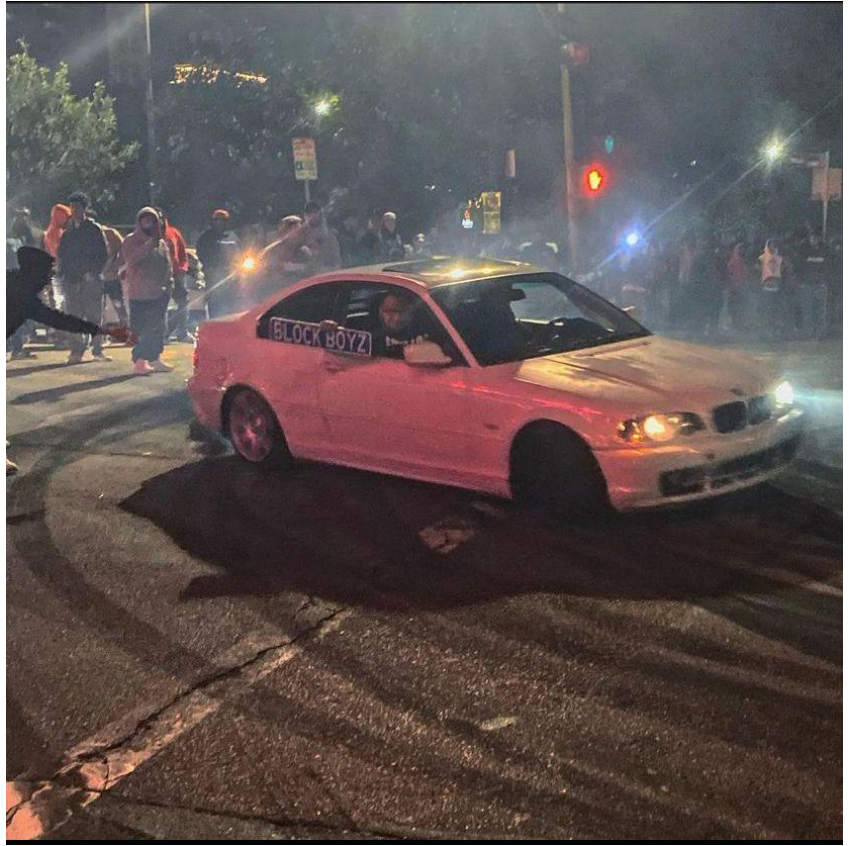


Photo by Nathan Castaneda

LA to Receive \$53 Million for Youth Job Program



Photo: LATimes.com

LA Mayor Eric Garcetti Discusses the Program at the Diego Rivera Performing Arts Community School

By Cesar Olmedo

Los Angeles is set to receive \$53 million dollars for youth employment and jobs thanks to Governor Newsom's 2021 state budget plan, this Spring. California's chief service officer, Josh Fryday, announced in a virtual press conference with Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti (along with other big city mayors of the state of California) the launch of the \$185 million dollar "#CaliforniaForAll Youth Job Corps Program" for underserved youth, in which \$53 million dollars will be included specifically for Los Angeles.

This program aims to provide employment opportunities for underprivileged youth, low-income, unemployed individuals, young adults transitioning out of foster care, and those who were previously incarcerated, as well as to those who are engaged with mental health or substance abuse systems. The program

will provide employment opportunities for Californians from ages 16-30 years old, according to officials.

Those who participate in the program will be involved in tasks focused on dealing with COVID-19 recovery, food insecurity, climate change, poverty, homelessness, and more of California's biggest issues. Jobs in Los Angeles will include the preservation of the Los Angeles River, tutoring for students whose learning was affected by the pandemic, assistance at food banks, and more. Those who participate will also receive a minimum wage of \$15 per hour, but cities will be able to increase the wage to meet the needs of their communities. Some are cities currently paying as much as \$27 per hour.

