

Daly City Library & Recreation Services
Active Adult/Senior Services
presents



Current Events with Frank Damon

Doelger Senior Center has been fortunate to have Frank Damon leading both our Current Events and History discussion groups for the last 6 years. During this time of physical distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Frank is sharing his current events discussion topics online. Starting on Monday, January 4, 2021 at 1:30 pm Frank will offer Current Events discussion groups each Monday on ZOOM.

Daly City Active Adult/Senior Services invites you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Current Events with Frank Damon

Time: 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm every Monday

Join Zoom meeting with following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87222786510?pwd=d0VucFhGYzhMMXVhSUNJTmdFWDNwdz09>

Meeting ID: 872 2278 6510

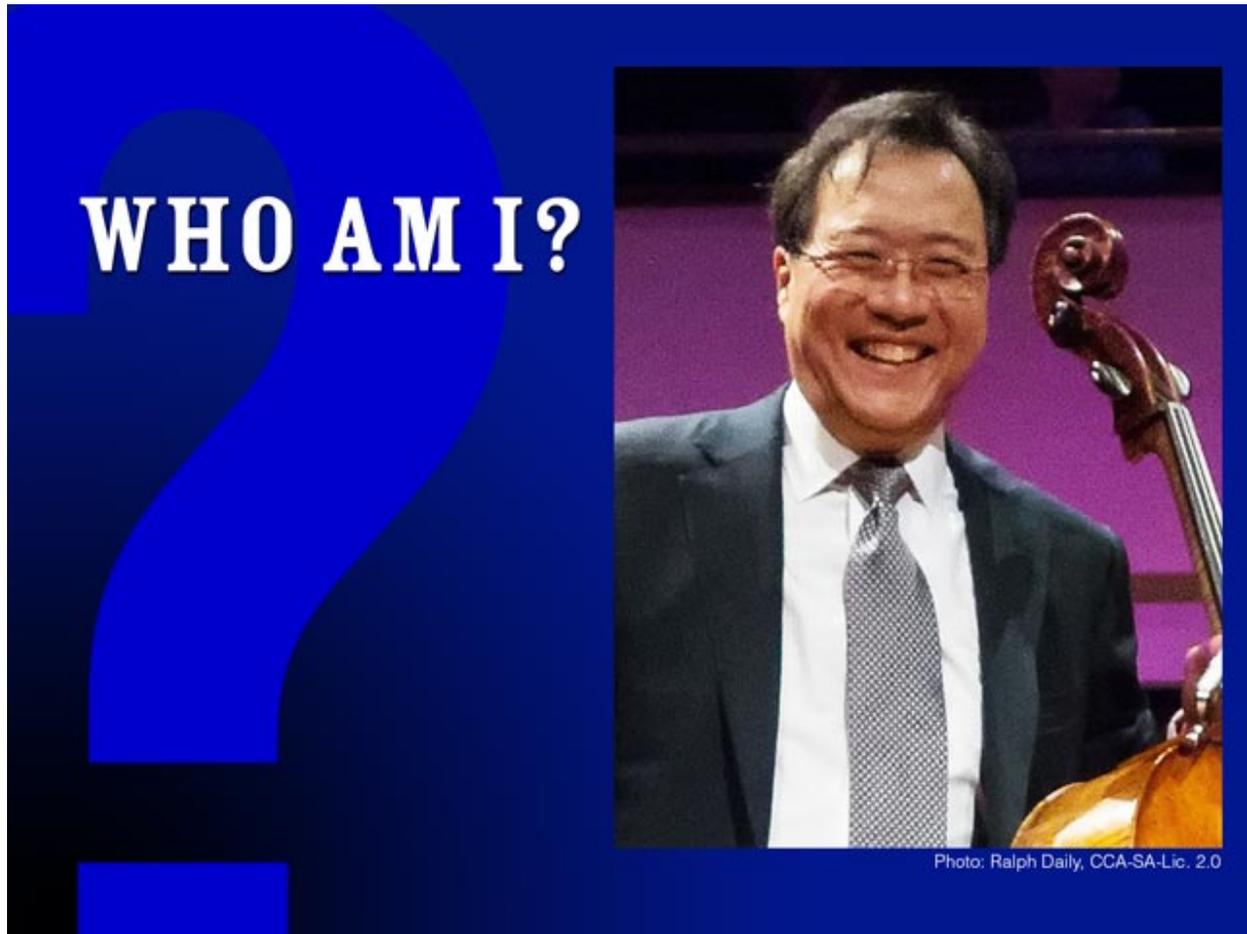
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Frank received his BA degree from the University of San Francisco with a dual major in Political Science and American History. He also earned his MA in Political Science and teaching credentials at USF. Over the course of his career, Frank taught in the San Mateo Union High School District and at Marin Catholic High School, Terra Nova High School, Golden Gate University, College of San Mateo, Skyline College and Canada College.

If you are interested in joining *Current Events with Frank Damon*, please go to www.dalycityseniors.org/current-events or contact Frank directly at frankdamon@my.smccd.edu.

