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# UCAST NEWS

Volume 1 Issue 2

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## Movie Theaters vs. The Studios

*by U Cast Studios*

In 1905, the first movie theater in the United States opened in Pittsburgh. Before 1905, there were little picture show houses in Frontier Cities in the West, but this 1905 year is looked at as the beginning of what we would consider the dawn of movie theaters.

Fast forward now to 2019, where the film industry made a record \$101 billion in the United States alone (with Avengers: Endgame making over \$800 million in the U.S.). To say that the film industry has become a massive behemoth over the past 114 years would be an understatement.

On July 28th, Universal Studios and AMC Theaters made a landmark deal: Universal's films would only have to play in AMC's theaters for three weeks, after that, their movies are free to move onto home entertainment. This decision was seen as a surprise on account of the fact that AMC and Universal were engaged in a public spat, over the fact that Universal has been publicly pushing harder than any other studio to reduce the amount of time a film has to be in theaters before it can go to home entertainment. The movie theater industry has been fighting this move as hard as they can, because once film studios start bypassing them and go directly to the consumer with their best products (big-budget films), they know that their time of existence becomes limited.

The other film studios and other large movie theater chains have slammed this agreement, and the conflict between how long a



film has to be out before leaving theaters has been heating up all year long.

Needless to say, this decision may end changing the industry forever.

The 2020's film lineup did not look as good or as promising as 2019's, on account of the biggest superhero movie ever, 'Endgame,' the live-action versions of 'The Lion King' and 'Aladdin,' and the sequel to 'Frozen' all coming out in 2019. With that said, 2020 was slated to have a fairly decent, if not somewhat weaker film lineup, but it was not forecasted to be a disastrous year for films. From 'Tenet,' to 'Top Gun 2,' to 'The Black Widow' standalone film, to the 'Sonic the Hedgehog' movie, there was some optimism for the movies that were supposed to be released this year.

This all changed when COVID-19 made its way to America.

The virus has had many significant and negative impacts on American society. One problem that it has caused, that has gone under the radar, is the growing all-out-war between Movie Studios and Movie Exhibitors, i.e., Movie Theaters.

Without becoming overly specific about the film industry, the biggest thing to take note of is that the movie exhibitors/movie theater industry has a different model for making money than the film studios do. Movie theaters only make money by showing the big studios' films at their cineplexes (and the concession sales they make at their locations). Studios have different arrangements with movie theaters, but typically,

## Lessons Learned as a Child

*by John Tolson*

Growing up in Tucson, Arizona, one of my first jobs was selling food at the University of Arizona football, and basketball games. I started out selling popcorn and peanuts, then after a couple of seasons, I got promoted to selling Pepsi soda, where the 'big money' was. I went up and down the stairs at each game, hawking my wares. I would purchase my food from the University Concessions at 'wholesale' and would make five cents on every drink. I would net a dollar per tray of food, and over the course of a game, I could bring home anywhere from \$12 to \$14. This was back when minimum wage

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# Why Do People Spend So Much More at the Grocery Store?

by Turner Stephens

Americans pride themselves on being independent and making their own decisions. However, just based on how they purchase food, many are easily manipulated to hand over more of their money to the supermarket.

If there was only one rule to reduce spending and buy what one wants, it would be this: make a list at home of what to buy, and buy only what is on that list. People buy emotionally and then justify intellectually that a purchase is a good one. Marketing and sales tactics are based on proven strategies to take advantage of the emotions and make it feel a lot easier to spend money.

Endcap displays are one of the most common methods to get people to buy more items. These large displays are at the end of each aisle facing the cash registers and are the most eye-catching exhibits in the store. What is normally stocked on end caps? Comfort foods like breakfast cereal, chips, crackers, snacks, and drinks like nutritional waters, sodas, juices, or beer.



Hundreds of small sales signs cover the shelves for other products around the store. Coupons and time-sensitive discounts are extremely effective in enticing people to buy now, and buy more. The scarcity principle comes into play here, where people feel they do not want to lose out on getting an item at a lower price.

Eating unprocessed, more natural foods, produce a steady, healthy release of dopamine in the body. High-fat or high-sugar comfort foods of all kinds, including frozen food snacks, pizza, baked goods, ice cream, and candy, make the body produce a huge amount of dopamine. A crash in dopamine levels soon occurs as the body attempts to bring dopamine to a healthy level, which leads to a craving for another dopamine hit. This can become an addictive cycle.

Baking bread or pastries while customers are shopping, fills the air with the smell of these comfort foods. This is most effective during lunch and dinner hours when people are already hungry. The impulse sections next to the cash registers usually have

candy, mints, and small sugary items, as well as gossip and rumor magazines. While waiting for the cashier to clear the line ahead, many people rationalize that the cost of a candy bar or a magazine is not much money, so it becomes an easy decision to grab that item and put it in the shopping basket.

The comfort and junk food items can be small purchases in a single shopping trip, but when these purchases are added up over a year, they can easily add up to hundreds of dollars.

Demos are small tables set up in stores where a demonstrator offers a free sample of food or drink to taste. Demos use the principle of liking the demo person or store because of free samples and begin to trust them

more and buy items more often.

Food advertising commonly uses the principle of social proof to get consumers to associate eating or drinking comfort foods with having a fun time with friends. These ads constantly repeat on TV, radio, the Internet, and in print media because of their powerful influence.

Around 25% of US groceries are spent on processed foods and candy annually. This is also why these foods are advertised so heavily. Customers who want to take more control over their food budget and their health need to remember to make their list before shopping and keep to it so they improve their ability to counter the sales strategies they will face while at the store.

## Lessons, *continued from page 1*

was around \$2/hour, so for a four-hour game, I was making good money, while also experiencing the excitement of the game. I still remember two games that stand out to me to this day.

One fall day, I was walking up and down the isles selling my Pepsi. I had a choice: Regular, or Diet. One family up in the top of the stadium asked me if I had Sprite. "No, that is only sold at the concession stand, and I cannot get that from my supplier." The father had more kids with him, and taking a trip all the way down did not seem like a viable option to him. He said that he would me pay a "premium" if I could get him Sprite sodas. I would go to the regular concession stand, wait in line with everyone else, and then purchase the Sprite sodas at retail, then take them back to him. I may have made an extra \$5 or \$6 that day, in addition to my \$14. Banner Day!

Another day that sticks out to me, was an isolated day in January, when on a normal business day (Monday during the day), there would be a basketball game. Many of my 'regular sales people did this as a second job (Weekends or evenings), and so I was probably one of only 25% of the normal crew selling that day. I did not need to go to up and down the isles that day. As soon as I came out of the back concession area, I was approached by fans, who did not want to wait in line, and I sold

as many, and as fast as I could take their money, and give them change. That day, I probably made closer to \$40. When my Dad picked me up that day, I was beaming from ear to ear.

What are the lessons learned from those days of being my own boss?

1. Give your customer what they want. If it is hard for them to get it, they will most likely even pay a premium for it. They will pay more for it, and thank you for doing it.
2. Sometimes, just being in the right place, at the right time, is all that is needed to have a hugely successful day. Consistency. Doing the work. Showing up every day. You may go into work one day thinking that it will be just a 'normal' day, then BAM! It all changes.

