

# UCAST NEWS

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## What Happened To The World's Fair?

by U Cast Studios



At the turn of the 20th century and well past the middle of the century, there was a very strong sense of optimism about the future. And it was not without warrant. If you were born in the 1890s and lived to be 80 years old, you saw the creation of the airplane, the implementation of vehicles into everyday life, men walking on the moon, and radical changes in technology inside of the home – ranging from indoor plumbing and running water to air conditioning. From the 1890s to the 1970s, the technological advancements that world civilization made were unlike anything in the history of this planet.

At the heart of all the advances that were made was the desire to continuously push the envelope and alter the way that people lived their lives and interacted with the man-made world around them.

### Enter the World's Fairs

The World's Fairs were forums for inventors, creators, corporations, and the brilliantly minded who had eyes towards the future to gather and share their creations and visions with the world.

According to Insider.com, here are just some of the inventions that debuted at a World's Fair:

- Color television
- Touchscreens
- The telephone
- Ice cream
- Landmarks like the Space Needle and the Eiffel Tower
- The Ferris Wheel
- The dishwasher
- X-rays
- Broadcast television

With this said, what happened to the World's Fair? The last one in the U.S. was held in New Orleans in 1984. They have continued to be held internationally, generally known as World Expo, but their importance has been greatly reduced. Sure, people attend them (this year notwithstanding), but their allure and mystique has all but evaporated, at least in the eyes of Americans. Why is that?

A primary reason that Americans might not be as interested in attending a World's Fair is that in recent decades technological advancements have primarily sought only to simplify our lives, with less of an emphasis on actual innovation. Additionally, Americans have less of an eye towards the future than ever before (at least the long-term future).

*Continued on page 2*

## What's the Deal with the Coin Shortage in the U.S.?

by Jane Miller

Perhaps you've seen a sign like this in your local grocery store, fast food restaurant, or convenience store: "Due to the national coin shortage, exact change or electronic payment is appreciated at this time." The first time I saw a sign like this, I almost laughed. I always feel like coins are everywhere – under couch cushions and at the bottom of every tote bag I own (which is a lot).

After seeing these signs, I mistakenly assumed that our coin shortage was due to the fact that the U.S. Mint was simply shut down due to safety concerns, since many people are working from home these days. While the mint did scale down employees at the beginning of the pandemic, by mid-June production was back to normal levels. In fact, in 2020, the U.S. Mint is most likely going to produce more coins than it has in two decades!

The main issue is not a shortage, but rather a lack of circulation of coins. Since many people have been quarantining and living their lives from home, they have not been using their coins at local businesses. Also, some people fear contamination, and are thus ordering their food and other essential items online. Additionally, neither businesses, nor individuals have been depositing coins at



World’s Fair?, *continued from page 1*

Technology, it would appear, has hit something of its peak in terms of innovation. Will there be hundreds of thousands of new inventions and new ways of doing things between now and the year 2100? The answer is likely yes, but technology since the start of the 21st century has moved in two directions: keeping us entertained and making our lives easier.

When it comes to entertainment, technology’s impact on our lives couldn’t be any more obvious. Consider this: back in 1995, most people didn’t have computers in their homes that were hooked up to the internet, and for the people who did, internet speeds were incredibly slow. And if one did surf the web, there wasn’t a lot to do. In 2020, people walk around with computers in their pockets that allow them to instantly message their friends, families, and coworkers, and to read and watch literally thousands and thousands of hours worth of content (mostly for free). Nearly all Americans watch a video, play a game, read an article, go onto a social media platform, or do some other form of recreation on their smart devices every single

day. In addition to cell phones’ invasion into all aspects of our lives, we have also seen the rise of streaming services that contain hundreds of times the amount of content that Blockbusters and other video rental stores could ever dream of carrying.

In the last 30 years, there haven’t been many new things created that chart new territory. Rather, new technology that gets produced primarily aims to improve upon what already exists. In a light interpretation of McLuhan’s Tetrad, most smart devices, which have seen the most profound advancements since the 1990s, aim at just blending computer-based technologies with already existing appliances. For example, a phone plus a computer results in a smartphone; a TV plus a computer results in a smart TV that’s capable of internet functionality (access to Netflix and other streaming services, for example), and so on. These incremental changes to technology don’t attract people’s attention in the same way that ground-breaking tech did in the past.

There’s also the fact that as a society we’re incredibly skeptical that our collective future is going



to be bright. It’s not that everyone walks with their heads down, but rather, there isn’t a prevailing belief in the Western World that the future is going to be as great or as glorious as the past was. There’s also the issue that there isn’t a sense of something to conquer or a strong desire for society to accomplish anything worthwhile or grand. Flight has been conquered, sanitation practices are widely accepted in America, man has walked on the moon, and most people are entertained to such an extent that they don’t even consider how advances in the fields of technology can alter the physical world around them. Prominent

people and politicians rarely mention technological innovation, as they’re more concerned with issues like eliminating poverty, world peace, and even a concept that has little to no political persuasion impacting it – a person walking on Mars.

Is it possible that Americans can view the future with optimism again? Is it possible that corporations’ hold on society will diminish enough that real advances in technology can be made? Is it possible that leaders with visions can get into elected office? Yes, it’s possible, but it remains to be seen if it shall come to pass.

Coins, *continued from page 1*

banks at the rates they used to. According to a statement released by the Federal Reserve on June 11th, “In the past few months, coin deposits from depository institutions to the Federal Reserve have declined significantly.” The Fed relies on businesses like laundromats, vending machines, and car washes to keep the flow of coins steady and reliable.



In July of this year, the government established the U.S. Coin Task Force to address this shortage and figure out how to get those coins flowing again. While a coin shortage might not seem like a huge problem that would require a government task force, it is actually affecting a great deal of people and businesses. Approximately 6% of the U.S. population is “unbanked,” meaning they have no checking or savings account. This is often due to the fees banks impose to start a checking account or because they don’t have the government-issued ID required to open an account. Without a

debit or credit card, a person purchasing items from a store with a coin shortage would be required to use cash, which is a problem if the store does not have change. That person may have to forfeit the change they are owed, and coins, while insignificant to some of us, add up significantly for others, especially for those making minimum wage.

Coin operated laundromats are among the businesses that have been hit the hardest. Of the nearly 30,000 laundromats in the U.S., 56% accept only quarters.

When the coins are all flowing again, we may be left with some questions to ask ourselves. Is a cashless society perhaps better and easier? If it is, how can we help those who are unbanked navigate that new world? There has been an ongoing debate about the necessity of certain coins, most notably the penny. Due to inflation, the penny costs about two cents to make. Should we simply say goodbye to the penny? I know I wouldn’t be opposed.



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I Made a Mistake – Big Deal!

by John Tolson

Back in the day, I owned a retail store in the northwest corner of the San Fernando Valley called Magic World. It started as a small magic store in Canoga Park, on Topanga Canyon Blvd. After a year or so, we added costumes to our mix, both for sale and for rental. (Did you ever see a person in a gorilla costume on the side of the road? That was us!)

The costume business took off big time! It was good all year long, but especially at Halloween. We relocated to Chatsworth and doubled the size of the store to accommodate our increased business. We rented costumes for all kinds of events - birthday parties, themed weddings, even television shows and movies. (We provided most of the comical themed costumes for "The Tonight Show.")

After a couple of years, we added the sale of balloons to our mix. I was fortunate enough to be on the world record-breaking crew for the closing ceremonies of the 2000 Democratic National Convention. I was on the "Red Team". This meant days of blowing up red balloons. We also provided all of the balloons for the Times Square scenes for the first Spiderman movie. 10,000 balloons each day blown up by 7 A.M. for 12 days of shooting!