Man in the News

He is one of the world's best-known classical musicians. He has played cello with the world's greatest orchestras. He has also been the featured soloist on hundreds of classical recordings. He was born 65 years ago in Paris, France, to parents who were musicians in their native China. He started playing violin and piano before he turned four, finally settling on the cello. At the age of seven, his family moved to the United States, where he was quickly recognized as a child prodigy. He is known for my classical recordings, but has also played with rock, pop, bluegrass, jazz, and Latin musicians. After receiving his second COVID-19 vaccine earlier this month, he asked if he could play a solo mini-concert for others who were waiting in the same Pittsfield, Massachusetts clinic. Someone filmed his performance and posted it on the internet, where it has been seen millions of times.



(Yo-yo Ma)

“Beginning of the end for Yemen crisis?”

In February, President Biden announced a major policy change for the United States in Yemen. Where is Yemen located? (In the Middle East.) For years, the U.S. has supported the involvement of Saudi Arabia in Yemen’s civil war. Why would the U.S. do this? (Saudi Arabia is a major U.S. ally in the Middle East — and a major source of oil.) However, that is about to change. Yemen’s civil war has been going on for more than six years. How do you think this new policy will affect the civil war in Yemen?

Saudi Arabia is the leader of a nine-nation coalition that supports the government of Yemeni President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi — AB-deh RAH-boo man-SURR HAHdee. Hadi’s government has been under attack by Houthi — HOO-thee — rebels and other groups. When he was forced to flee the country’s capital city, Hadi asked the Saudis for help. He claims that Iran, a major enemy of Saudi Arabia, is aiding the Houthis, but Iranian officials deny this.

For the last six years, Saudi jets have led airstrikes against the Houthis. The U.S. has sold many of the weapons and planes used in the airstrikes to Saudi Arabia, and also helped the Saudis with refueling their jets. Some U.S. citizens, like the people shown at bottom left, and others around the world have called for an end to this help. In 2019, Congress passed a resolution to end this military aid. The resolution was passed with bipartisan support, but then Pres. Donald Trump vetoed it.

“Beginning of the end” for Yemen crisis?

Iran
Saudi Arabia
Yemen
Indian Ocean

Photo: Felton Davis, CCA-SA-Lic. 2.0

Aftermath of a bombing in Sana'a
Photo: Ibrahim Qasim, CCA-SA-Lic. 4.0

Yemen is Starving

Protest in New York City

“We are ending all American support for offensive operations in the war in Yemen, including relevant arms sales.”
— President Joe Biden

In early 2011, Yemenis came together as part of the freedom movement that rose up everywhere on the Arabian Peninsula at that time. What was this movement called? (The “Arab Spring.”) The photo here shows Yemenis participating in nonviolent protests against former President Ali Abdullah Saleh in Sana’a. The protests helped to oust Saleh from office and end his 30-year rule. Yemenis freely elected Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi as their president in 2012. However, many people soon became frustrated over high food prices and other governmental problems. The Houthis, known officially as Ansar Allah, led these protests against Hadi, which really picked up steam when former President Saleh started siding with them. Why do you think he sided with rebels who helped force him out of office?

Fighting broke out near the end of 2014. Early the next year, the rebels were able to surround the presidential palace in Sana’a. Hadi fled, eventually moving his government to the southern port city of Aden, although he lives in Saudi Arabia most of the year. Government troops still control Aden, although they are surrounded by Houthis and other anti-government groups. Today, the Houthi rebels control most of the rest of the country. The Saudi-led coalition’s airstrikes have been more destructive than effective, killing many civilians and destroying civilian infrastructure. The Saudis have also set up a sea, air, and land blockade of Yemen, which has led to widespread starvation in the country.

Yemenis hoped for change in 2011, but a civil war broke out instead.



The composite image includes a map of Yemen in the upper right, showing its location relative to Saudi Arabia, Oman, Ethiopia, and Somalia, with Sana'a and Aden marked. Below the map is a photograph of a young man wearing a white headband with Arabic text, surrounded by other protesters. The text 'Yemeni protesters in 2011' is overlaid on the bottom of this photo.

Former president Ali Abdullah Saleh

Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi is internationally recognized as Syria's president.

Yemeni protesters in 2011

Since the start of the war in March 2015, at least 233,000 Yemenis have died because of the conflict, and many thousands more have been injured. More than 3.5 million people have been forced from their homes. Many have fled to refugee camps in nearby countries. But millions more remain in Yemen, suffering through what the U.N. is calling the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Why do we not hear more about this in the news? Human rights groups have documented hundreds of violations against the Yemeni people inflicted by the Houthi rebels, government troops, and the Saudi coalition. The war has created an ongoing famine since 2016. More than 16 million Yemenis lack regular access to food, and the country has the world's highest rate of child malnutrition. What is malnutrition? (Poor nutrition caused by lack of healthy and regular food.) Millions of Yemenis also lack clean water and proper sanitation facilities. This has caused outbreaks of cholera, a disease caused by contaminated water. The U.N., Doctors Without Borders, and other humanitarian organizations have tried to help. But in many cases, aid groups and packages have been blocked from entering the country. The Saudi government has set up frequent blockades of Yemen's seaports and airports, leaving food to rot in warehouses. The Saudis claim the blockades are meant to stop weapons from being shipped to rebel groups.

**“Yemen is speeding towards the worst
famine the world has seen in decades.”**

—Mark Lowcock, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator

The cost of the civil war:

- More than 200,000 dead
- 3.65 million displaced
- 16 million are food insecure
- 2.3 million children are malnourished
- 18 million lack clean water and sanitation



Biden signs \$1.9 Trillion American Rescue Plan Act

After weeks of debate in Congress, President Biden was finally able to sign his American Rescue Plan Act on March 11th. How did Congress vote on this bill? (The vote was 50-49, along party lines; no Republicans voted for it.)