What great times those were for me as a 13-year-old. Most of my friends did not have a 'job' for another couple of years. Lessons learned that have stuck with me to this day.

*John Tolson is the Director of Marketing and Membership for the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce, where he has been for nearly 10 years. He also has an independent Insurance business, where he is a Broker for many home and auto carriers. Currently, he is also a Planning Commissioner for the City of Simi Valley. He can be reached at john.tolson@goosehead.com*



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# Why Do Universities Charge So Much More for Out of State Tuition?

by John Crestani

Once upon a time, American college students were able to pay for their educations with the money they made at their summer jobs. We know this is not the case anymore.

The cost of a college education has gone up tremendously, but the cost of out-of-state tuition has gone up even more.

**Attending public university as an out-of-state student can cost up to three times more than in-state tuition.**

At the University of Maine, in-state tuition costs are roughly \$10,606 per year, while out-of-state students pay \$30,000 for the same amenities. Another example would be the University of California. Students from out-of-state pay \$35,070 per year, compared to \$12,192 for California residents.

Public universities recruit students who live outside of their state with higher test scores to increase their competitive edge. According to a report from the New America Foundation, public colleges frequently offer high-achieving out-of-state students merit-aid as a means of incentivizing them to attend their schools.

Steven Burd, a senior policy analyst at the New America Foundation, said flagship public colleges are becoming “bastions of privilege” and that they are evading their responsibilities to educate kids in their states. In a New York Times interview, Kevin Carey, education-policy program executive at the New America Foundation, described it as “the creeping privatization of elite public universities.”

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) offers a comparative analysis of in-state and out of state tuition costs. For the 2010-2011 academic

year, the average tuition for an in-state student at a four-year university for an undergraduate program was \$6,752. For out-of-state students, the cost was \$15,742. On average, it costs \$8,990 more for students to attend a college or university in a state where they are not a resident (that number has since climbed).

Some might claim that the reason why tuition costs have gone up so dramatically for out-of-state-students is that public universities have had their funding cut. But that is not correct.

**Public investment in higher education in America is vastly larger today (adjusted for inflation) than it was in the 1960s.**

School funding has increased at a much faster rate than government spending has overall. For example, the military’s budget is about 1.8 times higher today than it was in 1960, while appropriations given out towards American universities are more than 10 times higher. Over the past 35 years, college tuition fees at public universities have nearly quadrupled.

So, what is the solution?

Public universities should charge out-of-state students and in-state students the same price for enrollment. Vinay Bhaskara, co-founder of CollegeVine, suggests that most schools use the higher out-of-state tuition fees they charge to make their budgets work, which results in less aid being given to out-of-state students.

*Since leaving his job working for an advertising agency, John Crestani has gone on to create WeLearn, an education company that is changing the way the world learns. He lives in Venice Beach, with his wife, and newborn daughter, Lily.*

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# Growing Your Side Gig Business. Do You Know Your ABCs?

by Roberta Nadler

Do you want your side gig business to grow? Let’s start with the basics: the ABCs.

**A is for ‘Attitude.’**

A successful business is about attitude. Does this statement make sense? I vote YES. Let’s look at a sports analogy. John Wooden gained iconic fame leading UCLA basketball to win 620 games in 27 seasons, plus 10 NCAA titles. His attitude on success is applicable today: “Don’t let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.” Planning and having a positive “look ahead” attitude, will help your side gig Business grow. If you are revamping your business, this attitude will help you formulate a new plan. In today’s environment, I love the idea of side gig businesses. Entrepreneurs can learn and adapt as they grow. It all starts with attitude.

**B is for ‘Because.’**

Each business needs to answer the “because” question daily. What need does your business meet? Equally important, a new business is about you. What are

your aptitudes? What do you like? I asked Nelly Klein, a local entrepreneur, and owner of The Perfect Bite Cake Balls why she started her business: “I started my business because I like being my own boss. I make a product that people love, and that makes me happy.” Because Nelly had a strong “Because,” her business grew from day one. She met two criteria: Meeting a need, and doing a business she loved.

**C is for ‘Communication.’**

Excellent communication develops trust. This involves a consistent look, and message. Business owners need to consistently use multiple channels to communicate with the community, prospects, and customers. Today, most marketers recommend using a blend of social media, text, email, and snail-mail to keep in touch. All channels of communication need the same look and tone. Smart branding makes customers feel comfortable working with you. If you focus on the basics, your side gig might turn into a substantial business. Why not?

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# Is Jordan or LeBron the GOAT? Surprise! (It's Kareem)

by Alec Moore

With the Michael Jordan documentary “The Last Dance,” which aired to huge ratings on ESPN this spring, and now on Netflix, the debate about who is the GOAT (Greatest Of All Time) basketball player has intensified. Jordan or LeBron? And it is a pretty good debate. But are we forgetting someone? Yes. His name is Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, which you would think would be a tough name to forget. Even if you did forget that name, he has another name you also had a chance to remember: Lew Alcindor. Did you forget both those names? Come on, you have to do better with your names memory.

If Kareem might be the greatest, why does he not get talked about much in this debate? I have two theories: one, Jordan and LeBron were both aerial artists, performing spectacular leaping feats. Kareem, on the other hand, was only an aerial artist in that at 7'2" he lived in the air and had a devastating hook shot that was pure art. But the artful hook shot, while appreciated by purists, is generally not as exciting as a windmill dunk, or a reverse dunk, or just any dunk. The second reason Kareem does not get discussed like the other two?

Recency. LeBron may not be the GOAT, but he is the GOART - the Greatest Of All Recent Times. And Jordan, while now a 57-year-old team owner, played recently enough that anyone over 30 clearly remembers him in his prime. Almost as clearly as they remember him in those Hanes ads. Kareem's era predates a lot of those folks who are having this debate. Before you call me an old-timer, know that Kareem retired before I even knew anything about basketball. So I cannot use the eye test to decide who the GOAT is. But I can use the information test. So here is some information:

Jordan won six championships to LeBron's three, but Kareem also won six. LeBron took nine teams to the Finals, while Jordan never made it when he was not winning it all, but Kareem went to the Finals ten times. That is one more than LeBron's nine, though LeBron has a good chance to tie him this year.

Jordan won five MVPs to LeBron's four, but Kareem won six MVPs, the most ever.

Jordan scored 32,292 career points, and LeBron passed him, and currently sits at 34,087, but Kareem is the all-time leading

scorer with 38,387. Okay, so LeBron will probably pass Kareem to become the all-time leading scorer eventually, but guess what? He got a four year head-start on Kareem because he skipped college. Then there is college. What did Kareem do in college? Well, his college career was so legendary, he had to change his name when it was over, presumably because it would be impossible to have an NBA career that could live up to what he did in college as Lew Alcindor (or maybe it was because he converted to Islam, it is unclear). And yes, as I just pointed out, Kareem still had probably the best NBA career ever, but in college? Freshmen were not allowed to play on the varsity in the sixties, so he was the opposite of today's "one-and-done" guys, playing for the UCLA Freshman team, for which he averaged 33.1 points and 21.5 rebounds, which is pretty good. Then in his three varsity seasons, UCLA went 88-2, won the national championship every year, and Alcindor won all three Final Four Most Outstanding Player awards.