The first phase of the program will provide \$150 million to the 13 largest cities in California. The population of the city will determine the amount of funding they will receive. Los Angeles, California's biggest city, will receive \$53 million. The second phase will provide \$35 million to smaller counties and cities, which will be chosen through a competitive process. Other cities that are expected to receive funding are San Francisco, Santa Ana, Riverside, Stockton, San Diego, Fresno, Oakland, Bakersfield, Anaheim, San Jose, and Sacramento. This second phase of funding will take place some time in March. The cities who receive funding will also be able to create new, or expand existing, youth workforce programs that encourage underserved youth to work in the public sector jobs.

The #CaliforniansForAll Youth Jobs Corps is a collaboration between California Volunteers and local governments and is a part of the "California For All" Program. The program was launched in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with the task of encouraging Californians to get involved with volunteering, service, and civic action with California's biggest issues. Many of the participants of the program will be provided "wraparound services," such as case management, resume preparation, and job training, and more.

"Their work is of great value to us all and while we aim to make a positive lasting impact in their lives, we are certain they will make a positive and lasting impact in our communities," Fryday stated, hoping to make an impact in California's youth.

People interested in the program can sign up to receive more information at the California volunteers' website: www.californiavolunteers.ca.gov/youth-jobs-corps.

Leonel Chavez's Death Sparks Outcry

[From "CHAVEZ," B1] ...resulted in the officers shooting Leonel Chavez seven times. He unfortunately passed away on the scene, with no repercussions to the officers for their actions.

"Chavez's family wants justice for something that should have never happened," said Chavez's mother, Martiza Padilla. "I need justice, and I need the one who shot him out of the CHP," she demanded. However, during the beginning of the investigation led by the California Highway Patrol and the California Department of Justice, they refused to share a name or any information, making it much harder for Padilla to find that justice. Eventually though, the officer's identity was revealed as Robert Ruiz. The investigators claimed they were checking for footage around the perimeter to get any witness videos that led up to the moment. Since then, the Chavez family has attended interviews and conferences for their son. They often talk about how Leonel Chavez was and express their sorrow. This situation

was critical to the community, prompting a protest on October 9, 2021. The family continues to fight and grieve, but according to one of Chavez's attorneys, there has not been any updates on justice for Chavez.

Leonel Chavez was a young Latino male, born and raised in El Sereno. Chavez's parents were Jesus Miguel Chavez and Maritza Padilla and he had a younger brother also named Jesus Chavez. Leonel Chavez was a security guard at an unspecified business located in LA, however he had planned to someday start a business of his own. According to the people around him, he was a "kind giant" who was well-liked and respected amongst his community and friends. Christian Contreas, an attorney, civil rights activist, community leader, and a prior friend of Leonel Chavez spoke about who Chavez was: "He was from the Los Angeles community, right by the Hazard housing community, where most Wilson [High School] students come from. He was someone who loved working out. I knew him. Personally, I would meet him in Alhambra to work out with him. He was fairly big, around 6' 1", [but] many people liked him, a 'gentle giant.'" The pain of a beloved person around his community being taken away resulted in rallies and protests in attempts to counteract police brutality.

In an interview, local policeman, Officer Bling, shared his opinion on police acceptability and policies after the case of Chavez was explained to him, stating, "I do not agree with the term 'police brutality.' Instead, we use the term 'use of force.' The law allows us to use force to protect the rest, to overcome resistance, and to, of course, protect lives." Officer Bling followed-up on how tasers are seen through the eyes of officers, saying "tasers, less-lethal force- it's not going to kill you... Not sure [if] what [Chavez] did (or the case in general), made the officers believe in using the lethal force of... shooting him. To get there, the standard is pretty high." He explained that use of force would have to be caused by somebody trying "to kill us, to kill someone, or to create bodily injury." Officer Bling explained that there are steps before using physical actions. It depends on the situation. It either "starts with the pepper spray, straight with the taser, or go straight to [the] gun."

After providing additional context about the moment Chavez was tased to Officer Bling, he responded, "for an intoxicated individual... to carry a gun, you would be surprised how many people have guns in their cars... We give them an opportunity to 'show me your hands,' to know that you're not going to hurt us. If you're going to keep reaching at your waistband, there's a certain point where our reaction is slower than the action."