Although it has been called a COVID-19 stimulus package, this \$1.9 trillion Act contains some provisions that might set a new path for the way the U.S. helps its poorest citizens. News accounts have focused on the fact that every American making less than \$75,000 per year is receiving a \$1,400 payment, even children and dependent adults. Do you think this money will help stimulate the economy?

Another part of this Act increases the child tax credit. Parents will be able to deduct a higher amount (\$3,000 or \$3,600 for every child up to age 17) from their 2021 taxes. What's more, many of them will not have to wait for 2022 to receive this benefit; the government can send this amount in monthly payments for the rest of this year. The American Rescue Plan also extends the extra \$300 per week benefit for people on unemployment through the end of the year. It will also reduce the cost of healthcare under the Affordable Care Act for many people, and provide money for rent and utilities. Restaurants and other small businesses will receive money to help re-open, as will school districts. Nearly 10 percent of the act, or \$160 billion, is going directly to hospitals and other healthcare organizations to help fight COVID-19.

Biden signs \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act



In addition to money for COVID relief, the American Rescue Plan includes:

- Direct payments of \$1400 for each eligible family member
- Expanded child tax credits
- Expanded unemployment benefits
- Help for many people to pay for healthcare, rent, and utilities



AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

While the American Rescue Plan Act is meant to benefit all Americans, it will have the biggest impact on people and families living in poverty. What is the current poverty line in the U.S.? (It depends on several factors, but one common definition is an annual income of \$26,500 per year or less for a family of two adults and two children.) From the words here, how many Americans lived in poverty in 2018? (45 million.) This number declined in 2019, due to the continued strong economy. But the pandemic may have thrown as many as 8 million more people into poverty since May of last year.

According to official statistics, nearly 12 million children were living in poverty as of 2018. This translates to one out of every six American children, which is by far the largest age group living in poverty in the U.S. Living in poverty, which disproportionately affects people of color, has a huge impact on one's life and future. Experts link poverty to effects such as physical and emotional health problems, decreased school performance, unemployment, and a higher incarceration level. These factors end up costing the United States anywhere from \$800 billion to \$1.1 trillion per year. Since the American Rescue Act Plan is expected to reduce child poverty in the U.S. by more than half in 2021 alone, many politicians are now saying we should adopt some of its provisions on a permanent basis.

The American Rescue Plan is expected to lower child poverty by 52 percent.



Americans living in poverty: (figures as of 2018)

- 45 million people overall
- 11.9 million children
(one out of every six)
- The poverty rate among children under age 18 is higher than any other age group

"The American Rescue Plan...is the most significant piece of legislation to benefit working families in the modern history of this country."

—Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT)

Activist Malala Yousafzai signs deal with Apple TV+

Malala Yousafzai — mahLAH-lah yoo-sahf-zye — is one of the most famous young women in the world. Do you know what she is famous for? She has become known for fighting for girls' education in her home country of Pakistan and around the world.

Recently, Malala signed a deal with the streaming service Apple TV+ to create a series of original programs for the channel. Malala plans to create programs including dramas, documentaries, and children's shows. Malala and Apple have had a relationship for several years already, as the technology company supports Malala's Fund, a non-profit dedicated to providing educational opportunities for young girls around the world. What kinds of stories do you think Malala will tell? Malala has an amazing and inspiring story. As a teenager, she became well-known in Pakistan for her blog posts, speeches, and film appearances on behalf of women's education. This put her in danger, because she is from a town in the Swat Valley, a part of Pakistan where the Taliban exerts a lot of control. What is the Taliban? (A group that wants to impose its extremist Islamic beliefs on every Muslim.) The Taliban issued a death threat against her, but she continued to speak out. Would you have had the courage to do this? In October 2012, the world was shocked when Taliban gunmen stopped Malala's school bus and shot her in the head. She was just 15 years old at the time. Fortunately, she recovered. And, instead of being silenced, she has continued to energetically advocate for her important cause.

Activist Malala Yousafzai signs deal with Apple TV+



"I believe in the power of stories to bring families together, forge friendships, build movements, and inspire children to dream."