Jordan did play three years in college at UNC, and he hit a shot that helped clinch an NCAA title

as a freshman, but he did not win another one, nor was he even the best player on the title team. That would be Kareem's future teammate James Worthy.

Maybe the best argument against Kareem as the GOAT is that he was only the Finals MVP twice, while Jordan and LeBron were always the Finals MVP when they won the title. But Jordan and LeBron did not play with teammates who were also in the top 10 players of all time, while Kareem had Magic Johnson on five of his six title teams. Magic won three of those Finals MVP Awards, while the other one went to James Worthy. There is that man again: a lower-tier Hall Of Famer who was teammates with both Kareem and Jordan, and somehow managed to outshine them for stretches. Do you know who else won a Finals MVP while his teammate Steph Curry has none? Andre Iguodala. So it would be tough to use this gauge to pick Jordan or LeBron over Kareem.

And sure, Jordan was fine in "Space Jam," and LeBron was funny in "Trainwreck," but Kareem in "Airplane" as 'Roger' the co-pilot denying that he was Kareem? Classic. So is Kareem the real GOAT? Roger, Roger.

# The Lakers' All-Decades Team: the 60's

by Dustin Brewer

The Los Angeles Lakers have long remained one of the premier franchises in sports, seeing dozens of Hall of Fame-caliber players don the purple and gold. This series will focus on the Lakers' best players over the decades since the team moved to Los Angeles in 1960, beginning with the 1960's All-Decade team.

**PG: Jerry West** - Drafted 2nd overall by the team in the 1960 draft, Jerry West is not only one of the best point guards to ever play for the Lakers, but he is also the logo for the entire NBA.

**SG: Dick Barnett** - Barnett was only on the team for three years in the 60's but in those seasons, he averaged 18, 18.4, & 13.8 points per game. This, combined with his sweet shooting touch (just about 47% from the field), made him just about as automatic as you could want from the two-guard in this era of the NBA.

**SF: Harold "Happy" Hairston** - Traded to the Lakers in 1969, Happy Hairston made an immediate name for himself. In his six seasons with the Lakers, he averaged 20.5ppg, and 12.5r on 49% shooting from the field. He was also an integral piece of the championship team in '71-'72, and helped the Lakers rattle off 33 straight wins.

**PF: Elgin Baylor** - There is not much that needs to be said about Baylor, who was a superstar in the league before there were superstars. A walking highlight reel, the duo of Baylor and Jerry West, carried the Lakers through the better part of the decade, including in '61 when, as a third-year player, Baylor averaged 38 points and 18.6 rebounds.

**C: Wilt Chamberlain** - He did not join the Lakers until the 1968 season, but there is still no one else better suited to represent



the team in this spot. In his first season with the team, he shot 58% from the field, en route to averages of 20.5 points and 21 rebounds.

**Sixth Man:** Gail Goodrich - While Goodrich did not cement his status as a Lakers legend until he returned to the team in the 1970's, it is hard to leave him off the 60's team altogether. In '67-'68, while playing reserve minutes as backup to Jerry West and Archie Clark in the backcourt, he

still averaged 13.8ppg, 2.5rpg, and 2.6apg.

In the 1960's, the Lakers were an upward trend, but in the 1970's, the team soared to even new heights, and further deepened their legacy as one of the premier franchises in all sports.

**Next up:** Los Angeles Lakers All-Decade Team: the 70s!



# Gaming

## Virtual Reality Comes to Life in Santa Barbara

by Isabella Giotis

It is a warm summer evening, and just half a block off of downtown Santa Barbara's busy restaurant and bar district, four people are wearing some strange looking headsets and masks as they walk around a patio, pushing some handheld game controllers. They are off in their own world as they shout things like "Watch out," and "Shoot the monsters!" They are at a Virtual Reality studio, which is like a gigantic video game that immerses the players in the game.

Surreal Virtual Reality Studio is part of a growing string of VR businesses around the world that are taking video technology to the next level. Sophisticated headsets, and high-end computer set-ups allow for highly interactive gameplay that is unaffordable for home gamers.

Surreal Studio manager Mark Carlson explains the concept as an alternate reality created through a computer. The computer is connected to a headset that renders a virtual environment around you. Physical actions like turning your head, or moving your arms around, correspond to action in the virtual space, which creates the immersive experience. In most games, you have two controllers with grips in the form of hands. In the case of the game "Beat Saber," one uses two lightsabers to cut bricks to the timing of the music.

The Santa Barbara VR Studio is located on the 400 block State Street in Santa Barbara, which is part of the city's downtown area. It is in a converted auto shop. Because the building has big garage-style doors that open to a patio area, the business can stay open, while enclosed locations like movie theaters are closed due to COVID-19 health orders.

Carlson says protective measures are taken to keep people safe. These measures include a face liner being put in for each headset, then taken out after each use, and sprayed with CDC-approved sanitizer. The gear and controllers are wiped down and providing hand-sanitizer to each player before they put on the gear. Players are also required to wear masks at all times.

While gamers might feel at home with the concept of VR, regular people are often the ones who walk away excited about the experience. Carlson says very little



technical knowledge is required. Putting on the gear and getting instructions on how to use it only takes a few minutes.

The studio is an entertainment experience now, but Carlson says he sees the technology eventually becoming common place in our lives. It can also be used for education and research. The surge of people using Zoom and other online technology during the COVID crisis is conducive to growing interest in everyday practical applications.

VR products can essentially be separated into two categories: lower-cost consumer products, and higher quality, more expensive technology with a niche base. Oculus, a VR headset company owned by Facebook, is going further in the direction of wireless consumer-friendly software. Gaming company Valve created the Valve Index headset and released it along with its headliner game, "Half-Life: Alyx." It is offering perhaps the highest-quality consumer VR experience suitable for home gamers. The HTC Vive is a VR headset developed by HTC and Valve, which is what the Santa Barbara VR studio uses. These headsets are among those that use "room-scale" tracking technology, which allows you to move through the simulation rather than passively observing the surroundings.

The most unique thing about the Santa Barbara VR studio is that they have "Free-Room VR," which allows players to walk around in a designated outdoor space, with a capacity of up to four players at a time. There are about 20 different single-player or multiplayer games and experiences. Some

of the multi-player games include escape rooms, arcade games, and shooting games. One of their most popular games is called the "The Raft," in which four players work together to get out of the swamp on a raft, or risk being infected by evil supernatural aliens.

Carlson believes that VR is going to be the next big thing, possibly more popular than smartphones. He thinks many of our social

interactions will be through the use of VR, as well as many types of entertainment. Carlson brings up the Steven Spielberg film "Ready Player One" as a vision of what the future might hold.

Ella Onishuk of Santa Barbara is one of the VR players at the studio. she said her experience playing "The Raft" was fun and felt like she was actually battling aliens.

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New Inventions to Make Your Life Happier, Easier or Just More Interesting

by Jane Miller

Utility patents cover the creation of a useful new or improved product, process, or machine.

In 2019, over 300,000 utility patents were filed with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. That is a lot of new ways of hopefully improving our lives. I am a sucker for an exciting new invention, and I know I am not alone in my enthusiasm.