Bling talked about how he thought Chavez was not complying with the officers because he lunged at them. "He was lunging at the police officers; that's not complying... I wouldn't get to the gun, [but] I would create distance, give opportunities to have him stop, or maybe get to my taser. According to our policy... if you are not cooperating with me, but are not running away, it is not within our right to tase you. However, if you are trying to do something, for example, reach for your phone when I tell you, 'to put your hands up,' in my... [CONTINUES, B5]



Photo: LAist.com

Leonel Chavez (1998-2022)

Community Mourns Chavez, Seeks Answers

[From “CHAVEZ,” B4] ...mind, I don't know if it's a gun or a phone." Bling lastly explained the police officers' point of view, saying, "we are human beings, as well. We get scared sometimes, we have the training, but we are all human beings."

Every year, there are an estimated 930 to 1,240 victims of police brutality or “use of force” in the United States, alone. "Sadly, the trend of fatal police shootings in the United States seems to be only increasing... in 2021 there were 1,055 fatal police shootings and in 2020 there were 1,021 fatal police shootings," according to Statista.com. Although there has been an increase in fatal police shootings, there is still hope. Community partnerships are one of the great ways to bond with your community members and stay informed. Building a community connection can create a stronger relationship with the police, in order to help them understand the community's needs and attention. Another major factor that can help prevent police brutality is focusing on administrative control. According to a student from the University of Massachusetts at Boston, administrative control "involves the increased supervision of line officers, giving supervisors increased responsibility for combating corruption, and eliminating debt practices that encourage corruption (e.g., arrest quotas)." Some of the things that the U.S. has done to prevent Police Brutality are "applying body cams, civilian review boards, improved police training demilitarizing the police forces, and legislations aimed to reduce police brutality," said LA Law Enforcement. Even though these practices have been applied, it is clear that there still needs to be more effort in protecting local communities. Situations like what Leonel Chavez had to face should have never happened. Many believe that to move forward in a more secure and equitable society, the justice system needs to take accountability. At this moment, the Chavez family is still demanding justice for Leonel Chavez.

Successful Blood Drive Amid Historic Shortage

[From “BLOOD DRIVE,” B1] ...perspective of both being someone who donated as well as someone who contributed to the organization of the event. Her insight as a donor for this event was that, “my donation experience was great! The process was quick; the UCLA blood drive and leadership people provided snacks and even the choice between a Starbucks gift card or a movie ticket for ourselves at the end.” Especially in a big school like Wilson, a swift experience is ideal. Furthermore, for the students to receive either a movie ticket or a Starbucks gift card was a privilege.

Donating blood comes with possible side effects, such as feeling dizzy or light-headed, so snacks were provided to limit those effects. Leadership really played a role in the precautions-aspect of the event. As stated by Endre Cattouse, “leadership was helping out with the different stations. An example is since students were donating blood but may not have had breakfast, I made sure to ask everyone and offer them two snacks and a drink.” Gladly, snacks and drinks were provided both before and after donating to ensure the students’ health and well-being, along with multiple questions to ensure they were eligible to donate and a test to check glucose levels before giving blood.

As for difficulties with the blood drive, only two had come up. As disclosed by Endre Cattouse, one of these issues was that, “around lunch, when multiple walk-in students came, there weren’t enough seats.” Regardless of the lack of seats during this time, staff and students found a way to work around this. As reported by Melanie Hernandez, “I was never called out to donate blood even though I had an appointment... I was disappointed I had missed out on the chance to give blood, especially since it was here on campus.” However, even though this was an issue for some students, it is something that the student volunteers at the event can learn from, to do better for following years.