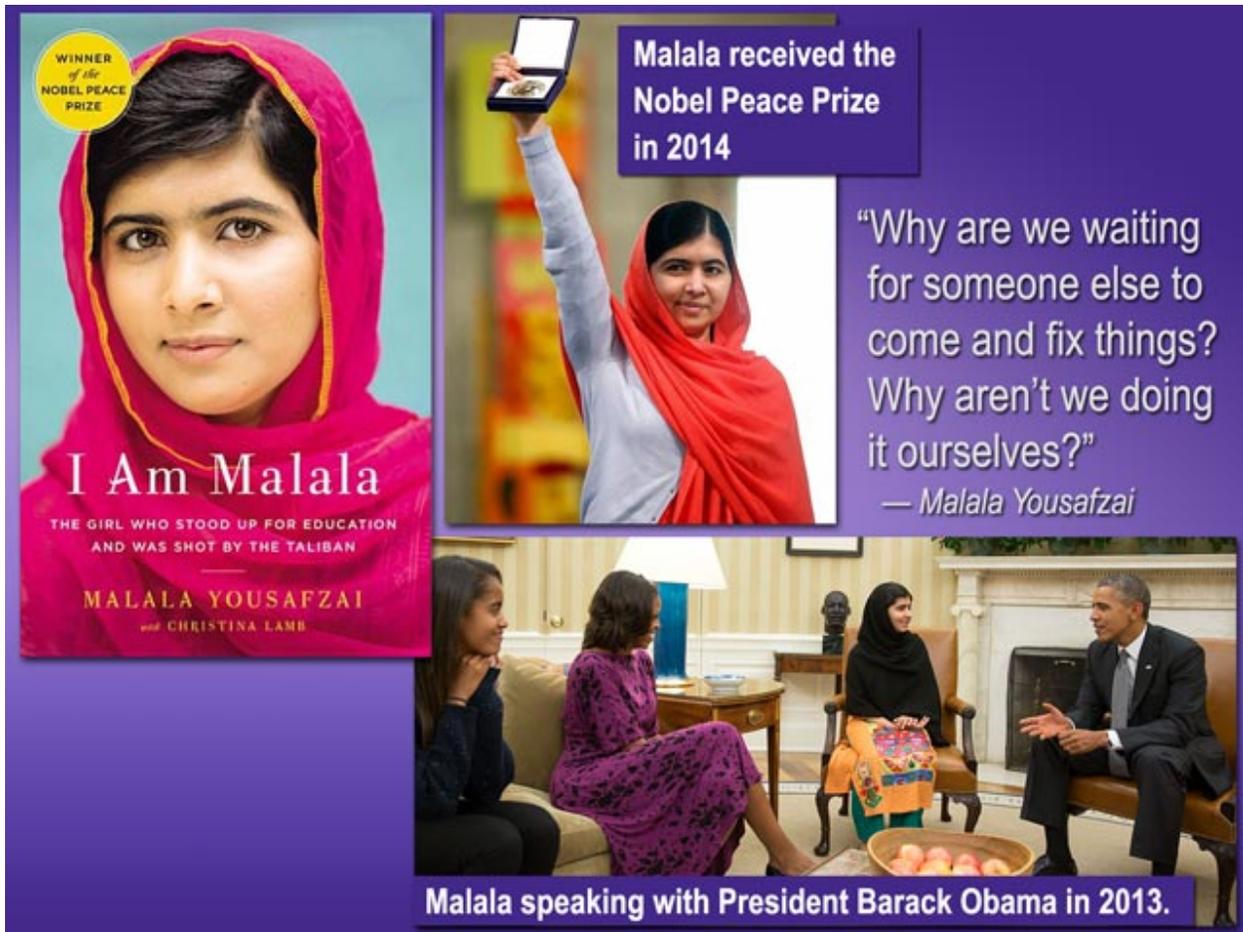
— Malala Yousafzai.

After her shooting, Malala Yousafzai was brought to a hospital in England for surgery. She was in critical condition for days. But she recovered, and redoubled her efforts to work for her cause. On July 12, 2013, her 16th birthday, she addressed the U.N. to promote worldwide access to education. But the Taliban in Pakistan continued to threaten her and her father's lives. Why is the Taliban so threatened by the idea of female education?

Following the shooting, Malala and her family settled in the United Kingdom. She graduated from Oxford University in 2020, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics. In 2013, Malala published her first book, titled "I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban." The book quickly became an international best-seller. That same year, she started Malala's fund, which has raised millions of dollars to support girls' education.

Malala has gone on to do many other amazing things while continuing her activism for female education. In 2014, at the age of 17, Malala became the youngest person ever to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Why do you think she was given this award?

In addition, Malala has met and spoken with some of the most influential people in the world. As you can see here, she met former President Barack Obama in 2013. On her 18th birthday, Malala opened a school for Syrian refugees in Lebanon



Country of the Week: Haiti

Haiti is a Caribbean republic located on the western side of the island of Hispaniola. It shares a border with the Dominican Republic, which makes up the other half of the island. Haiti is the most populous nation in the Caribbean, with a population of around 11 million. It is covered in mountain ranges that are broken up only by the river valleys and plains that are found throughout the country. The country used to be heavily forested, but after the French colonized Haiti, they deforested large swaths of land, clear-cutting areas to make room for plantations. How do you think this has impacted Haiti? Deforestation has led to major environmental problems, including in Haiti's largest river, the Artibonite. This river now supports little animal life. Port-au-Prince is the capital and largest city of Haiti. About 2.6 million people live there, and it is the economic hub of Haiti. Haiti's economy is mostly reliant on exports of manufactured goods like clothing, as well as agricultural products such as cocoa, coffee, and mangoes. The country's economy is heavily burdened by high rates of debt and unemployment. Much of Haiti's debt was imposed by wealthier nations, particularly France, which sought compensation for its slave owners after Haiti abolished slavery. There have been calls for France to repay this money, but it has yet to do so. Do you think France should repay Haiti? Haiti's president, Jovenel Moïse, has been in office since 2017. Recently, many protesters have been calling for him to resign, accusing him of corruption and economic mismanagement.