As of April 2020, the reality television show “Shark Tank” averages an audience of about 4.82 million viewers per episode. We are entranced by innovation. But not all innovations are built to last for the long haul. Some are simply funny, and/or creative, and will not keep our attention for long. Perhaps you have heard of the wine bra, or the bacon making alarm clock. While these are fun gag gifts, they will likely end up being Marie Kondo’ed out of your life.

What are some new useful inventions that will probably last? I did some digging to find some of the most useful inventions that you probably have not heard of



that might make your life a little easier, happier, or just more fun. Here are five of my favorites:

1. Levitating Light Bulb

If you had a levitating light bulb in your home, you would surely impress Thomas Edison (or practically anyone, really). Who knew they even existed? Well, they do. This levitating light bulb is an invention by the Swedish company, Flyte, named by the merging of the English words fly, and light, and the Swedish word for Float. The bulb hovers by magnetic levitation and is powered through the air. It is beautifully designed, and probably more of an art and design piece than a practical way to light your home. However, it does use an energy-efficient LED light made to last about 50,000 hours, which is equivalent to about 12 hours of usage per day, for 11 years. Maybe now that \$299 price tag becomes a bit more understandable.

2. Self-Watering Pots for Plants

As someone who travels a lot, and owns plants, I often feel

guilty leaving my plants in the Los Angeles sun, and hoping for rain that may not come. These self-watering pots are another Swedish invention that will not let you over-water, or under-water your plants. There is a terra-cotta plant holder surrounded by a larger glass reservoir where the water is placed. The plants will only absorb what they need through the terra-cotta pot walls. This works via a process called capillary attraction, where water can make its way through very small spaces.

3. Farmer’s Fridge

Recently, I was at a hospital in New York City getting, you guessed it, a COVID-19 test. I did a double-take upon spotting a vending machine filled with what appeared to be mason jars of fresh vegetables. Huh? The company Farmer’s Fridge has created vending machines with jars filled with freshly made, produce-laden meals. The meals are approximately \$7 each and look bright and colorful, and quite delicious (this coming from someone who greatly prefers pizza to salads). Farmer’s Fridge makes it easy to eat healthy on the go.

4. Pizza Scissors

Created by inventor Roger Stone (not the one you may be thinking of), these pizza scissors are a pretty solid investment if you eat pizza regularly. They are scissors that both slice pizza and allow you to serve it at the same time using the spatula tool attached. About a year ago, a friend introduced me to the process of using kitchen shears to cut pizza instead of a typical rolling pizza cutter, and wow, it was so much easier to use (especially to clean!). Until I own my pizza scissors, I can only imagine that these are a step above the basic kitchen scissors.

5. Mini-Table Crumb Vacuum

Designed like a computer mouse, this small vacuum picks up tiny messes and is not an eyesore, so it can live on your table or desk. One reviewer called it a “marriage saver,” since she was so annoyed by her husband’s crumbs, and this product made cleaning joyful for both of them. Of course, if your marriage was crumbling due to some crumbs, you may have other issues that an invention will not fix.

Summer of COVID

by Novin Shakiba

Back in March, when the surging pandemic caused lockdowns across the globe, few of us envisioned how our lives would be impacted. Here we are, mid-summer, while most are debating whether it is safe to open up schools, whether professional and collegiate sports should resume, or if we should wear masks when outdoors, some have managed to live their lives with as much normalcy as there can be, and stuck to their routine of summer travel.

Many who had plans to visit family in another part of the country may not have been able to do so, whether it was due to travel restrictions, sheer inconvenience, or the risk of exposing loved ones to the virus. Some spent their summer at home, taking up DIY projects, picking up new hobbies such as gardening, taking online classes, learning a new language, or partaking in

some other form of self-gratifying activity. Others went stir crazy. Then some traveled, despite all the inhibitions.

Because of COVID-19, some of the most visited sites and attractions across the globe were closed. That was also the case here in America. Museums closed. Zoos closed. Theme parks closed. Shops, restaurants, and bars closed. Music festivals canceled. Concerts canceled. Casinos closed. Attractions such as Seattle’s Space Needle in Seattle LA’s Griffith Observatory, and the Philadelphia’s Liberty Bell all closed. Cities such as New Orleans, Houston, Tampa, Miami, Chicago, and New York, known for their bustling streets and nightlife scene, all closed. So where did those who traveled, travel to? Nature.

While national parks, and most state and local parks were closed at some point during the

lockdown, easing restrictions allowed most of them to open up before other large-crowd places. If you have been an indoor cat during the pandemic and are itching to get out and about, and do it in a relatively safe way (operative word being ‘relatively’), here are some hot spots you can visit before summer of COVID is over.



Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks, Utah

Known for its majestic, giant table-top rock formations, and show-stopping riverside hikes, Zion National Park boasts some of the most stunning and unique

excursions in North America. It is not surprising to learn that upon reopening, Zion became packed with visitors, hikers, campers, and backpackers alike. As of early August, the park still limited the number of vehicles that can enter the park. But with some schools opening across the country, you will likely get to see most, if not all, that Zion has to offer. If you feel adventurous enough, a scenic two-and-a-half-hour drive north-east of Zion is another sprawling wonder, the Bryce Canyon National Park. This oft-ignored beauty is home to spectacular crimson-colored hoodoos, which are giant spiral-shaped rocks, carved by thousands of years of wind and elements. If you are apprehensive about flying, do not worry. Zion is a mere six-and-a-half-hour drive from Los Angeles, the amount of time it takes to drive to San Francisco.

## Value of Mentorship

by Alex Gandel

A big key to success in any aspect of life is having positive mentorship. From Aristotle, who was famously influenced by his mentor, Plato, to Oprah Winfrey, who was mentored by Maya Angelou, many who have made an impact on this world have often been impacted by a mentor figure. I know for myself, mentors have played a significant role in my life, and their impact on me is still felt to this day.

There have been five mentors who have profoundly affected me - these five mentors vary in terms of their backgrounds and the type of success they have achieved, but all five share a common thread - they taught me something or imparted wisdom that I have been able to incorporate into my daily life.

One of the most impactful people that I have ever known was an incredibly giving and honest marine. He was retired, a little older, and he was a successful businessman. I remember one day he and I were getting lunch

near his office in Sherman Oaks and outside we saw a homeless veteran sitting outside with a bottle of alcohol. He was drunk, homeless, and down on his luck. After my friend/mentor saw this man, he excused himself from the table and went outside. He brought the man inside to sit with us and he treated him like a human, with dignity and respect. Over the next several years, my mentor helped this man get out of homelessness, and he employed him to be his driver and personal assistant. When my mentor passed away several years ago, this man was there at the funeral, and we grieved together.

I saw my mentor, who was not obligated to help this person he just met, and instead of doing nothing he decided to change this man's life. At that moment, I learned something about empathy and compassion in action.

Mentors come in all shapes and from all walks of life, and even though the mentor I mentioned was successful, a mentor does

not necessarily need to be a successful person to make a difference in a person's life. A mentorship dynamic is formed when someone is open to learning and growing, not just in their craft, but also in life. And that openness starts with being truthful and honest with oneself and others, acknowledging where one needs improvement, and being diligent in learning from others.

Mentorship can come to pass through a long-standing relationship, or it may just last for a short period of your life. For me, I have been blessed with



Alex Gandel

mentors that have spoken into my life for decades, and I have had mentors that have only been in my life for a short chapter. The impact that a mentor can have on a person's life often lasts long after that person is gone. There should be no finish line to your growth path, and it needs to start with being open to learning.