Evidently this blood drive was a success because of the amount of students who participated- that made a huge difference. Notably, precautions were put in place and executed effectively. The satisfaction from donating was shared between most Wilson students. Most importantly, students involved with helping out gained experience and participants came together to contribute to the constant need for blood in hospitals and clinics all over, especially during this current blood shortage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Comics & Puzzles



Sports

Wilson Boys' Soccer Team Makes Playoffs

Close Loss in Semifinals Came Down to Penalty Shoot-Out



Photo via Luis Naranjo

By Luis Naranjo

On February 23rd, 2022, at 3:00pm, the Woodrow Wilson High School Boys' Soccer Team finished their season with a score of 1-1 (4)(5) in their semifinals playoff game at Venice High School. It was a close game and both teams battled until the last minute. The Wilson "Mighty Mules" were down 1-0 as few mistakes by the Venice High School Gondoliers gave them the lead by halftime. The Mules came into the second half without losing any motivation at any moment. Fifteen minutes before the game ended, #5 Angel Mena scored a sensational goal to tie the game at 1-1. The game could have gone either way after that, but due to questionable... [CONTINUES, C5]

LA Rams Win Super Bowl

By Keyla Barajas

On February 13, 2022, the Los Angeles Rams won the title of Super Bowl Champions after an intense showdown against the Cincinnati Bengals. The Rams have won a Super Bowl back in the year 2000 when they played for St. Louis, but Los Angeles has not had a Super Bowl victory since 1984 (by the then-Los Angeles Raiders), so this win meant a lot to the Rams players and to the city of LA as a whole. This season the Rams were very hardworking and put all their time and effort into playing great.



Photo: CNBC.com

The Los Angeles Rams not only won the Super Bowl, but did it in their home stadium (Sofi Stadium) in Inglewood, Los Angeles. The game had many people betting their money on which team... [CONTINUES, C4]

Winter Olympics Conclude in Beijing

Epic Two Weeks Produced Heroes and Villains, Heartbreak and Ecstasy



Photo: TheStar.co.uk

By Violet Reza

The 2022 Winter Olympics started on February 4th, 2022 and ended on February 20th. This highly anticipated event took place this year in Beijing, the capital of China, but it is in a different country every four years. It is an exciting occasion that many people look forward to participating in or watching. There were many different sports played in this year's Winter Olympics, such as cross-country skiing, curling, freestyle skiing, ice hockey, ski jumping, speed skating, snowboarding, and more. Each athlete represented their country with passion. There were a total of 27 countries that participated in the Olympics this year. Unlike its

older sibling, the Summer Olympics, the Winter Olympics can only occur in cities suitable for sports requiring ice and snow.

The youngest Olympian who competed this past February was Kamila Valieva of Russia, who is a 15-year old figure skater. She placed 4th in women's figure skating, however she tested positive in a drug test which she said that it was due to her grandfather's medication. She was still allowed to participate in the competition because of the condition of her being a minor.

Eileen Gu, an 18-year old athlete, also gained attention when she won her third medal for free skiing. There was some controversy surrounding her performance because she was born in the United States, yet decided to compete for China. Even though Gu says she considers herself "just as American as Chinese," she insists she played for China to "to unite people, promote common understanding, create communication, and forge friendships between nations." Lots of Americans do not believe that though, and accuse her of switching allegiances for the money and fame she has now acquired in China. In particular, ex-UN ambassador Nikki Haley accused Gu of "standing for human rights abuse," alluding to the well-known atrocities the Chinese government is committing right now, such as the ethnic cleansing of a specific race of Chinese Muslims called "Uyghurs" who are being forced into concentration camps.

Erin Jackson, a speed skater from the United States, won a gold medal, however she almost did not make it. During the trials, she slipped, but her teammate was nice enough to give up her spot for her. She was the first female American to win a gold medal in speed skating since 1994.

Nathan Chen, an American figure skater whose parents are from China, won a gold medal for free skating and a silver medal for "Men's Short Program." However, he did not receive his silver medal due to an ongoing investigation into that event involving Russian athletes who might have been using performance-enhancing drugs. It was a very frustrating thing that occurred because these athletes worked so hard, and he was not the only one that did not receive their medal. Chen expressed his frustrations in an interview with *The New Yorker*, saying, "It's ridiculous. We were like, 'Are you kidding me!'"

Shaun White, an American snowboarder, has the world record for most Olympic gold medals as well as X-Game gold medals. He is a living legend in the world of snowboarding who helped to popularize the sport across the world. It was a bittersweet competition for White because, since he is getting on in years, this was his final time in the Winter Olympics. White placed fourth this year in the Men's Halfpipe, however he still had many great moments throughout the Olympics. Even though he did not win a medal, he still received a touching standing ovation after his final run from all the snowboarders to thank him for everything he has done for the sport.