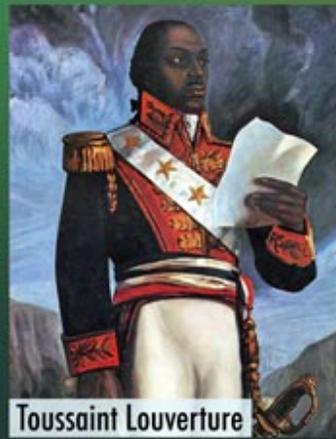


The Taíno nation had established a civilization on Hispaniola long before the arrival of Europeans in 1492. After Spain colonized the island, the indigenous population was almost completely wiped out due to disease, hard labor conditions, and violence. France gained control over Haiti in 1625, and created large sugar and coffee plantations using labor supplied by enslaved people from Africa. In 1791, a revolution led by former slave Toussaint Louverture took over Haiti with the goal of abolishing slavery and driving the French from the country.

After a long struggle, Haiti gained its independence in 1804. Haiti was the first country in the world to abolish slavery and the only country ever established as a result of a slave revolt. Did you know Haiti had this inspirational history? The U.S. occupied Haiti from 1915 until 1934. The U.S. military imposed brutal conditions on Haitians during this time, and thousands died due to overwork and suppressions of revolts. The occupation left most of the country's population in poverty. In 1957, François Duvalier became president promising to help the country's poor. Duvalier and his son, Jean-Claude, then ruled the country as dynastic dictators for the next 29 years. During their time in power, the Duvaliers killed thousands of Haitians to preserve their stronghold on the country. What responsibility do other nations have for Haiti's problems today?



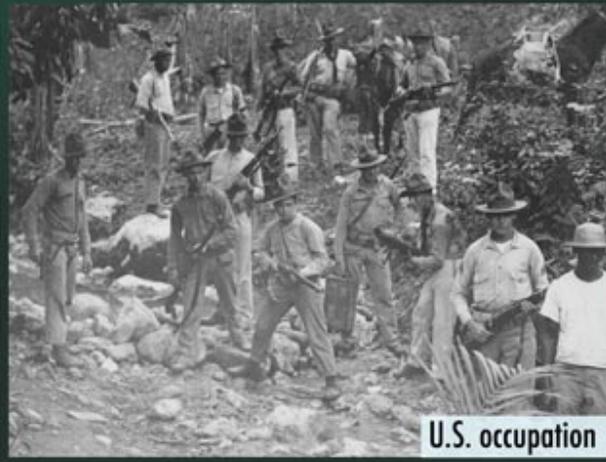
Vodou



Toussaint Louverture



Duvalier dynasty



U.S. occupation

This Week in History: The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

This week marks the 110th anniversary of one of the worst workplace disasters in United States history. The fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory on March 25, 1911 led to some much needed reforms in the American workplace, and had a permanent effect on the way we live — and work. The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory was located in New York City, near Washington Square Park in the borough of Manhattan. Workers at this factory received very low pay and worked in crowded and often unsafe conditions. Factories like these were called sweatshops. There were many sweatshops in big cities in the early 1900s.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY March 25, 1911:
The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire



The composite image consists of three main parts. At the top left is a logo for 'THIS WEEK IN HISTORY' with a globe icon. To its right is the date 'March 25, 1911:' followed by the title 'The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire' in a large, bold, black font. Below the logo and title is a black and white photograph of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory building on fire, with thick smoke billowing from the windows and a fire hose spraying water onto the structure. To the right of this photograph is a map of New York City with the five boroughs labeled: Manhattan (highlighted in red), Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. Below the map is another black and white photograph showing a group of young women sitting at long tables in a factory, working on sewing machines.

The picture on the right shows women working in a sweatshop. What do you notice about this picture? Like the workers in the picture, the workers at the Triangle factory were young women — some as young as 12 years old. Most were Italian and Jewish immigrants. What is an immigrant? (A person who moves to a country from another country.)

The women were poor, and many of them could not speak English. It was easy for factory owners to take advantage of them, forcing many to work 14-hour shifts. Why do you think this was? (They might have been afraid of losing their jobs; they couldn't speak English, so perhaps they had more trouble fighting for themselves; they were living in a new country, so they might not have been familiar with the laws; and so on.)

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory took up the 8th, 9th, and 10th floors of the Asch Building, which is shown above. The fire broke out around 4:45 p.m. on Saturday, March 25, 1911. Many workers were just getting ready to leave for the day. No one is sure exactly how the fire began. Once it started, however, it spread quickly. The fire department arrived relatively soon, but their rescue ladders and the water from their hoses didn't reach higher than the seventh floor. On the left, you see firefighters working to put out the blaze. What details do you see in this photo?

Most workers were able to escape, but others weren't so lucky. The building's main fire escape bent under the weight of the fleeing workers. Desperate, some women jumped out of windows to their deaths. Although the fire was contained in less than 20 minutes, 146 of the 500 women working at the factory died. In the aftermath of this tragedy, many people pointed out that factory conditions and bad planning had almost certainly made things worse — flammable cloth had been lying everywhere, some male workers had been allowed to smoke cigarettes on the factory floor, and the main internal light came from open gas lamps. Furthermore, at least one of the doors on the ninth floor was locked. Are you surprised that fires didn't break out more often? But this horrible tragedy did lead to some important changes. New safety laws required sprinkler systems in big factories and prevented factory owners from locking building doors. In addition, the fire helped strengthen support for labor unions. What is a labor union? (A group of workers that bands together, or organizes, in order to work for benefits, rights, and safety standards.)

Remembering When...

At one time, one of the most exciting things about going to the grocery store was collecting the trading stamps at the end of the shopping trip. Do you remember coming home from the grocery store with a couple of sheets of trading stamps?