## Summer, *continued from page 6*

### Olympic National Park

Nestled in the northern most corner of the Pacific Northwest, just west of Seattle, Olympic National Park is home to one of the most diverse ecosystems in the U.S. During the summer months, avid climbers, hikers, campers, and backpackers flock to the park to take advantage of the stunning peak points of Olympic Mountains, the sprawling growth forest, as well as one of the last remaining, and best preserved rain forests in the world. The Hoh Rain Forest is a breathtaking two-hour drive, some along the U.S./Canada coastal border, from Port Angeles, WA. You have to be a bit more adventurous if you want to drive up here from Southern California, but if you have become stir crazy from staying at home the last five months, the drive may be worth it.

### Yosemite and Grand Teton National Parks

These parks, which under normal circumstances, bring in some four-million visitors annually, need no introduction. Yellowstone

is the vast, wild, and wondrous heartbeat of American National Parks. While mostly known for its enormous spouting geysers like Old Faithful, and numerous hot springs, Yellowstone is home to some of the most diverse wildlife congregations in the U.S. Visitors can regularly view elk, deer, bison, and even bears in their natural habitats. If you are lucky, you may spot a wolf, or two, during the cooler late summer. It is also a haven for backcountry hiking, backpacking, and camping.

Grand Teton lives up to its name. Its grandeur, along with its imposing summits carved out by glaciers, has captivated the eyes of visitors since early settlers. Attractions include rafting along the Snake River, the 42-Mile Scenic Loop Drive, hiking, fishing, camping on the cheap, wildlife viewing, and horseback riding.

While visiting these parks requires a time commitment and physical activity, it may just be what you need after spending the last five months at home.

## What to do if your Air Conditioning Unit is Leaking Refrigerant

by Service Genius

During the summer, air conditioning units often run for several hours a day. The age of the average A/C unit in the San Fernando Valley is 50 years. Refrigerant leaks can occur in these older A/C units and the air quality in your home can become hazardous to your health.

### Refrigerant leaks are dangerous.

An under performing or malfunctioning A/C system is not just annoying, it is dangerous. Freon is a highly toxic substance that is not meant to be inhaled, and prolonged exposure to it can be extremely hazardous to your health. Young children and the elderly are especially susceptible.

Common symptoms from exposure can include:

- Nausea
- Headache
- Skin dryness
- Irritation

### What causes a refrigerant leak?

A multitude of factors can cause refrigerant leaks in an A/C system, but the most common causes are:

- Years of wear and tear
- Formaldehyde - which can turn into Formic acid on the A/C coil
- Pin Hole Leaks - which is caused by the Formic acid eating at copper tubing
- Manufacturer defects

No matter what the cause is, it is important to have your air conditioning unit repaired or replaced as quickly as possible. Exposure to leaking refrigerant can be extremely hazardous and it needs to be taken care of by trained professionals.

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The Pokéblock Podcast is hosted by YouTuber HoopsandHipHop. In this weekly podcast, HoopsandHipHop covers weekly Pokémon news and analysis. In recent episodes, Hoops has hosted several big-time gamers on YouTube.



## Lakers Outsiders

Lakers Outsiders is a weekly Lakers-centric podcast hosted by Gary Kester. The Lakers are the greatest team in modern NBA history. Join Gary as he gives his analysis of the playoffs and news related to the Lakers.



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The Talk Spot is an interview show that features guests from all backgrounds. In a recent interview, Heather Stone, from the Mentors and Moguls Podcast, stops by and gives her advice on being successful in business.

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**Thank you for letting us grow with you for 55 years.**





Adventist Health Simi Valley Receives Two Awards

by Harold Pierce / Adventist Health Simi Valley

When it comes to stroke and heart attack care, Adventist Health Simi Valley has been recognized this week by the American Heart Association for its commitment to following national, evidence-based treatment that leads to the best outcomes for patients.

Adventist Health Simi Valley has received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's *Get With The Guidelines Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award*; and the *Mission: Lifeline Silver Receiving Quality Achievement Award*. These awards recognize the hospital's commitment to ensuring both stroke and heart attack patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized research-based guidelines.

"At Adventist Health Simi Valley, we know how critically important it is to provide quick, compassionate and safe care to individuals suffering from

heart attacks and strokes," said Chief Medical Officer Dr. John Dingilian. "These recognitions from the American Heart Association reflect the lifesaving work our physicians and associates perform each day, to ensure patients have the best outcomes during these types of events. It also means that our community members can feel confident that the care they receive here in Simi Valley is among the best in the nation."

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death nationally, according to the American Stroke Association, and the fourth leading cause of death among women in Ventura County. It is the leading cause of adult disability in the United States. Meanwhile, roughly 250,000 Americans annually suffer from ST-elevated myocardial infarctions (STEMI), an often-fatal heart attack that

causes blocked blood flow to the heart and requires immediate medical treatment.

Adventist Health Simi Valley has invested in treating these types of cases with two state-of-the-art cardiac catheterization labs, where skilled physicians can clear blockages in the heart in minutes.

"We commend Adventist Health Simi Valley for this award in recognition for following evidence-based guidelines for timely heart attack treatment," said Tim Henry, M.D., Chair of the Mission: Lifeline Acute Coronary Syndrome Subcommittee. "We applaud the significant institutional commitment to their critical role in the system of care for quickly and appropriately treating heart attack patients."

Adventist Health Simi Valley additionally received the

Association's *Type 2 Diabetes Plus Honor Roll*, and *Stroke Elite Honor Roll*. To qualify for this recognition, hospitals must meet quality measures developed to reduce the time between the patient's arrival at the hospital, and treatment with the clot-buster tissue plasminogen activator, or tPA, the only drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat ischemic stroke.

"We are pleased to recognize Adventist Health Simi Valley for their commitment to stroke care," said Lee H. Schwamm, M.D., national chairperson of the Quality Oversight Committee, and Executive Vice Chair of Neurology, Director of Acute Stroke Services, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts. "Research has shown that hospitals adhering to clinical measures through the Get With The Guidelines quality improvement initiative, can often see fewer readmissions and lower mortality rates."



Fewer Strokes Raise Red Flags at Local Emergency Department

by Shannon Morris, RN, MSN, MICN

When the ambulance bay doors at Adventist Health Simi Valley opened on a Tuesday evening, a team of caregivers was already waiting.

Moments earlier, first responders called ahead, to let our team know that they were rushing to our hospital with a woman who was exhibiting symptoms of a stroke. Within minutes, a neurologist stood by. Imaging techs cleared the CT scanner to make it available for stat diagnostics. Pharmacists began mixing crucial clot-busting medications. Meanwhile, nurses, doctors, lab technicians, and others were already assembled at the ambulance bay doors to meet the patient and immediately go to work assessing whether this was a stroke or a false alarm.

That type of immediate, coordinated response is critical with stroke, which occurs when a clot blocks the blood supply to the brain. Hospitals across the nation, including ours, however, have been taking fewer of these types of calls since the COVID-19 pandemic was first announced. Meanwhile, there is no indication that fewer people are suffering

from strokes, leaving us gravely concerned about the health of our community.