When one area of the store was slower, another was crazy busy! It seemed to be a great combination of the three major areas (magic, costumes, balloons) for us.

Every year in March, my management team and I would go to the National Halloween show in Chicago to see what was hot and new for that year and to place our orders. I took a team of 4-5 each year. We would fly out the day before the convention started and do some "touring" of some of the local costume and balloon stores in the greater Chicago area. These were friends that we had met over the years, and we could see what was selling and how they displayed their wares. There was not any threat to them of us stealing ideas because we were over on the west coast. This was years before the internet.

One year, we went to Fantasy Costumes, the largest costume store in Chicago. George Garcia was the owner and a great guy! He encouraged me to expand into the "paper goods" category, which was mostly self-service. This meant paper plates, napkins, plastic cutlery, streamers and decorations of all types with solid colors, themes and licensed patterns. Birthday parties were the number one theme, but baby showers, anniversaries, and "over the hill" parties were very popular. I did my research and planning. I talked to other party store owners and company reps prior to the launch. We jumped all in. I gave it a full 18 month run to get the word out with marketing, advertising and the like.

And it was... a bust. The dollars did not add up as it related to income and expenses. We shut it down, discounting and finally donating what was left to charity. We gave it a fair shake, but made a mistake. Bad on the ego and self-esteem? Sure. Did that make us go out of business or file Chapter 11? Nope. We chalked it up as a learning experience.

We all make mistakes, either personally or professionally. Should we beat ourselves up because of it? Nope. It becomes a learning experience. Did Thomas Edison quit trying after thousands of attempts to create the electric light bulb? What was his feeling when his laboratory burned to the ground? To paraphrase, "Look everyone, burning there are all of the ways NOT to make the light bulb." Everyone will make multiple wrong choices during a lifetime. Pick yourself up and keep going. Learn and take notes. It's all good. It's no big deal!

John Tolson is the Director of Marketing and Membership for the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce, where he has been for 10 years. He also has an independent insurance business, where he is a broker for many home and auto carriers. He has owned both a retail and wholesale business for over 18 years. 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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"To The Rescue" Saved Dogs and Their Grateful Families

The heartwarming stories of abandoned dogs and the grateful families who save them will be documented in the half-hour weekly syndicated reality TV show "To The Rescue." Airing nationwide in over 200 markets, the series is hosted by veteran TV producer-personality Tommy Habeeb ("Cheaters," "STAG") and debuts Saturday, October 17.

"Thousands of dogs are put down every year due to a lack of resources. 'To The Rescue' wants to save the most desperate dogs from this fate by transforming

them from a neglected stray into a loving family pet," says Habeeb.

Every show will revolve around one or more former pets, now awaiting their fate at animal control pounds, as they make their journey of hope. These formerly "unadoptable" canines of all breeds must fight to regain their physical and mental health and control their bad behavior. With the help of their human guides, the dogs transform themselves into the perfect companions for their new forever families.



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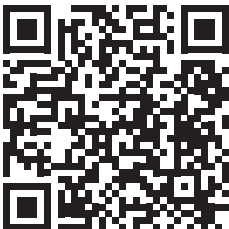
by Turner Stephens

Market-based economies are huge engines of innovation. They create many opportunities for collaboration, and to test if new products are popular with consumers. Globally, consumers spend trillions of dollars on millions of different products and services. With so much money being spent, there is plenty of profit to be made with the right product. However, just like toddlers that fall and get up many times before they learn how to walk and run, so goes the success rate for new products. Failures often lead to more ideas and better products. Sometimes safety failures create outrage and cause the creation of more effective regulations and enforcement for consumer protection. Top experts, like Professor Clayton Christensen of Harvard Business school, and Inez Blackburn, Director of Research at The Institute for Retail Innovation and Nielsen Global Connect, disagree on the product failure rate for the roughly 30,000 new

grocery items introduced each year. The failure rate for new products ranges from 70% to as high as 95%. Why there is disagreement here is unclear, but it may be because products that sell poorly from little known brands never make it into major distribution channels. Large distributors regularly report the sales of their products, while various small distributors do not. However, many product failures make a big enough impression upon the world that they are documented in the news. Companies either learn from their mistakes or go out of business. The pharmaceutical industry introduces only 40 to 50 new drugs per year. This is because of the high R&D and FDA regulatory requirements which add to the retail cost of the drug. JAMA Network recently published a report stating that the cost of bringing a new drug to market ranges from \$314 million to \$2.8 billion.

Turning a new electronic product from a concept to a manufactured item has a much lower cost than a drug. John Teel of Predictable Designs wrote in Entrepreneur Magazine that for exceptionally complex products, the cost to market can be in the millions of dollars, but most products are simple and can be done for around \$100,000. Cloud computing and open-source software have decreased the cost and time of development for many consumer electronics. The cost to introduce a new food item to the grocery industry is lower still, although the failure rate, as stated in the first paragraph, is far higher than new drugs or electronics. Rachel Zemser, Food Science Industry Consultant at A La Carte Connections, states that the average production startup cost for a food item ranges from \$10,000 to \$150,000 just to bring a first production run to the market. This does not include the cost of food brokers, food demonstrators, marketing, etc. There are hundreds of well-documented product failures and various reasons why they failed. Here are a few notable ones. In 1997 Clearly Canadian Beverage Company started selling Orbitz in stores. Maybe the product was named because the makers thought the colored candy balls floating in the drink looked like planets suspended in space, although the beverage reminded many customers of lava lamps. Marketed as an alternative drink with texture, adult customers thought it was disgusting, though children liked the taste of the candy balls. Initial Orbitz sales plummeted like a comet and the product died within a year. The refrigerated bottled beverages in many grocery stores generate the most sales per square foot even though most of these drinks are shelf-stable and do not require refrigeration. Even without refrigeration, the bottled beverages are a huge seller, particularly bottled water. So, with the chance to introduce a new bottled drink and interest in multicultural cuisines growing quickly, what might a new

beverage taste like? How about a vitamin and mineral-infused drink that tastes like beef or like fish? And who is the target market for these types of products? Dogs and cats! Marc Duke of the Original Pet Drink Company was sure he had a winner when he launched Thirsty Cat! and Thirsty Dog! drinks in 1994 because he thought pet owners would find these to be a much easier way to deliver nutrients to help their furry friends have healthier skin and hair. Also, a small national poll showed 40% of pet owners were concerned about giving their pets tap water. At \$1.79 a bottle, this product just sat on store shelves. Grocery and pet stores realized it was a bomb and did not place reorders. There is a lot of press worldwide about plastic contamination of our oceans and the massive problem of non-recyclable packaging shipped daily to landfills. PepsiCo thought they had a great idea. In 2008, after 4 years of research, the company created a biodegradable package made from vegetable matter that would break down in about 14 weeks in a hot, active compost pile. Sun Chips, their popular snack chip, was chosen to fill these eco-bags. A high demand snack item in a package that helps protect the environment should have had no downside. However, Sun Chips sales dropped 11% within a few months of being sold in the new compostable bag. It was not the looks of the bag; it was the irritating sound the bag made when handled by consumers that turned people off. The high decibel ratings the bag made while consumers were snacking on the chips were louder than voices during normal conversation and kept people from hearing the words spoken by their friends or on television and radio shows. PepsiCo responded to consumer complaints by creating a quieter Sun Chips eco-bag in 2011. To continue reading this article, scan here





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Los Angeles is Titledown Once Again

by Dustin Brewer

Comparing and contrasting the circumstances and differences in the Dodgers and Lakers’ recent championships.