[CONTINUES, C4]

Klay Thompson Returns to Golden State Warriors

One of NBA's Greatest Shooters Returns, As If He Never Left



Photo: WashingtonPost.com

By Destiny Perez

The Golden State Warriors, who already have the league's second-best record and one of the league's leading MVP candidates in Stephen Curry and one of the league's best leading defensive players of the year in Draymond Green, have added one of the greatest shooters in history to their lineup. Klay Thompson, who just made his long-awaited return to the NBA, is the shooter in question.

Previously to the current season, Thompson had not played in an NBA basketball game for almost two-and-a-half years, after tearing his ACL in Game 6 of the 2019 Finals and then damaging his Achilles tendon right before the start of the 2020-21 season. Klay Thompson's Instagram has been a spot for fans to keep up with the Golden State Warriors' guard while he's been away from the game for the past two years and he also provided his fans a behind-the-scenes look at how he spent his "941 days" off the court on the popular "Dubs Talk" podcast. Thompson, in typical fashion, announced his homecoming via Instagram on January 8, 2022, where he captioned a clip from the film Space Jam (1996) showing the excitement of a player joining the game with the phrase, "How I'm pulling up to Chase [Center] tomorrow... I'M SO EXCITED TO SEE YALL DUBNATION! LETS GET IT!"

The Warriors, despite their early success, require him back. There is no telling how long Thompson will take to regain his "game legs," let alone his basketball rhythm, and who knows if he will ever be the same physically, but we do know he can shoot in his sleep. So long as he can do that, teams will not be able to sell out on Curry with ease, especially with Green at the helm of 4-on-3 situations and Thompson poised to fire one pass away.

Klay Thompson's triumphant return to the NBA occurred on January 9, 2022 when the Warriors defeated the Cleveland Cavaliers 96-82 at the Chase Center. During pregame warmups, line-up introductions, and as he departed the court, teammates, coaches, and spectators showered him with cheers and praise. Thompson's teammates all wore his No. 11 jersey during pregame warmups. Warriors star Stephen Curry then intentionally completed his pre-game warm-up before and during Thompson's.

Warriors fans flocked to the courtside seats an hour before tip-off to cheer for Thompson as if he were playing in a playoff game. Thompson raised his arms in an attempt to inspire the audience to cheer even louder. The volume level climbed after Thompson hit his first six shots. While the world wonders what kind of player Thompson will be overall this season, he is dead-set on proving that he can be the same player he was prior to his injuries. Although now he is taking it slow, it has just been like he has never left. His shooting is still at the same level as before, and he is, without a doubt, slowly but steadily returning to the player he was two years ago.

High Stakes at Winter Olympics

[From “OLYMPICS,” C2] Another fascinating element of this year’s games was the relationship between Russian president Vladimir Putin and Chinese president Xi Jinping. The two were observed acting friendly in the spectator section throughout the games. The world was on edge to see these two powerful dictators being so chummy while at the time Putin was massing troops along the Russian-Ukraine border. In hindsight, it is clear that Putin was planning his current invasion of Ukraine at the time. Many have speculated that Jinping knew what he was planning and asked him to wait until after China’s Olympics to attack Ukraine. There is no proof of that, though.

China was the first country to win a gold medal, but Norway won the most medals, with 16 gold, 8 silver, and 13 bronze. The USA won a total of 20 gold medals, 6 gold, 11 silver, and 3 bronze. The athletes do get paid if they win any type of medal, however they win a different amount of money depending on the type of medal received.

Overall, it was a very good Olympics that showed how all the different countries of the world can come together in the spirit of friendly competition. Even though it was just last February, it might feel like so long ago considering how divided the world has gotten since then because of the Russia-Ukraine War. In these times of great conflict, it can be worth remembering the lessons of peaceful good sportsmanship that were on display by those amazing young athletes.