Strokes are the fifth leading cause of death in the United States, killing about 140,000 people each year, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What many do not realize is that it is also a leading cause of long-term disability, reducing mobility in more than half of stroke survivors older than 65.

That is why it is imperative for those experiencing symptoms to immediately call 9-1-1 and be transported to the nearest hospital for treatment. Stroke victims should never drive themselves to a medical facility. First responders are trained to recognize stroke symptoms and trigger the notification system that gets hospital staff ready, and that extra time is crucial. Every minute of a stroke kills about 2 million brain cells. It is why we say: "time is brain."

At Adventist Health Simi Valley, we are an advanced primary stroke center, meaning we are able to treat patients with clot-busting

drugs like Alteplase or TPA, have neurologists on standby 24 hours a day, and that our nurses hold national certifications on how to care for stroke patients.

It should go without saying that we do not want our friends and neighbors suffering from strokes. Some factors are out of our control, like age, genetics and family history, but others can be controlled.

Limit alcohol intake; reduce your blood pressure if it is high; keep your cholesterol down; stop smoking cigarettes, or other illicit drugs; and talk with your physician about a moderate exercise regimen. If you have diabetes, work with your doctor to get it under control. Roughly 80 percent of strokes are preventable, according to the American Heart Association.

All these risk factors can be easily modified with a little effort and working to control them could save your life.

*Shannon Morris is a registered nurse and the stroke coordinator at Adventist Health Simi Valley.*

### SIGNS OF A STROKE:

Recognizing stroke symptoms is critical when it comes to getting treatment quickly. Symptoms often come on suddenly and can be remembered by the acronym, **"BE FAST."**

<b>B - Balance:</b>	Many stroke victims are off balance.
<b>E - Eyes:</b>	Blurred vision is common.
<b>F - Face:</b>	The face often droops to one side.
<b>A - Arms:</b>	Arms sometimes fall to one side.
<b>S - Speech:</b>	Stroke victims can slur speech or be unable to speak.
<b>T - Time:</b>	Call 911 if any of the above symptoms are observed.



Palm Springs

by Chris Carnicelli

Yes, you have seen them before. Time-loop movies. From *Groundhog Day* to *Happy Death Day*, they have always held a special fascination with audiences, especially when the subject matter is more than the sum total of its parts. And with this damned virus, this film should have been in the theaters. His name is Nyles (Andy Samberg), and he wakes up every morning in bed with his cheating girlfriend, Misty (Meredith Hagner). Every single morning. For how long? Who knows.



Not even Nyles, as he has been stuck in a time-loop for maybe a million days after he entered a mysterious glowing cave. He keeps repeating the same Palm Springs wedding day of Tala (Camila Mendes) and Abe (Taylor Hoechlin), drinking countless beers, hitting on women (and some guys), and accepting his fate after innumerable attempts of trying to ‘escape’ and avoid the vengeful wrath of Roy (J.K. Simmons), a fellow time-looper who went into that cave as well. One night, Nyles meets with and tries to seduce Sarah (Cristin Milioti), Tara’s sister, but with disastrous results. She accidentally follows Nyles into that cave and BOOM! She is now stuck in the same time-loop as Nyles. Freaking out at first, Sarah slowly comes to accept her twisted fate as Nyles shows her the ropes of having no consequences in life since, even if you die, you wake up the same morning on the same day over again. Nyles finds a kindred spirit in Sarah, and the two hit it off famously, even dodging the murderous Roy. But, complications arise when

both Nyles and Sarah share their secrets--secrets that neither one was ready to hear. The focus shifts from Nyles’ POV to Sarah’s, as she attempts to find a way out of this accursed loop through science. But will it work? And will Nyles even be interested in leaving his safe-place? Now, you would think for a newbie screenwriter, Andy Siara would play it safe and stick to a rom-com or something easy, but no. Siara, who only wrote for the forgettable TV series *Lodge 49*, took the often overused time-

loop trope and added a splash of crazy comedy and heartfelt drama. Ignore the opening five minutes as it has a rocky, uneven start, but once you get into the swing of things, the comedy kicks in. This is due largely to Andy Samberg’s crack comedic timing (he slips into his *Brooklyn 99*, Jake Peralta persona on occasion, and who can blame him), and his co-star, Cristin Milioti (with those great big Amanda Seyfried/Emma Stone eyes). Under the terrific direction of another newbie, Max Barbakow (shortfilms& docs only), Samberg and Milioti develop wonderful chemistry together, and verbally spar with each other, which is part of the charm of this movie. Aside from the laugh-out-loud comedy, this movie also gives us a chance to see them shine in some heart-breaking scenes that showcase their strengths as dramatic actors. And, of course, as always, J.K. Simmons is perfect in the small role he is given. It is a pity this movie will not be seen in the theaters, as it is that good. But you can see it at home, only on Hulu streaming. Stream it, it is worth it.

Why Is Music So Important To Us?

by Amy Zabel-Nordstrom

Why is music so important to us? Because it is an inherent part of our evolution as human beings. Life is filled with music of all kinds; natural rhythms, patterns, and notes, and our human creations of every sort, Jazz, Rock, Pop, Classical, Folk, Blues, and Techno. The art of sound is everywhere, and probably always has been. Music is old magic. Maybe the oldest magic, as we understand the concept. It is how we communicate, even when words fail us. Music has the power to build us up, or break us down, and allow for our more fragile emotions to find their voice, their place in our busy, noisy world. Music is not noise, but the opposite. It offers order, waves, and repetition. A safe, familiar place for us to revisit, or a new, exciting escape to expand into. How many times have we heard a song that instantly took us back to a memory? A happy celebration, or a difficult loss? It is in that piece of music, or well-worded song, that we relive the

glorious moments, or relearn lessons from a painful mistake. What music, or songs, do you like to work out to, cry to, shout alongside, or meditate with? Music, as you have already instinctively deduced, is the universal language. It transcends culture, environment, and time. It does not create emotion, it makes what is already there louder, like an amplifier (how appropriate). We all have a range of feelings, and some of them are smaller and meeker, but no less meaningful. Amidst this crazy backdrop of our current reality, music allows our emotions that might otherwise be lost in the din, to find a voice, a space to grow, to live, and just be. We get to experience, if even for just five minutes, a world where everyone can love one another, be kind to each other, and where peace and harmony rule. When we listen to music, we are engaging our entire brain, the benefits of which include

Continued on page 14

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9	28	40	47	75



Melody Land: Northridge’s Graceland Impersonator

by Adam Papagan

Elvis impersonators are a tradition almost as old as Rock and Roll itself. For decades, diehard Elvis fans have donned white rhinestone-studded jumpsuits, combed their hair into slick black pompadours, and learned to imitate The King’s exact mannerisms and singing style all in an attempt to bring back to life their favorite performer. However, it takes an unusually dedicated and determined spirit to want to impersonate not only the man himself but also the home in which he lived.