In Los Angeles, the sports hierarchy is a fairly clear structure:

- 1. Lakers
- 2. Dodgers
- 3. Rams
- 4. Chargers
- 100. Clippers

For fans of the top teams, there is no “Maybe we’ll get them next year.” As with other large-market teams (Boston, New York, etc...), it’s become title or bust each and every season.

The Lakers capped off one of the strangest NBA seasons ever by claiming the 17th championship in franchise history, tying them for most championships for a franchise with their heated rivals, the Boston Celtics,. Their win came a decade after their last NBA title and in their first year in which they even made the playoffs since 2013. The all-in trade for Anthony Davis before the season started paid ultimate dividends, as LeBron



James and AD brought a title in their first season together, but now the pressure will be on the team to repeat. Lakers fans are nothing if not lofty in their expectations.

With teams in the West continuing to emerge and develop, and a returning superpower in the now-healthy Golden State Warriors, the Lakers will have to navigate an especially tricky offseason and free agency period to ensure depth in their key role players.

Down the street at Dodger Stadium, things are a bit more set up for an extended run. Much like the Anthony Davis trade, the Dodgers’ move to acquire Mookie Betts from the Boston Red Sox paid immediate dividends. Betts’ skills and championship experience finally gave the Dodgers a player

they could count on and turn to when things started to get tight. The emergence of Cody Bellinger, NLCS and World Series MVP Corey Seager, Julio Urias, and others alongside Betts has the Dodgers set up to maintain NL supremacy for the duration of Betts’ historic 12-year contract.

Each organization had heavy expectations hanging over their postseason runs. With the Lakers dedicating their season to the late, great Kobe Bryant, it quickly was apparent that anything other than a championship, even in the Orlando NBA Bubble, would be disastrous. For the Dodgers, it was their eighth straight postseason appearance and third World Series appearance in four years, yet they had no titles so far to show for

it. They were running the risk of becoming MLB’s version of the 1990s Buffalo Bills: a supremely talented team that just couldn’t get over the hump.

This is specifically true when looking at LA’s future Hall of Fame pitcher, Clayton Kershaw. “Playoff Kershaw” has long been criticized and judged for his less-than-stellar postseason appearances, including bad performances in the 2017 World Series against the cheating Houston Astros. With two wins in this World Series, Kershaw dropped the baggage of previous failures in exchange for the proper adulation and respect the all-time great has earned over his career.

Both teams have huge questions heading into free agency, and there’s a strong chance that these rosters of fan favorites will look different by the time the leagues are able to figure out when the next seasons will begin. One thing is certain though; whoever takes the court, or the field, will have much of Los Angeles behind them, along with all the pressure for continued success that comes with Lakers and Dodgers expectations.

Ten Reasons Cardboard Baseball Fans Are Better Than Real Baseball Fans

by Alec Moore

Major League Baseball played its abbreviated 2020 season without fans in the stands due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Well, without living fans. Most teams had cardboard cutouts of fans in the seats at their ballparks. In exchange for a donation to the teams’ charities, they let fans submit photos of themselves, usually in team apparel, and then the team staff made the cardboard cutouts and placed them in seats around the stadiums. To some, this probably seems silly. But I would argue that cardboard fans proved to be better than real ones.

- 1. They don’t get into fights.

I once encountered an under-educated fan who was certain that legendary Red Sox error-committing first baseman Bill Buckner had over 3,000 hits. He was convinced the famous error in the 1986 World Series was the only thing keeping Buckner out of the Hall of Fame. I informed him that while he came surprisingly close, he did not have 3,000 hits. (He

had 2,715.) The fan told me “That’s your opinion.” I tried to explain the difference between facts and opinions to him. He challenged me to a fight. I strongly feel that cardboard versions of him and of fans like him, though even less intelligent, would never attempt fisticuffs.

- 2. They don’t spill beer.

Not on the floor, not on other fans. These cardboard cutouts are total teetotalers. Totally.

- 3. They don’t arrive late or leave early.

These cardboard fans support their teams from the first pitch through to the last out, even if the game goes into extra innings. They don’t even get up to use the bathroom, buy concessions, or rise for the seventh inning stretch (even though they’re always stiff).

- 4. They don’t aggravate home fans by cheering for the visiting team because they’re from the other team’s town.

Continued on page 5

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# The Curse of the Mookino

by Alec Moore

In 1919, one year after winning the World Series, the Red Sox traded star right fielder Babe Ruth to the Yankees for cash. In 2019, exactly 100 years later and one year after winning the World Series (albeit by cheating) they traded star right fielder Mookie Betts to the Dodgers to save money. The first trade begat The Curse of the Bambino. Given that Red Sox owner Harry Frazee famously sold Ruth so he would have the money to fund a Broadway show, the curse seemed warranted. The Sox did not win the World Series again for another 86 years. I predict that this newer trade will beget The Curse of the Mookino and that the Red Sox will not win the World Series again until the year 2104. The city with the most well-known racist history in the country (among cities that have an MLB team) jettisoned the best Black ballplayer they ever produced and the best Black ballplayer in the game today. If that doesn't warrant a new curse, I don't know what does.

Well, here's something else that does. In addition to Betts, the Dodgers got pitcher David Price - a former Cy Young winner and 2018 World Series hero - and cash from the Red Sox for outfielder Alex Verdugo and two prospects - catcher Connor Wong and... wait for it... shortstop Jeter Downs. Yes, the Red Sox acquired a player who is literally named after longtime Red Sox nemesis and Yankees legend Derek Jeter! This may result in a double curse and could well mean the Sox will have to wait not 86 years, but rather 172 years, for their next title. But think of how big the party will be when the Red Sox finally win the World Series again in the year 2190! The parade of hover-cars in the skies over Boston will be epic... if our alien overlords allow the hover-cars in their sky space. Of course, if the Sox make further trades and acquire future players with names like Dimaggio Jones, Mantle Smith, Gehrig Burns, Mattingly Morris, and Judge Jablonski, you can add a few hundred more years to the curse.

Some may argue that Mookie Betts is no Babe Ruth. While on the surface, they may appear

quite different as Betts is 5'9", 170 pounds, while Ruth stood 6'3", 220 pounds, let's take a closer look and compare them in some very key areas.

### All-Around Skill set:

Both are five-tool players (hitting for average, hitting for power, running, throwing, and catching the ball). No, Babe didn't have great running ability, but he was the top lefty pitcher in the American League for several years, before switching to the outfield full time. So I'm counting pitching as his fifth tool.

### Edge: Babe

### Food generosity:

Mookie has been known to deliver meals to the homeless, while the Babe was known to deliver hot dogs from vendors directly to his own mouth during games.

### Edge: Mookie

### Big money contracts:

In 1930, Babe signed a huge contract (a whopping \$80,000) that made him higher paid than President Hoover, which he justified by saying "I had a better year than he did." In 2020, Mookie signed a huge contract paying him \$365 million for 12 years, which is more money than God (though, to be fair, God presumably doesn't need money), which can be justified by the fact that Mookie has already done more to help the Dodgers than God has done to help humanity lately.

### Edge: Mookie

### Royalty factor:

Babe was the Sultan of Swat. Mookie is a distant cousin of former princess Meghan Markle. Edge: Babe (If Harry and Meghan had remained royal, the result might be different, given that exhaustive research indicates Ruth's Sultanship was merely an honorary title.)

### WAR (Wins Above Replacement Level Player):

At age 28, Mookie already has 45.2 career WAR, which is really, really good. Babe had 182.5 career WAR, the most all time.