Although many companies created trading stamps, by far the most famous were the Sperry & Hutchinson, or S&H, Green Stamps. Do you remember collecting S&H Green Stamps? Did you collect any other kinds? Green Stamps actually have been around since 1896, but they saw their popularity grow between the 1930s and the 1970s. Stores handed out trading stamps to customers for their purchases — the more you bought, the more stamps you got. Customers, in turn, saved their stamps in booklets like the one you see here on the left. Do you remember saving up your stamps in books like this? Did you have to do the “licking and sticking” of the stamps into the book, or could you get someone else in your family to take on this job? Retailers paid the trading stamp company for the stamps. In return, they received customer loyalty. Consumers shopped at stores where they were sure to get Green Stamps. Stores even advertised with signs to let customers know they carried Green Stamps. Were you more likely to shop at stores that gave out Green Stamps? Do you think this was a good way to get and keep customers? Why or why not?

When consumers had saved up enough books of stamps, they could cash them in for rewards. Stamp companies put out catalogs that featured every kind of merchandise imaginable

— from toasters to insurance policies.



What do you think of the items shown here? The size of the reward depended on the number of stamps you saved up. Bigger prizes cost more stamps. You could choose to take your books down to the redemption center. This was a storefront where you could turn in your stamps and pick your prize. Or you could send in your books and get your prize through the mail. Did you ever save up your green stamps for something special? What prizes did you get when you went to redeem your stamps? How did it make you feel to get these items? In the middle of the 20th century, Green Stamps could be found across the country, and they became a part of popular culture. In the 1960s, Green Stamps were at the height of their popularity. The company was printing three times as many stamps as the U.S. Postal Service printed! In 1965, the artist Andy Warhol created a print featuring a sheet of S&H Green Stamps. And in 1970, trading stamps went primetime, when they were featured in the plot of an episode of "The Brady Bunch." In that episode, the boys wanted to trade their stamps in for a rowboat and the girls wanted a sewing machine. Did you watch this show? Do you remember this episode? By the late 1970s, the economy and inflation had taken their toll, and S&H Green Stamps were just about gone. They made a brief high-tech comeback a few years ago; shoppers could build up "greenpoints" and redeem them on the Internet. Did you hear anything about this? Unfortunately, the pandemic's effect on the economy also affected the greenpoint system, and the website closed down last

October. But the idea remains valid. Many stores and other companies have reward programs that are clearly influenced by S&H Green Stamps. These range from extensive customer loyalty programs to being able to get free food or drinks after going to a place often enough to fill out a punch card.

Cuomo refuses to resign as accusations multiply

What happened

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo continued to defy growing calls to resign, saying that he would not yield to “cancel culture” even as the majority of his state’s congressional delegation and 60 state Democratic lawmakers said he should step down. Cuomo, a third-term Democrat, asked the public to wait for the results of investigations into the allegations of sexual harassment against him. “I did not do what is alleged, period,” Cuomo said. Last week, the number of women leveling charges of impropriety at Cuomo rose to seven when Jessica Bakeman, a former statehouse reporter, accused Cuomo of improperly touching her. Cuomo now faces two separate investigations—one overseen by state Attorney General Letitia James and an impeachment investigation by the State Assembly. One accuser, Charlotte Bennett, 25, met with investigators for four hours, turned over 120 pages of records, and said Cuomo, 63, often talked about his “hand size and what the large size of his hands indicated,” her lawyer said.

Cuomo, already engulfed in a parallel scandal involving the underreporting of nursing home residents who died from Covid-19, also faces accusations that his “vaccine czar,” Larry Schwartz, phoned county officials to ensure their loyalty ahead of the placement of 10 mass vaccination sites. One Democratic county executive filed an ethics complaint and said he felt that Schwartz had tied support for Cuomo to vaccine distribution. “At best, it was inappropriate,” said the county official, who was not named. “At worst, it was clearly over the ethical line.”

What the columnists said

Cuomo does deserve due process, said Karen Tumulty in *The Washington Post*, and the fact that he is getting it shows that “the #MeToo movement has evolved to the point where due process is possible for those accused of wrongdoing.” That’s a positive development. Cuomo is getting the independent inquiry these charges merit. But if Cuomo wants to maintain it will exonerate him, he and his staff should stop trying to pressure accusers and state officials and “let the process work.”

New York’s Democrats now “have the best of both worlds,” said Noah Rothman in *CommentaryMagazine.com*. The harassment allegations against Cuomo give New York’s Democrats a way to “hold Cuomo accountable without indicting their party in the process.” The focus on Cuomo’s sexual improprieties instead of his Covid-related failings lets them divorce themselves from the “imperious governor” without tarnishing the myth that Democrats have capably handled the pandemic.

Conservatives now “dunking” on Cuomo and the Democrats have no shame, said Tim Miller in *TheBulwark.com*. Most New York Democrats are now calling on Cuomo to resign, whereas when more than 20 women made allegations of harassment, assault, and even rape against Trump, Republicans hid behind craven “excuse making” and didn’t even call for investigations. In “a properly functioning democratic republic,” parties do not tolerate one of their own abusing women. “The GOP should take note.”