In the late 1980s, professional Elvis impersonator Danny Uwnawich (known professionally by the catchy stage name Danny U) began work on Melody Land, a scaled-down but still ambitiously over the top tribute to Elvis Presley’s famous Graceland estate in Memphis, Tennessee. Despite its much smaller size (Melody Land sat on less than one acre compared to the original’s thirteen), Uwnawich was determined to make his masterpiece as authentic as

possible. Superfluous classical columns and statuary were added to the home’s grand entrance. The front gates, adorned with guitarists and musical notes like the Tennessee originals, were repurposed from the ones used in the TV movie “Elvis and Me,” in which Uwnawich had a small part. He even sent his contractor to check out the real thing in Memphis so he would not omit any key details.

The extravagance continued to the interior of the three-bedroom home, which was adorned with crystal chandeliers, gilded toilets, and Uwnawich’s take on Elvis’ famous Jungle Room. The property also included various



Photo by Adam Papagan

assortments of Elvis memorabilia as well as a collection of cars similar to ones Presley was known to have favored. Twice a year on the anniversaries of Presley’s birth, and death, the home would be opened to the public so that fellow fans could share in their love for The King.

Unfortunately, Melody Land had to contend with a reality the original Graceland did not—earthquakes. Within a few years of being completed, the mini-estate was severely damaged by the 1994 Northridge Earthquake. Extensive renovations were done, and the home reopened in 1996. Around this time, Danny U got out of the impersonation

business, stating that he did not want to impersonate his idol past the age of 42, Presley’s final year. Uwnawich sold the home in 2002, and since then, the property has changed hands a few times.

Interestingly, Melody Land is not the world’s only Graceland impersonator. At least two other unaffiliated replicas exist in Orlando, Florida, and The Netherlands. Though none are as grand as the original, each replica embodies the tacky elegance Elvis Presley has come to symbolize.

Today, Melody Land still stands at 17912 Parthenia Street. Sadly, the new owners have removed all the original flourishes, except the front columns, and the heart-shaped swimming pool. Still, with a little imagination, when you drive by, you can almost picture Elvis walking through the gates, or at least Danny U.

*Adam Papagan is a historian, tour guide, and occasional consultant to The Valley Relics Museum. He is also host of the YouTube series “Rock and Roll Party.”*



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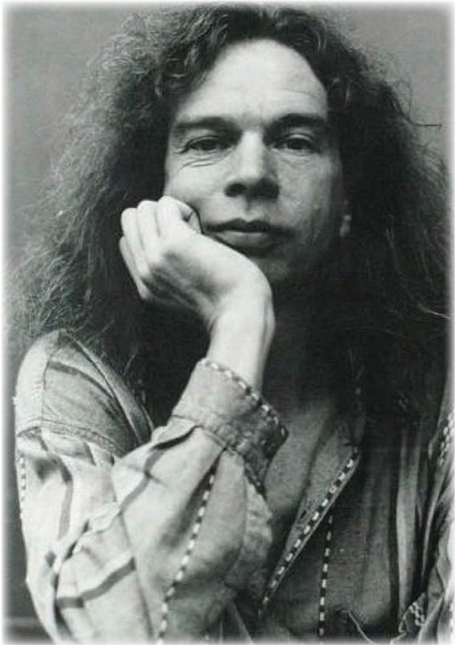
Lyle Mays Tribute

by U Cast Studios

Lyle Mays passed away on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020. He was one of the greatest piano players of all time. He won 11 Grammys, toured the world as a founding member of the Pat Metheny Group, he was into architecture, math, and was one of the most brilliant musicians to walk the face of the Earth. To me though, I knew him as a friend.

Lyle Mays formed the Pat Metheny Group in 1975 along with Pat Metheny, and during his time in the band, he won 11 Grammys and sold millions of albums.

Even though Lyle was an incredibly accomplished musician, he did not talk about music in the way that most musicians would, he spoke about it



Lyle Mays

more in terms of science and math. He didn’t consider himself to be tapping into the realm of music (something akin to Plato’s Theory of Forms), he considered his music to be an equation – something that can be quantified and scientifically dissected.

Lyle will be missed.

If you would like to listen to his music, I would encourage you to purchase a Pat Metheny Group album.





*by Daniel Bavi*



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## Movie Theaters Vs. The Studios, *continued from page 1*

there is some kind of deal made for every dollar that movie theaters bring in where the studios will get their cut, and then the movie theaters will get their money. Studios make money by offering numerous products and services, and the money they make from the box office is just one source of revenue for them.

One of the key components of the long-standing arrangement between the studios and movie theaters is the agreed-upon length of how long a film will play in theaters. The average movie will play in theaters for four weeks, with bigger budget films potentially playing for over two months.

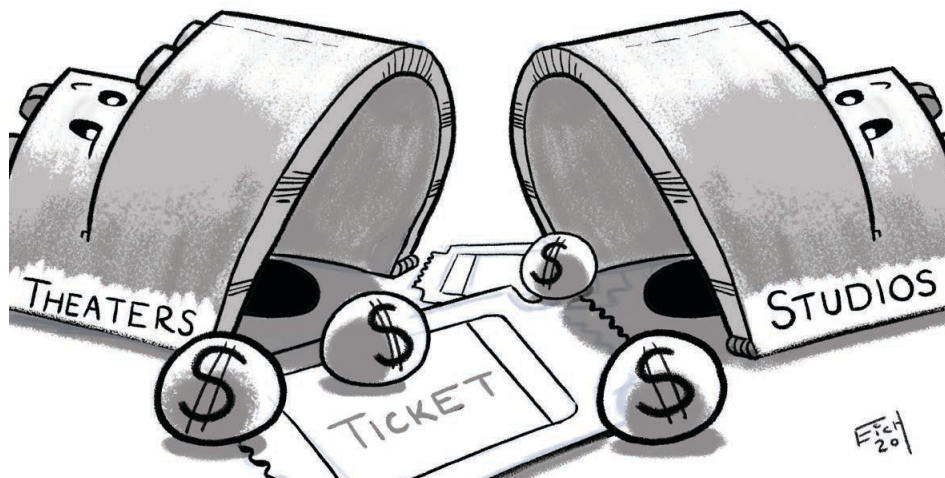
Most big-budget films make the bulk of their money within the first 10 days of release, but even a film like 'Endgame' made a substantial amount of money after its 10th day of release. For reference, 'Endgame' made \$258 million after its 10th day of release in the U.S.

The reason why all of this matters is because studios want to change the amount of time that a movie

has to play in theaters before they can move it to streaming and video on-demand services. Needless to say, this move has made the movie theater industry angry, and could even result in the end of the movie theater industry entirely.

This leads us to the agreement that Universal and AMC have made; the decision to reduce the release window, by which a film has to abide, before it is allowed to move onto home entertainment platforms.

From the studios' standpoint, since March, they are losing money like never before, and since they are such large entities, they need to do anything and everything they can to make money. With the advent of streaming services, consumers have more access than ever to high-quality content all in one place (at least each streaming service offers hours and hours of entertainment, even if a great deal of what they are offering is mediocre at best). One way that they can make money is by bringing in and keeping people



on their streaming platforms, and the best way to do that is by adding new content on a regular basis. That content can be in the form of shows, documentaries, and of course films.

The conflict between the studios and movie theaters boils down to money. The studios want to move their films onto their platforms faster because they want to keep their monthly subscribers subscribed by adding new content that will keep them around, movie theaters need

movies to say in their cineplexes because they only make money when someone buys a ticket and sees a movie in-person.