### Edge: Babe

### Stolen Bases:

Mookie is an excellent base stealer with 136 career stolen bases and just 27 times caught stealing for a fantastic 83.4% success rate. The Babe, despite being remembered for his portly stature, had a surprisingly high 123 steals. But... he was also caught stealing 117 times. And the first 13 steals of his career came before they kept track of the caught stealing category. So in the years that they were counting times caught, he was actually nabbed 117 times while stealing successfully only

110 times for an abysmal 48.5% success rate. Why did he run so often? Perhaps to get off the field more quickly and have a chance to eat another hot dog before he had to go back out on defense.

### Edge: Mookie

So as I've clearly chosen the six most important areas in which to compare the two stars, and the final tally is 3-3, we can safely declare their trades away from the Red Sox to be equally calamitous to the future of the venerable franchise. Prepare for the Curse of the Mookino.

## Fans, *continued from page 4*

Typically when the Yankees play the Rays in Tampa Bay, Yankee fans turn up in such high volume, they tend to drown out the Rays fans. But not this year! Those cardboard Rays fans were just as sparse and quiet as a normal Rays crowd.

5. No mascot assaults.

There have been several instances in the past of mascots assaulting unruly fans across the sports landscape. But this year, not one single cardboard broken nose!

6. No threat to sue the team for injury, and no injuries to distract other fans with worry.

When a hard hit ball or a bat that's flown out of the batter's hands flies into the stands and wallops someone, there's not even a need for cardboard EMTs to run over (which is good because cardboard EMTs are notoriously slow.)

7. A substantially higher percentage of fans than normal are pets. (This only applies as a positive if you like pets.)

Numerous folks submitted photos of their dogs to be turned into cutouts, and the teams obliged.

A couple teams even had a cardboard horse (No word on if they cheered so loud they got hoarse... Sorry.).

8. They fit comfortably into their own seats.

All fan cutouts are the same size, meaning no cardboard fans have to worry about an obese cardboard fan hanging over into their seat.

9. No embarrassing instances of failing to hold onto a foul ball or home run ball that hit you or that you dropped, and then getting booed by fellow fans and/or suffering from the pain of getting whacked by a ball.

Several teams even have a policy of sending fans the ball that hit their cardboard cutout.

10. They provide a great alibi.

A man once beat a murder charge because he was at the Dodgers game at the time of the crime and "Curb Your Enthusiasm" was filming during that game. They found him in the background on camera in the "Curb" footage and he was exonerated.



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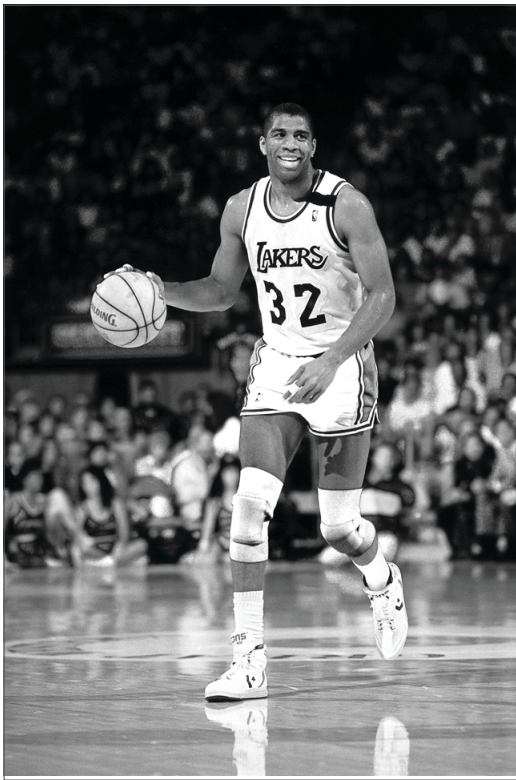
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This Month In Sports History: November

by Andrew Bernstein (NBA Photographer) | Cowritten by Veronica An



November 7<sup>th</sup>

In 1991, Earvin “Magic” Johnson shocked the world by disclosing his HIV-positive status and announcing his retirement from the NBA. In 2004, ESPN named Johnson’s announcement the seventh most memorable sports moment of the previous 25 years. At the time of his retirement, he held the career record for assists with 9,981. He had just averaged 19.4 points, 12.5 assists and 7.0 rebounds per game for the 1990-91 season and led the Los Angeles Lakers to the NBA Finals, where they lost to Michael Jordan’s Chicago Bulls. Johnson was selected number one in the 1979 NBA draft and played 12 seasons as the point guard for the Lakers. He won the NBA Finals Most Valuable Player Award in his rookie season and twice more, as well as another three regular season MVP awards, while collecting five championship rings. After announcing his retirement, Johnson returned to play for the “Dream Team” 1992 United States Men’s Olympic basketball team which won the Olympic gold medal. Johnson returned to the Lakers as head coach for the end of the 1993-94 season. He came back again as a player for another stint with the Lakers in 1996, this time as a power forward. In 2017, after years as a successful businessman, he became president of the team’s basketball operations, stepping

down in 2019. Johnson is also known for his HIV and health activism; he founded the Magic Johnson Foundation in 1991 and was the keynote speaker for the United Nations (UN) World AIDS Day Conference in 1999. Johnson was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame for his individual career in 2002 and as a member of the “Dream Team” in 2010.

November 15<sup>th</sup>

In 2005, nineteen-year-old Dwight Howard became the youngest player to score 20 points and get 20 rebounds in a single game, while playing for the Orlando Magic against the Charlotte Bobcats. Howard elected to enter the 2004 NBA draft instead of attending college and was selected first overall by the Magic. Howard concluded his rookie season with impressive averages of 12 points and 10 rebounds per game, and was the first NBA player directly out of high school to play in all 82 games. He was named to the 2004-05 All-Rookie Team. In 2005, the NBA instituted a minimum-age policy of 19 and began encouraging young players to participate in its Developmental League, now called the G-League. Howard went on to win three Defensive Player of the Year awards and make eight All-Star teams. He left the Magic to play for the Los Angeles Lakers (2012-13), Houston Rockets (2013-16), Atlanta Hawks (2016-17), Charlotte Hornets (2017-18), and Washington Wizards (2018-9) before returning to the Lakers for their 2019-20 championship season.

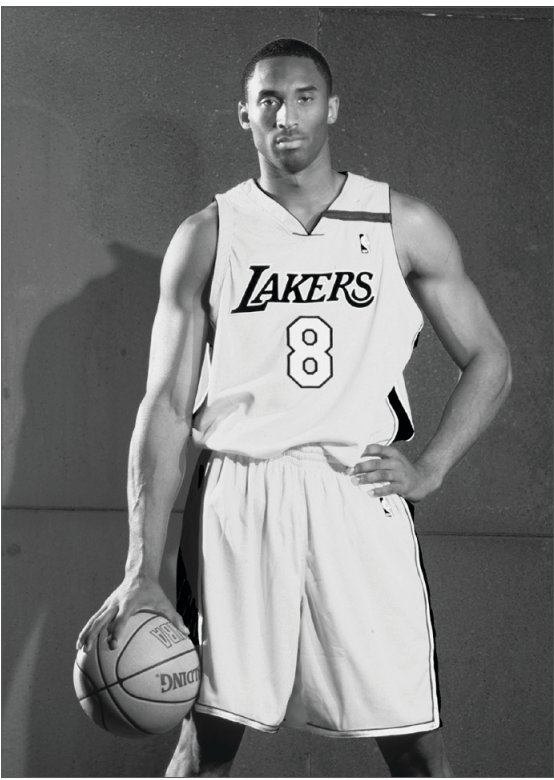
November 20<sup>th</sup>

In 1977, Walter Payton played one of his most memorable games despite a 101-degree fever. The Chicago Bears beat the Minnesota Vikings 10-7 with Payton running for 275 yards. Payton was selected fourth in the NFL’s 1975 draft by the Chicago Bears. He proved to be a valuable running back, winning the MVP award in 1977

and playing in Super Bowl XX. He played in the Pro Bowl nine times and had the most receptions by a non-receiver and eight career touchdown passes when he retired. Payton, nicknamed “Sweetness,” is remembered for his stutter-step run, a high-stepping, irregularly paced run which he said gave him an advantage over faster players. Payton retired from the NFL in 1987 with 16,726 yards and 110 touchdowns.