Biden promises vaccine doses for all by May

What happened

Hopes grew this week that the end of pandemic is in sight, as the U.S. hit record numbers of daily vaccinations and President Biden vowed to make doses available to every adult American by May. Nearly 6 million shots were administered over last weekend, after a week in which an average 2.4 million shots were given daily—a 40 percent increase from early February. Some 30 percent of all American adults and two-thirds of those over 65 have now received at least one shot, and nearly 40 million Americans are fully vaccinated. In a primetime address last week, Biden promised that ramped-up production and the purchase of new doses would mean every adult could be inoculated by the end of May. With infection, death, and hospital rates steadily dropping, he said, if Americans remain vigilant there's "a good chance" of returning to a semblance of normalcy by July 4, with small gatherings of families and friends. "That will make this Independence Day truly special," Biden said, "where we not only mark our independence as a nation but we begin to mark our independence from this virus."

Alaska and Mississippi became the first states to open vaccination to all adults, as Connecticut and Michigan said they'd do likewise by April 5 and Ohio opened eligibility to anyone 40 and older. "Get your shots, friends—and let's get back to normal!" Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves exhorted on Twitter. But Mississippi was one of more than a dozen states that lifted nearly all restrictions, even as cases crept up in some states in the upper Midwest, Northeast, and Mid-Atlantic. Public-health experts warned that as more-contagious variants spread, another surge is possible if caution is abandoned. "This is not the time to let up," said Biden.

What the editorials said

How wonderful to have "competent leadership," said the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Unlike his predecessor, Biden is "willing to take responsibility for a national crisis," and has reminded us what a "newly sentient national government" can achieve. The pandemic is not yet over, but thanks to the Biden administration's efforts to speed vaccine production and buy 800 million doses, "the distance to that celebratory day is getting shorter."



A mass-vaccination site in Seattle

Biden's self-congratulatory speech felt "like a con job," said the *New York Post*. He promised that people can gather outdoors with friends by July, but millions of Americans are already doing that. He "made a big deal of upping the vaccine supply" when that was "hardwired in long before he took office." In his effort to portray himself as a savior, Biden sounded like he was "trying to sell Americans a bridge they already own."

What the columnists said

Biden should give President Trump his due, said Rich Lowry in *National*

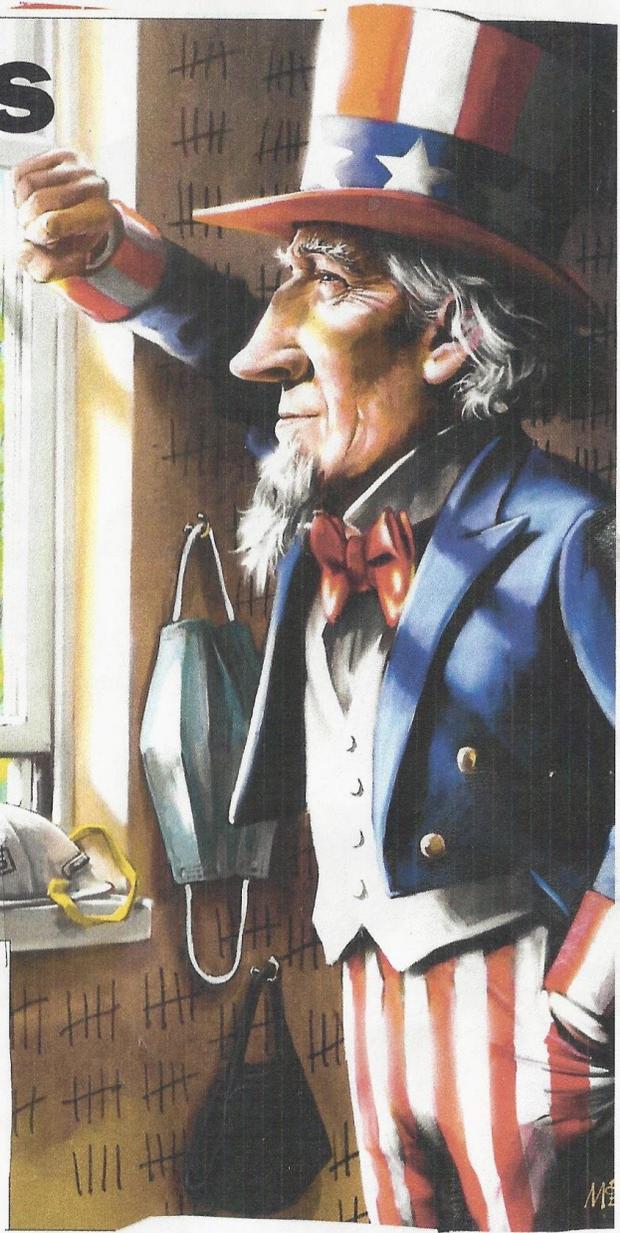
Review.com. Without Trump's bold Operation Warp Speed initiative, vaccine doses would not now be rolling out by the millions. Biden may have ramped up vaccine production and distribution, but he was building on Trump's "undeniable, important contributions." Instead of acknowledging that reality, he acts like "he had to conjure the vaccines out of nowhere."

We haven't forgotten what Trump gave us, said Frida Ghitis in *CNN.com*: an "excruciating, dystopian year" in which 400,000 Americans died. Trump told Americans the virus was "a little flu" that was "going away," and callously ignored its casualties. In his "moving, compassionate" speech, Biden offered a stunning contrast—and his accelerated vaccine schedule showed he can deliver for a suffering nation. It's impossible not to wonder how many lives would have been saved if we'd "had a reasonable, competent, stable president when the coronavirus struck."