As time goes by, the conflict between these two sides will most likely dissipate, and if the film studios are allowed to purchase movie theaters (about which there have been talks), then more likely than not, the studios will simply add another branch in their sprawling web of businesses and services by purchasing cineplexes.

## Nintendo's Old Ways of Thinking

*by U Cast Studios*

For all the creativity and imagination that Nintendo puts into their videogames, the company lacks in one crucial area - services. I currently own a Nintendo Switch and PlayStation 4 and it is clear to see who does what better in some areas of gaming. I have always loved Nintendo games. Smash Bros., The Legend of Zelda, Super Mario, and Kirby are all Nintendo proprietaries I have been playing consistently over the years. There is a special charm to Nintendo games. You look at a game like Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door and just get a happy feeling while playing. This longevity is hard to find in gaming franchises these days. For all the amazing experiences Nintendo gives that is not just special for nostalgic reasons, some things hold the company back from being perfect. It mostly has to do with logistics.

I turn on my PlayStation and it is a one-stop-shop for my entertainment needs. I can stream shows on it, surf the web, engage socially, and even play Blu-rays, though no one really does that anymore these days. As the years have gone on, Sony and Microsoft have made their gaming systems more than just a gaming console,

and it has become the standard. Nintendo has yet to catch up on this front. Over three years into the lifecycle of the Switch, Nintendo still does not have these types of capabilities. Looking back, Nintendo's past consoles like the Wii and Wii U were lacking in these departments as well. It is not a necessity to have Netflix and Hulu on your gaming console, but Nintendo's lack of these services shows how archaic they truly are, and it bleeds into the important part of the consoles - gaming. The Nintendo eShop is its digital store for buying games. One thing Nintendo fans have always wanted is a library of their greatest past titles. N64 and GameCube games would go a long way. We saw N64 games on the Wii U, but a limited amount of them. PlayStation and Xbox e-stores have been offering old titles for years, and yet Nintendo still has to port some of their best games of all time. I can play Crash Bandicoot and Jak And Daxter on my PS4, but I cannot play The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time on my switch. Why is that? Because Nintendo refuses to play catch up with the rest of the gaming world.

Nintendo's mentality greatly affects their modern titles too. Nintendo put out a game called Splatoon 2. It is a team-based, third-person shooter. It is a creative spin on the formula made popular by games like Gears of War, and yet the online servers and multiplayer functions are lacking compared to an Xbox game like Halo. In Splatoon 2, the map rotation is limited to two maps, which switch every hour. So, when you sit down to play the extremely short rounds, you are stuck with these two maps. Map rotation is very important in online shooters since it keeps the game from getting stale. Nintendo, instead of utilizing all their assets, makes an odd choice to restrain the player's experience.

Add that onto an online service that lacks in social and voice chat capabilities, and the old ways of thinking that Nintendo embodies become more apparent than ever. It is easy to get over one game like Splatoon 2, but this mentality is rooted in a good amount of their titles and the overall experience of owning a Nintendo console. Smash Bros. Ultimate, the fifth game in the series, still cannot be played online since there is

so much lag. The player-to-player server function does not work. This is one of the most competitive titles on the Switch, and you cannot even use the competitive part of it. Pop in Battlefield 5 on your PlayStation, and you have a match of 40 or more players with explosives, bullets, and debris flying around during a generally smooth experience. One could make an argument for the challenges of voice chat on the Switch, that it is a better way to protect children online, but we cannot play a round of Smash Bros. without lag in 2020?

Once again, Smash Bros. is one game, but if one were to look at all aspects of Nintendo, their archaic nature builds up and can sometimes ruin a gaming experience. If only their systems, services, and online functions ran as smoothly as Sony and Microsoft, all would be resolved. If Nintendo games were made on PlayStation consoles, in some ways, they would be much better. It is tough to think Nintendo would be better off getting out of console production after the success of the Switch, but it is something to think about.



Weird and Wacky News

by Chris Carnicelli

From around the corner, down the street, and up your alley, here are some stories that hitting the headlines, and they are all TRUE!



Dateline: Merseyside, England

Planet of the Apes? A roving gang of baboons in Knowsley Safari Park has grown rather bold. They have been seen carrying knives, screwdrivers, and even a chain saw, which workers believe they acquired from visitors. Park officials say they have vandalized cars, and alarmed visitors, but many believe these stories have grown in exaggeration as they have been retold. Cornelius and Zera were unavailable for comment.

Dateline: Hyde Park, Vermont

I could just kick myself. Chris Marckres went skydiving but encountered a slight problem. The double leg amputee was harnessed to an instructor and landed safely, but when he landed, he realized one of his

prosthetic legs was missing, and he did not know where it ended up. His plea for help on Facebook was answered the next day by farmer Joe Marszalkowski, who found the prosthetic leg safe and sound in his soybean field.

Dateline: Berlin, Germany

Does Fox News know about this? Christian Meyer lost his running shoes to a thief. When he posted a notice on

a community sharing platform, he learned other residents had also lost their shoes. Meyer soon discovered the culprit, having caught the thief red-handed with a pair of blue flip-flops in its mouth. It was a fox. He followed the critter to his lair and found a stash of more than 100 multicolored shoes.



Music, continued from page 10

relaxation, and a release of endorphins that help us with stress and pain, and boost our immune system. Music has been used to help stroke victims speak again, and Alzheimer patients with memory retention. It alters our mood, expands our thoughts, and opens our hearts to the deeper human experience. And, shall we talk about the energy generated from listening to a live performance? So many of us know the rush of hearing organic art happening at the moment, the sweep of goosebumps from a well-placed note or riff, and how it lifts us into the stratosphere.

In our present COVID-restricted state, music is a crucial coping tool. It keeps us connected to



what was, and helps us remember what it was like to gather with hundreds, if not thousands of our fellow humans to celebrate art, community, and culture. Music also allows us to write new songs, and express new thoughts, break out of the limitations of stay-at-home orders, and find new ways to explore and expand in a safe, healthy, and productive way.

Music is so important to us, because it is a constant, never failing way for us to connect. So put on your headphones, turn up your speaker, or grab that instrument, and know that everyone around you is doing the same thing. We are all listening together.



Having a relationship issue?  
Is your significant other  
causing you problems?

Doc Lovelace can help. Look for a monthly relationship column coming soon... and she's looking for submissions. If you have a question, relationship situation, or if you're seeking advice, please send an email to DocLovelaceUCast@gmail.com

Drive-In Movie Event August 13, 14, & 15

by U Cast Studios

On August 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup>, Definite Media hosted another drive-in movie event. This one took place at the Rancho Santa Susana Park in Simi Valley.

This drive-in was put on by Definite Media and the company's owner, Scott Juceam, and the Simi Valley Soroptimist group. People purchased their tickets online at SavingSimi.com.

Proceeds from the first night's showing were donated to the Samaritan Center in Simi Valley.

Over the three-night event, the films 'Jurassic Park', 'Dora and the Lost City of Gold', and 'Ferris Bueller's Day Off' were played on consecutive nights.



Photo by Karen Hoyle

During these unprecedented times, families throughout our area are desperately looking for something to do, and this movie event gave them an outlet to have some fun, while still adhering to social distancing rules and protocols.

Definite Media is exploring doing additional drive-in movie events in the near future.



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