November 30<sup>th</sup>

In 2015, Kobe Bryant announced his retirement via a poem in the Players’ Tribune. Bryant played 20 years with the Los Angeles Lakers and was the youngest player in league history (at age 34) to reach 30,000 career points. He is the fourth highest-scoring NBA player of all time and won five NBA titles, two Finals MVP Awards and two Olympic gold medals with Team USA. Bryant declared for the 1996 draft after he finished high school, and earned recognition his rookie year by winning the 1997 Slam Dunk Competition. He was



the highest scorer in Lakers team history and was chosen to start the All-Star Game for a record 18 consecutive appearances. Bryant is known for his fall-away jump shot and fiercely competitive nature which he referred to as the “mamba mentality.” He is considered one of the greatest players in NBA history and has career averages of 25.0 points, 5.2 rebounds, 4.7 assists, and 1.4 steals per game.

Andrew Bernstein is the official team photographer for the Lakers and Clippers.

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





# When it comes to health, weight isn’t everything

by Maren Stein, Registered Dietitian,  
Adventist Health Simi Valley

In this country, we’re constantly barraged with marketing pushing us to adopt the newest fad diet. Keto. South Beach. Atkins. Jenny Craig. Nutrisystem. Paleo. Low-carb. No-carb. Low-fat. High-protein. Almost all that marketing has a singular goal in mind: convince people they need to lose weight in order to be healthy. But the truth is that weight shouldn’t be exclusively tied to health or diet. As a weight-inclusive dietitian, I know that in most cases, we can’t just look at somebody’s body size and determine whether they’re healthy or unhealthy.

It may seem strange, but when I talk to somebody about their diet, I don’t specifically talk to them about their weight because that number on the scale is not an indicator of health. Instead, weight is affected by a variety of factors, including genetics, the area you live, food access, history of food insecurity and more. Just think of the term “skinny-fat,” which has gained recent popularity as a way to describe individuals whose diets may consist of less nutrient-dense food choices, but are skinny. It’s a fat-phobic term, and it would be just as accurate to label those individuals as having unhealthy behaviors. Nevertheless, it’s proof-positive that weight nor

size is not an indicator of healthy behaviors or diet. Unfortunately, “diet culture” has become so pervasive that it’s convinced many that losing weight is the single greatest thing they can do to lead a healthy life. It’s not true. I have seen people of all shapes and sizes diagnosed with serious health conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and high cholesterol -- it’s not just fat people. Thin people also have health issues and get diagnosed with so-called “lifestyle diseases.” And plenty of fat people are healthy as well and have not been diagnosed with those same diseases.

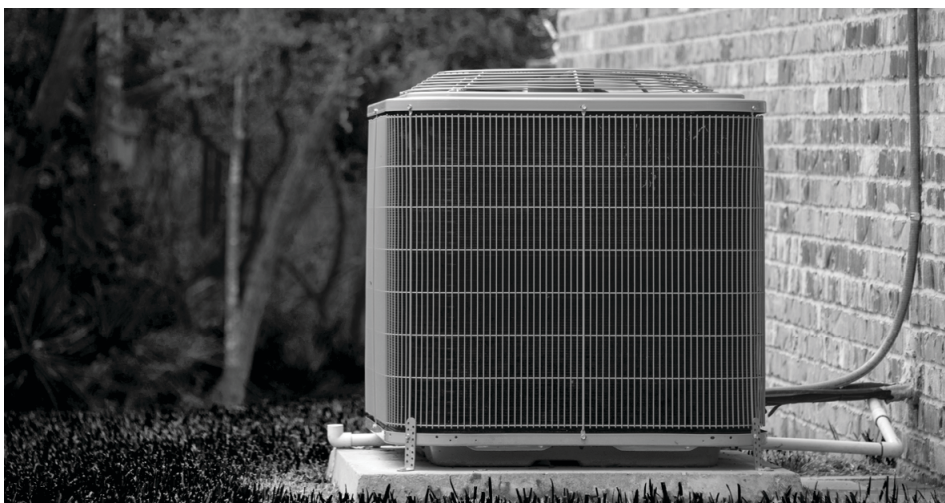
So, what can we do to ensure we’re leading healthy lives without taking our cues from diet fad marketers? It’s simple: add more fruits, vegetables and whole foods into your diet; practice routine physical activity; don’t smoke; and limit your alcohol intake. Also, since health is more than what you eat and how you move, having a healthy relationship with food can help with your mental and emotional well-being. Most of all, remember to ignore that number on your bathroom scale. *Maren Stein is a weight-inclusive registered dietitian at Adventist Health Simi Valley. Follow her on Instagram @guiltfree\_dietitian.*

# Is HVAC Preventative Maintenance Necessary?

by Service Genius

Regular preventative maintenance of your HVAC system goes a long way in ensuring not only its efficiency and longevity but also in reducing repair and operation costs. However, most people tend to neglect this commonsense notion and allow their HVAC systems to amass unnecessary wear and tear, and they end up ultimately receiving bad news from the repair person. Your HVAC system is a machine equipped with many components, each of which needs to function properly for your entire unit to work efficiently. Ultimately, an inefficient system will likely cost you much more in repairs than if you took simple, cost-effective preventative measures. It might blow your mind

to know that regular maintenance can reduce the risk of expensive repairs by as much as 95%. It can also cut your monthly utility bills by as much as 30% during high usage months. So why not treat your HVAC system the way you would treat your car? If you live in Southern California, it is recommended that you have a licensed professional service your HVAC system once a year, ideally before peak usage months. **What Does Preventative Maintenance Entail?** Depending on your system and your home’s needs, a technician may tend to one or more of the following during a preventative maintenance visit: **Electrical Inspection**



Inspection and repair of any loose or worn wires can help prevent a system blowout. **Worn or Damaged Parts** Belts, fans, drain lines and drain pans, among other components, can accrue wear and tear and require cleaning or replacing, which would cost much less than if they gave out and caused water and/or other expensive system damages. **Airflow Inspection** Faulty components such as dirty air filters, fan motors, and leaky or blocked ducts can inhibit airflow and lead to frozen coils and in some cases, a burned-out compressor. **Refrigerant Charge** Over time, small holes and cracks can develop in refrigerant lines,

and cause a refrigerant leak. A low refrigerant charge can significantly reduce your system’s power to cool your living spaces. A simple repair of the leak can save you a significant amount on your utility bills. Over the last 50 years, the home services industry has stood still -- until now. The team at Service Genius is able to provide a better quality of service with more innovative products and solutions by leveraging today’s technology for a cleaner, more efficient, more affordable home in Southern California. Call us today to schedule an appointment to properly take care of your A/C unit!