Herd immunity may already be kicking in, said David Leonhardt in *The New York Times*. Some scientists estimate that about 30 percent of Americans have been infected with the coronavirus, and about 30 percent have received at least one vaccine shot. There's overlap between the two groups, but more than 40 percent now have some protection from Covid, so the virus has fewer people to infect. But as states "rush to lift mask mandates and restrictions on indoor gatherings," the twin threats of "risky behavior and new virus variants" pose a continued danger. Remember: About 12,000 Americans died from Covid in the past week. Better days may be coming, but "the crisis is still with us."

The end is in sight

After a year of lockdowns, pain, and death, vaccines offer liberation by summer



One year on: How has the pandemic changed us?

At this time in March a year ago, “we realized everything was about to change,” said Remy Tumin in *NYTimes.com*. As cases of Covid-19 spread, the World Health Organization declared a pandemic, fear gripped us, and normal life shut down. More than 540,000 Americans and 2.7 million people in total have died, and millions have lost their jobs and businesses. Far from being the “great leveler” that some predicted, the pandemic exacerbated the inequities of our society. While the office workers who began working from home on laptops and video calls were mostly white and relatively affluent, the “essential workers” who kept our hospitals, supermarkets, and our country running were disproportionately brown-skinned and lower-income, and their communities were ravaged by the virus. With mass vaccinations now underway, we survivors are wondering what awaits at the end of this long, dark tunnel. There are so many questions, said Nicholas Goldberg in the *Los Angeles Times*. How will a lost year of schooling and socialization affect our children? “Will we ever go back to hugging and shaking hands?” And with 42 percent of adults reporting struggles with anxiety and depression this year, how long before we “work through the trauma of Covid and put it in the past?”

We’ll never “fully return to the way we used to live and work,” said Paul Krugman in *The New York Times*. When 42 percent of U.S. workers started working remotely a year ago, most found they were more productive. Coupled with a need for physical space, this spurred a mini-exodus to the suburbs and rural areas, which may continue after offices reopen. Eventually, though, we’ll strike a balance between remote work and the energizing, in-person interaction of office life. “A rethinking is underway in



A memorial in Brooklyn

education,” too, said Donna St. George in *WashingtonPost.com*. “The pandemic showed, unmistakably, that most students learn best in person.” But online learning provides a new tool to reach students who can’t make it to the classroom or who want to take specialized classes in another district.

Who is this “we”? said John Rash in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. Previous crises—from World War II to 9/11—have created the feeling that “we’re all in this together.” But this one has left us “more divided than ever.”

Thanks to the erratic, divisive leadership of then-President Trump, nearly half the country refused to take the pandemic seriously. Millions still reject commonsense measures like mask wearing as sinister incursions on their freedom. Even before the pandemic, we had become a nation without a shared set of facts, said Elliott McLaughlin in *CNN.com*. This erosion of agreed-upon truth “dealt us deadly consequences during the pandemic” and bodes ill for our handling of future crises.

The immediate challenge is recovery from this one, said Jacob Stern in *TheAtlantic.com*. By its very nature, a pandemic is “at once the most universal of disasters and the loneliest.” Cooped up at home, we’ve had no choice but to inhabit our own realities and cope with very different kinds of loss and grief. The other “psychological archvillain here is uncertainty,” said Matt Simon in *Wired.com*. We’ve been fighting a new, invisible enemy with guesswork and evolving science, and even now it’s not clear when, or if, we’ll reach herd immunity. Like returning soldiers from war, we may feel both haunted and grateful when we return to a new normal, and never take it for granted again.

We Are Not Silent

BY LUCY
FELDMAN

CONFRONTING AMERICA'S LEGACY OF ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE BY CADY LANG



Artwork by Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya

A HISTORY OF HATE

1882

President Chester Arthur signs the Chinese Exclusion Act, halting legal Chinese immigration until 1943



1942

Some 120,000 people of Japanese descent are rounded up and sent to incarceration camps, where many are held for more than three years

1871

As Chinese migrants begin arriving on the West Coast, xenophobia runs rampant; in 1871, a mob of white rioters descends on Los Angeles' Chinatown, shooting and hanging 18 Chinese men and boys

1885

White miners in Wyoming massacre 28 Chinese co-workers, blaming them for poor working conditions

1981

With anti-Asian racism spiking after the Vietnam War, the Ku Klux Klan sets fire to Vietnamese refugees' houses and boats in Texas



1982

Vincent Chin, 28, a Chinese American, is murdered in Detroit by two white autoworkers who assume he is Japanese and blame him for the auto industry's decline

2001

The Sikh Coalition documents more than 300 cases of violence and discrimination against Sikh Americans in the first month after the Sept. 11 attacks



2021

A white man opens fire at three spas around Atlanta, killing eight people including six women of Asian descent

1992

Korean businesses in Los Angeles are looted and destroyed during protests and riots following the police beating of Rodney King



2020

Reports of anti-Asian-American violence skyrocket during the COVID-19 pandemic; in Texas, a family of three is stabbed by a man who thought they were "Chinese and infecting people with the coronavirus"



BIZARRO Piraro

So it's agreed: Wally, no more steamrolling over Dotty. And Dotty, no more dynamite in Wally's cigars.