Photo: Associated Press

Nathan Chen Competes at Figure Skating

Super Bowl Champion LA Rams

[From “RAMS,” C1] ...would win and which player they thought would make a touchdown. On “Super Bowl Sunday,” many friends and families came together to watch the big game, as well as the halftime show. Throughout the city of LA, one could see crowds of people on the street wearing Bengals jerseys or Rams jerseys. From every door and window, many people could be heard cheering for their team every time a touchdown was made!

The Halftime Show was especially memorable this year and was many viewers’ favorite part of the game. The halftime show included artists such as Snoop Dogg, Mary J. Blige, Dr. Dre, Eminem, 50 Cent, and Kendrick Lamar. They all sang or rapped their hit songs they wrote and had many people cheering and singing along with them as they performed together. This halftime show showed how everyone can come together, whether it be singing songs or having the same interests as others, which represented Los Angeles beautifully. Many claimed that this Super Bowl Halftime Show was the best halftime show there has been.

Towards the end of the game, everyone was on edge because the Bengals were winning, which had all the Rams fans anxious. Up until the very end, there was no certainty that the Rams were going to win. The game was definitely a close one, but the Rams managed to score with 1:45 left in the game, when quarterback Matthew Stafford passed the ball to “star receiver” Cooper Kupp, who then made the 1-yard touchdown, leading the Rams to beat the Bengals. Although the Bengals played well, the Rams played better and beat the Bengals with the final score being 23-20. All over the city, everyone was seen celebrating and cheering for the Rams! This night was definitely a night to remember for all of Los Angeles.



Photo: NYPost.com

Rams Quarterback Matthew Stafford

Legendary Season for Boys' Soccer Team



Photo via Luis Naranjo

[From “SOCCER,” C1] ...calls by the center referees, #18 Hosly Gabarrete's goal was not counted, which sent both teams to a penalty shoot-out. As the penalty shoot-outs go it was extremely close, but unfortunately, the Mighty Mules lost by a single goal.

One of the “questionable calls” that cost the Mules the game was a one-on-one ball where #18 Hosly Gabarrete won a fair ball and scored, but the center referee thought otherwise. There was more than just one single contentious play, however; multiple close-calls were counted against Wilson High School, which got their players frustrated and affected their morale. There were even some plays where the center referees could not understand the calls the sideline referees had made! Many players and spectators felt the game was “weird” and “off” when so many dubious calls were getting made against the Mighty Mules.

At the beginning of their season, everyone on the Wilson Boys' Soccer team had one goal and one plan: to bring it all home. The Mighty Mules began their pre-season with a wonderful start and went undefeated throughout the whole pre-season. Their pre-season record was 3-0-1 and for league, they went 4-3-1. As the current season came along, the team had difficulties with being able to have the full squad present because coaches and most players had to quarantine at various times due to COVID-19. The team had to cancel practice at some points and other times had to play without their head coach, Alex Gonzalez. Despite these unprecedented struggles, The Boys' Soccer Team not only made it to the playoffs, they also made history by having zero grade cuts this season for the first time in Wilson's history. No other school expected this team to be as strong as they were this year. The Mighty Mules fought hard throughout the season to be able to prove other teams wrong. Despite their playoff loss, the Wilson Boys' Soccer Team showed everyone that they are not just the underdogs.

Wilson's striker, #6 Omar Medina, finished his season with 18 goals and 2 assists, which put him on top as the best goal scorer in the CIF-LA division 4 for the 2021-2022 season. This has been Omar Medina's first and last season with the soccer team. He was never as committed to playing as he was this year and did a spectacular job on and off the field. When asked about his season, Omar replied, “the season was fun and I enjoyed it at games and practices. The way it ended was sad and I wish we could have won the championship and overall I feel disappointed in myself.” Omar is looking forward to playing college soccer and is keeping all his options open at this time.

Despite Omar's disappointment, his coaches and teammates believe he is an amazing player who fought until the last minute of every game. Head Coach Gonzalez's favorite saying of all time is “mes que un club,” meaning that the team is more than just that- they are a family. After the final game, Gonzalez apologized that he could not do much more for the seniors. He then said, “I love you all forever, we are a family. Thank you for all the excitement and laughs. It was a bittersweet season, but now seeing you all become successful in this big game of life is the best feeling.”