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Trying to Find a Winner in PS5 vs. Xbox Series X/S

by Dustin Brewer

The lead-up to the launch of the next generation of video game consoles has been uncharacteristically shrouded in secrecy. With release dates, pre-order options, and even prices not announced until just a few weeks ago, fans are still trying to decide which console is truly going to be the best for them. But instead of interior specs, there are a few other variables that might make the decision a little easier.

For years “PlayStation vs. Xbox” has been an argument between gamers who are sure their own console is superior. With the impending launch of the PS5 & the Xbox Series X & Series S, this debate is only going to intensify even more. As someone on the fence between consoles, it can be maddening trying to split hairs and decide which should be the new console for your home. To that end, it’s probably better to avoid trying to go inside and determine which console has the better CPU, bandwidth, and processor. Instead you should focus on the things that

are going to make up how you enjoy your console in daily use. Buying either of these next-gen consoles at launch will likely also require buying a brand new TV if your plan is to enjoy the highest possible clarity to its full potential. Focus on a few outside factors that may help make your decision easier:

Cost:

Edge - Xbox Series X/S

In a smart move, both developers will be offering budget consoles that are digital-only. The all-digital PS5 will be \$399 while the all-digital Xbox Series S will be \$299. If you were to tell a gamer ten years ago that they would be able to buy a brand new, next-gen console in 2020 for \$300, they may not have believed you as they lined up to pay more than that for PS3s, PS4s, and Xboxes.

Exclusive Games:

Slight Edge - Xbox Series X/S

Before buying either console, sit down and check out a list of some upcoming titles for both systems.



You’re going to spend quite a bit of money on games for these (more on that in a second) so it’s important that you have a good idea of what games each console will have that you will actually want to play. PlayStation has built its name on the back of strong exclusive titles over the years like God of War, Infamous, Uncharted, The Last of Us, and many more while Xbox’s big ace-in-the-hole, Halo: Infinite, has been pushed from a launch in November to an early 2021 release. Yet, it’s Microsoft’s purchase of video game titan Bethesda that may push it over the edge here too. Titles like Fallout and Elder Scrolls may begin to become Xbox exclusives in the years to come, which would give Xbox a massive edge with gamers who are loyal to the publisher and its titles.

Compatibility:

Edge - Xbox Series X/S

The current generation of consoles is seven years old, meaning gamers have hundreds of games, thousands of hours, and more media saved on their consoles from years of loyal use. So far in the rollout for the next-gen, Xbox has been very clear in their goal to make playing and sharing gameplay easier than ever. You can play old games on the new console, use old Xbox controllers, and transfer old game data over

to your new Xbox. The PS5 has been way more secretive about just how much users will be able to transfer over from their PS4s. While games will be playable on the new console, they have yet to answer how and if achievements & trophies will transfer over or if gamers will be able to view media purchased through the PS Store. This vague response has alienated more than a few gamers.

Game Pass:

Are you a gamer who absolutely has to play every major title that comes out? Then save yourself time and buy the Xbox. Microsoft is doubling down on streaming by expanding their Game Pass service. Picture a Netflix but for games that includes every title available as it’s released. Instead of buying new games for \$70 each, a \$10 or \$15 per month subscription will put endless titles at your beck and call.

If you’re loyal to either company for a reason, then you may already have your mind made up about which console you’ll be getting. But if you’re interested in getting into games with the new generation or you’ve been thinking about making a switch, knowing what you’re looking for will help you make a decision quicker, so you can be home playing games instead of standing in the store trying to choose.

The Valley’s Experimental Rock Masterpiece

by Adam Papagan

Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band’s “Trout Mask Replica” is widely considered by music critics to be one of the best albums of all time. The record mixes blues, beat poetry, avant-garde compositions, and plain old-fashioned rock ‘n’ roll for a sound that is absolutely original. What many people don’t realize, however, is that the ground-breaking album began life in a modest house in Woodland Hills. Captain Beefheart was born Don Glen Vliet in Glendale, California in 1941. Beefheart showed an early talent for drawing and sculpting, and many of his instructors considered him a child prodigy. His interest in music began around his teenage years when the family moved to Lancaster, California. There, Beefheart and his high school pal Frank Zappa would hang out at each other’s houses, drink soda, and listen to records. Eventually Captain Beefheart relocated to Los Angeles, where he formed his own band, but found little commercial success.

Finally in 1968, Zappa offered him a recording deal on his Straight Records label with complete artistic freedom. Beefheart moved his band into his Woodland Hills home to prepare for the sessions. With no formal musical training, Captain Beefheart composed the entire album himself on piano, an instrument he had no experience playing. The parts were then transcribed by drummer John “Drumbo” French and assigned to each player.

Rehearsals for the album took place over the next eight months inside the house and were, by all accounts, exceedingly grueling. The band practiced for up to fourteen hours a day. Improvisation was not allowed, and sections were to be performed exactly as written, similar to classical compositions. The band had hardly any money and was forced to survive on welfare and handouts, eating little food and conserving most

Continued on page 11

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Why Microsoft Flight Simulator 2020 Is Revolutionizing Game Realism

by Isabella Giotis

It is PC gaming’s longest-running franchise, as well as one of its most popular. Now, more than four decades after it was first introduced, Microsoft Flight Simulator has gotten a state-of-the-art makeover.

Early versions of the simulator included basic low-tech graphics with limited features to fly an airplane. Flight Simulator, which was created by Bruce Artwick in 1976, started as a set of written articles on flight simulation using 3D graphics. That same year, Artwick founded Sublogic Corporation to commercialize his ideas. It was first released for Apple II, but eventually ended up in the hands of Microsoft.

Microsoft Flight Simulator 2020 is conceptually similar, but otherwise, it is light years away from earlier versions. AMC Games describes it as “the most realistic flight simulator ever created.” It is a technical breakthrough that takes gaming realism to an entirely new level.

The 2020 version relies on more than two petabytes of Bing’s satellite imagery to stream a realistic simulation of the Earth. It is the equivalent of two million gigabytes. Machine-learning algorithms and Azure’s AI technology use these high-quality

satellite images to transform them into 3D buildings, terrain, water, and trees plus other objects. It includes around 40,000 airports, 400 cities captured in mapping scans, and a newly improved flight model. The use of topographical data in games is not new, but the exceptional resolution and detail of Flight Simulator 2020 is unmatched. The game features an immersive weather system, breaking the planet’s atmosphere into 250 million boxes where it can track real-time temperature, wind direction, and weather conditions such as hurricanes and tornados.

Your flight experience will be different each time you play. For instance, if you find yourself in a cold location, your virtual windscreen will ice up. Real-world pilots describe the look and feel of the virtual airplanes as indistinguishable from the real thing.

One issue users have reported is problems with the game’s responsiveness. Some say that when they were flying in more crowded areas, they noted that

the frame rate was slow, even at the lowest settings. Glitches are another issue. One glitch caused the terrain of a specific area to warp down to the planet’s core,



where players were able to fly down and find a hidden airport. Another glitch created a 200-floor skyscraper in Australia. The Microsoft team is working on fixing the bugs, even though some players are enjoying the unexpected twists.

If you want to enjoy the experience with other people, you can activate the “Live Traffic” button and pick other pilots to fly alongside. If navigating the plane gets too complicated, you can always hand over control to your co-pilot with AI Control. Pilots say it is like being inside the cockpit of a plane, which can be complex. With Airplane Mode, available for an additional \$11.99 on Steam, you can chill out as a passenger while reading the plane’s magazine “Stratospheres,” play sudoku, listen to music and podcasts through your unreliable in-flight Wi-Fi, eat bland airplane food or deal with a screaming baby on board. In other words, it is all of the things you might have missed by not traveling during the worldwide pandemic.

Many are eagerly awaiting the virtual reality support. According to Jorg Neumann, the head of Microsoft’s Flight Simulator development team, they have been working on VR support for over a year. The closed beta version is expected to be released by the end of November. The initial headset to support the game will be the HP Reverb G2, which is due this fall. The device will provide a whopping 4320 by 2160 pixel resolution. Work on adding compatibility with additional VR headsets such as HTC or Oculus will start after the Reverb G2 launch.

The latest technological advancements in virtual reality paired with AI’s satellite imagery bring mind-blowing prospects for the gaming industry. Imagine being able to move and explore almost any part of the world on ground level by foot, or in other vehicles. The opportunities can stretch your imagination, and while much the world is stuck at home, it could not come at a better time. Flying over India looking for elephants, over Chile to watch wild flamingos, or over Tanzania to gaze at giraffes are not common opportunities, but doing this in a virtual simulator can produce a sense of awe. The ability to live stream the game, fly with other pilots, and turn it into a team effort can help people break through their isolation.

Masterpiece, continued from page 11

of their energy for playing. Beefheart exerted total control over his band, berating them into psychological submission. No one was allowed to leave, and many of the members would later describe the atmosphere as “cult-like.”

When it finally came time to record, Zappa wanted an “ethnic field recording” sound to the album and suggested it be recorded in Beefheart’s home. Some initial demos were cut at the house, but Captain Beefheart, suffering from schizophrenia, accused Zappa of trying to record the record cheaply, and insisted on using a proper studio. Time was booked at Whitney Studios in Glendale, and the well-rehearsed band recorded all of the music in a single eight-hour session. Vocals were overdubbed (sans headphones)

during the following days and, just like that, the album was complete.

Though it sold poorly on initial release, “Trout Mask Replica” has become a venerated cult classic. Fans include “The Simpsons” creator Matt Groening and Red Hot Chili Peppers’ guitarist John Frusciante, and the album is regularly named as one of the 500 Greatest of All Time by Rolling Stone magazine. Captain Beefheart went on to a prolific recording and visual art career before his death in 2010. The house still stands today as a monument to finding creativity in unexpected places.

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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“Tenet” Review

by Chris Carnicelli

I have to admit, when I first saw the trailer for Tenet, I was way beyond confused, yet I was happy. Practically every trailer shown gives away the entire plot of the movie start to finish. I hate that! But this movie trailer? I had no idea what the movie was about. I love that! But, will the movie be just as confusing as the trailer?

\*\*SPOILERS AHEAD

No doubt about it, writer/director Christopher Nolan never makes your typical movie. From Dunkirk to The Prestige to his Batman trilogy, the man doesn't disappoint. This time around, he tackles the concept of time itself, a subject he kind of touched on with his mind-bending film Inception. We begin with a bang. While trying to extract a guy at a Russian opera house, a CIA agent (John David Washington) is captured by Russian spies and almost killed. This agent, who's never called by name, is only referred to as "Protagonist," (so I'll call him Pro for this review). He is recruited by an off-the-books organization called Tenet to go undercover to stop the world from ending. So, you know, no pressure!

Pro is then let in on a super secret that blows his mind: a nefarious megalomaniac named Andrei Sator (Kenneth Branagh) has discovered an algorithm from the future that lets him invert

time and allows him to travel backward to events already done by going through some rotating turnstiles. It's like the twin Earth portals in TV's Fringe. His plan? What else? Destroy the planet! Bwahahahahaaa! Yeah, this guy would make a great Bond villain. Pro's only way to get to this creep is going through a variety of bad guys and to Sator's estranged wife, Katherine (Elizabeth Debicki), who hates her husband. Helping Pro out in his Mission Impossible playbook of getting things done is Neil (Robert Pattinson), a Tenet handler.

But getting Pro to see Sator isn't going to be easy, as Katherine demands a favor first, and that means stealing a MacGuffin... sorry, I mean a painting and that's where the fun (and the head-scratching) begins. Pro and his friends create a major distraction (and it's crazy-nuts, too!), giving Pro the leverage he needs to finally meet the elusive and evil Sator. But things go really south when Pro, Sator, Neil, Katherine, and a chunk of plutonium all go on a wild car chase - twice - through inverted time! It's jaw-dropping, messes with your mind, and makes you start doing calculus in your head just to keep up.

The third act is just a mind-f\*\*\*, with stuff going on with inverted/backward time, so much so that

I had to go to YouTube and check out several videos (The Ending of Tenet Explained) just to get a handle on what the hell happened. Writer/director Nolan loves this sort of stuff and must giggle like a schoolgirl when writing it, knowing it's going to confuse 98% of the public. But I'll say this: his directing is flawless. It's precise, elegant, and dramatic and he never wastes a single frame. The screenplay is difficult to follow; God knows I tried! It's an intricate jigsaw puzzle of covert operations that, entertaining and fascinating as it is, is hampered by a lot of "temporal pincer movement" and "inverted entropy" gobbledy-gook jargon.

To their credit, Washington and Pattinson are excellent, making it all look easy when spouting this time-gibberish and moving around in a reversed world. They make a perfect team and have great chemistry together. Branagh oozes evil, a nice change for him. Also look for Nolan's favorite collaborator, Michael Caine, to pop up for a



small cameo. Debecki shines here as the emotionally battered wife who has inner strength enough to see things through. With a movie that's 2.5 hours long, it does hold your interest with all the eye-candy special effects, outrageous stunt work, and Ludwig Goransson's loud throommmmming score, so be prepared to have your brain tossed inside a salad-spinner with this maddeningly convoluted masterpiece.

*\*\*Showing only in limited release in selected theaters in areas like La Habra, Wilmington, Long Beach, etc. Check Fandango.com for theaters near you. VOD not available until 2021.*

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## Who Was Horace Mann, and Why Does He Matter?

by John Crestani

In the history of America, there are few people who have profoundly changed the country for the better or for the worse. One individual who radically transformed the country was a politician from Massachusetts by the name of Horace Mann.

Over 150 years ago, Massachusetts became the first state to provide all of its children with access to a free, public education. Over the next 65 years, every state in the Union would follow suit. The result was a publicly-funded educational system where every American classroom would be made up of about 28 students who were roughly the same age, and who would be taught by one teacher at a time. This model has dominated the American educational system ever since.

Born in 1796 in Massachusetts, Horace Mann practiced law before becoming a politician. He would eventually be named as secretary of the newly established Massachusetts Board of Education in 1837. It was in this role that he would overhaul the state's public educational system, and establish a series of schools to train teachers. He would later go on to become a Congressman. As a representative in Congress, he would enact education reform for the entire country.

Prior to the formation of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, the educational system in Massachusetts had become stagnant, and there was a sense that it was underperforming. The state's educational system had a rich history dating back to 1647, but by the time that Mann was elected to office, its elite status had fallen off. At the same time, there were a number of reform movements that began to spring up across the U.S., one of which was called the Common School Movement (of which Mann was a member). These two factors would have an impact on Mann's way of thinking, and the belief that education was failing in his home state, combined with the educational reform movement, drove him to implement his idea for education reform.

The Common School Movement essentially advocated for the

government takeover of education. Prior to 1837, education in America was largely executed by private institutions, churches, and the family unit (home schooling). The battle over education boiled down to the role that schools were going to play in the shaping of the minds of the American people. One of the primary goals the Common School Movement had was to educate teachers on how to follow Mann's guidelines in the classroom.

So, why does this matter? And what did Horace Mann really want to accomplish?

What Mann advocated for was a factory-model classroom which would act as a form of controlling the minds of the masses, and could churn out the type of workers that the future Industrial Age would need. Mann got his ideas from what he saw in Prussia in 1843.

Mann's methods and his goals angered a number of groups throughout the United States. Clergymen objected to the diminished role that Christianity would play in the classroom, politicians balked at the blatant governmental overreach by local school systems, and a number of Americans objected because they didn't want their children to be taught by the government instead of themselves or the church. Ultimately, Mann prevailed, and he is generally looked at favorably.

The Common School Movement shares a great deal with the Prussian Model, which would become the Factory Model of Education towards the end of the 19th century. In "The Underground History of American Education," Educator John Taylor Gatto describes Prussian thinking as this: "The Prussian mind, which carried the day, held a clear idea of what centralized schooling should deliver: 1) Obedient soldiers to the army; 2) Obedient workers for mines, factories, and farms; 3)

Well-subordinated civil servants, trained in their function; 4) Well-subordinated clerks for industry; 5) Citizens who thought alike on most issues; 6) National uniformity in thought, word, and deed."

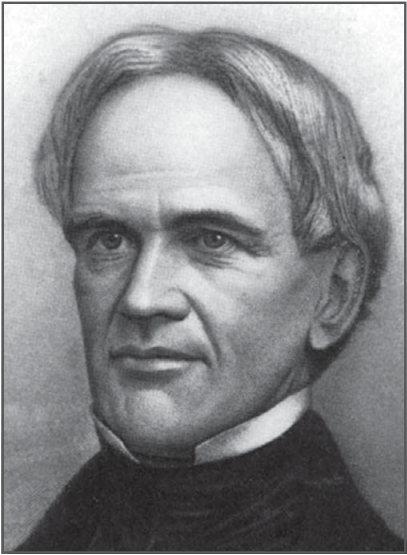
According to Mann himself, "The state is the father of children." It was from this worldview that he went about making the goal of primary education be in the state's best interest, rather than focussing on the well-being of students.

The Prussian system of state-controlled education would eventually take over from the

lower grade school system to the university level. Schools were established, supported, and administered by a central governmental authority that would supervise the training of teachers, attendance would be compulsory, parents would be punished for withholding their children from school (today children can be taken away by social services), and all curriculums and instructions would become uniform.

Horace Mann wanted a system where the government would shape the minds of the American people and somewhat control them. Horace Mann succeeded!

*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.*



Horace Mann

## What is Floatation Therapy?

by Antarra Belcher

A unique therapy that involves no speaking at all - that's right, no speaking at all - has gotten more popular this year than ever before. Perhaps this is due to the unprecedented stressors that 2020 has thrown our way, or perhaps it is because people are looking for alternative and more natural ways to heal their bodies. While Floatation Therapy may sound like pseudo-health, New Age mumbo jumbo, this incredible type of therapy is a scientific creation.

In Floatation Therapy, a "sensory deprivation tank" is used to remove all external stimulation and distraction to the patient. The patient is then able to experience what they call Restricted Environmental Stimulation Therapy, more commonly known as REST.

Here is a little history on the origins of this fascinating type of therapy. In 1954, American physician and neuroscientist John C. Lilly invented the first floating tank so that he could study consciousness more thoroughly by essentially cutting off all external stimuli. The patient enters a small, dark pod wearing no clothing and spends an hour floating in a foot of highly

concentrated Epsom salt water. The patient has no gravitational feel and no ability to hear, smell, or see anything around them.

Unfortunately, in the 1960s, Dr. Lilly decided to take his experimentation a little too far by distributing LSD and Ketamine to those who would then use the floatation rooms. This was a setback for about a decade, until in 1972 the health benefits of Floatation Therapy began to become apparent, and more tanks were made for purchase around the world. Even though its initial conception was here in the United States, it was not received very well at first. However, its popularity exploded all over Europe, before making its way back to America. Today there are over 500 Floatation Centers around the world, with more than 150 in the USA alone. An average of two to three new Floatation Centers are opening every month.

Are you considering a visit to your local Floatation Center for some relaxing therapy? According to studies and medical journals around the globe, Floatation Therapy can help with many mental

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Food Flies at Thailand’s Notorious “Monkey Buffet Festival”

by Greg Goodsell

With social distancing still the norm, it’s doubtful that one of Thailand’s most colorful and disgusting tourist attractions will take place this November: the “Monkey Buffet Festival of Lopburi.”

The festivities take place in one



of Thailand’s most ancient cities, Lopburi, which dates back at least a thousand years. Adventurer Marco Polo noted the city in his journals. Home of the majestic ruins of the Phra Pang Sam Yot Temple, Lopburi also overflows with the area’s macaque monkeys, who roam throughout the city’s streets uncaged.

The monkeys are prized as symbols of luck and prosperity. In the Hindu faith, Hanuman is the monkey warrior god, depicted in religious art as a human with a muscular physique and a monkey’s face. Legend has it that Prince Rama called upon Hanuman to help save his wife, Sita, from the clutches of a demon lord. Hanuman rescued Sita, and in so doing, gave the monkeys a revered status as a sign of good fortune.

Left to their own devices, and elevated to a higher spiritual status, the local macaque monkeys in Lopburi have taken unfair advantage of their human hosts. Visitors are startled by the frequent sight of a macaque brazenly walking up to people in public places to snatch food from their hands.

The Monkey Buffet Festival is one part Hindu observance, one part spectacle. Organizers dreamed it up for camera-toting tourists. Held on the last Sunday of November, coordinators line up tables at the 13th century temple and stack great quantities of food, ranging from locally grown fruits and vegetables to candy and cans of soda, in pyramidal piles for the monkeys.

Prior to the simian feast, dancers dressed as monkeys entertain the crowd until the four separate banquets, spaced in two hour intervals, are laid out.

The macaques descend on the tables and gobble up the food with wild abandon. The monkeys, overwhelmed by their good fortune, then begin to throw food and their own feces with wild abandon. The event brings smiles and laughter until the monkeys begin to act, well, like monkeys, grabbing people’s purses and backpacks and pulling their hair. Officials reassure visitors that while there are occasions when the monkeys bite or behave aggressively to people, they remain an infrequent occurrence as the animals know not to bite the hand that feeds them.

On a far more serious note, some scientists have noted that many chimpanzees engage in odd rituals, such as throwing stones at trees and pulling fellow chimps’ noses and ears to signify the deaths of members of their family. Given that apes are closely related to humans, researchers believe that this chimpanzee behavior could be indicative of the origin of human religion. So the staged rituals of the Lopburi Monkey Buffet Festival may evoke the presence of religious pre-human behavior in our evolutionary brethren.



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



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and psychological ailments such as stress, anxiety, depression, and insomnia, while simultaneously increasing mental clarity and creativity. Many people seek out Floatation Therapy simply for the physical health benefits that they receive sometimes after just one session. Scientific experiments and randomized studies have shown that people report a lessening of symptoms such as chronic fatigue, chronic pain due to arthritis, fibromyalgia, and tendonitis.

Some additional health benefits of Floatation Therapy include overall inflammation decreasing, immune system function increasing, and magnesium absorption increasing, as well as a more acute awareness of one’s musculoskeletal system and physical body. Side effects, especially for first-time users, can include nausea. I am looking forward to trying out Floatation Therapy later this month and am excited to see what improvements I notice in my own mind and body after the experience.

Pain Relieving Patch  
for Heavy Swollen  
Restless Legs  
from excessive  
standing,  
walking or exercise



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