LOS ANGELES TRIES TO SPEED UP COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

Despite issues with distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, worries over certain batches creating adverse reactions, Los Angeles moves forward with creation of mass vaccination sites.

ISAI ROCHA

The COVID-19 vaccination process in Los Angeles has confronted issues over the past two weeks, but still moved forward with the creation of a mass vaccination site within the Dodger Stadium parking lot. The “supersite,” as described by Mayor Eric Garcetti, has the capacity and staffing for up to 12,000 vaccinations per day in Los Angeles, which is more than the 10,000 COVID-19 tests the stadium previously administered before transitioning to vaccinations.

The fate of the elderly vaccination process was then passed to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, as an executive order was passed on Monday, January 18 allowing those seniors to begin receiving vaccine doses by Thursday, January 21.

“If we are to ever get out of this dark winter, it is critical that we make headway vaccinating people 65 years of age and older as soon as possible – in line with Governor Gavin Newsom’s recommendations,” L.A. County Supervisor Chair, Hilda Solis, said. “That is why I signed an Executive Order today directing the County’s Department of Public Health to make COVID-19 vaccination appointments available to residents 65 years of age and older, beginning on January 21, 2021 – this is to allow for public health officials to adequately prepare for the rollout of the vaccine to this population.”

As the county and state have increased their efforts to ramp up vaccinations, concerns were raised about a batch of doses from Moderna Biotech company, as severe allergic reactions were reported from recipients at a California vaccination site.

State Epidemiologist Dr. Erica S. Pan recommended the pause of doses from Moderna lot 041L20A, but not all doses from the company.

“Out of an extreme abundance of caution and also recognizing the extremely limited supply of vaccine, we are recommending that providers use other available vaccine inventory and pause the administration of vaccines from Moderna Lot 041L20A until the investigation by the CDC, FDA, Moderna and the state is complete,” Pan said in a statement, Sunday, January 17. “We will provide an update as we learn more.”

The distribution of vaccines in California is currently in “Phase 1A,” which prioritizes health care workers in three tiers, all of whom can make appointments at the stadium, and 74 other L.A. County locations, as of Monday.

L.A. Public Health set a goal to vaccinate more than 500,000 health care workers by the end of January, while the county has surpassed more than 1 million positive cases of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic.

SHERIFFS CONTINUE TO CITE HUNDREDS IN “SUPERSPREADER PARTIES”

L.A. County Sheriff’s Department “superspreader task force” has cracked down on multiple underground parties and cited hundreds since its inception in December.

Its most recent sting was on the 600 block of Manchester Ave. where 167 adults were cited and 50 warned on January 16, as the department has noted many attend these events maskless and increase the risk of COVID-19 spread.

“Alex Villanueva has made it clear he will seek out & take law enforcement action against ALL underground party events occurring anywhere within Los Angeles County, who fall under the Health Ordains of the County’s Department of Public Health,” The LASD said through its Twitter account. “The goal of these enforcement actions is to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and the risk to our vulnerable populations.”

In December alone, the task force made 325 arrests at these superspreader parties, 90 coming from New Year’s Eve parties. The Sheriff’s Department stated they have found weapons, drugs and even underage individuals at these parties.

PROTECTING THE CALIFORNIA CAPITOL

After the January 6 storming of the U.S. Capitol and FBI advisement that armed protests were being planned across the country...
in response to the inauguration of President Joe Biden, California took additional measures to protect its capitol.

Newsom announced on January 14 that he signed an order to deploy 1,000 National Guard members to “protect critical state infrastructure,” including the state capitol.

“In light of events in our nation’s capital last week, California is taking important steps to protect public safety at the State Capitol, and across the state,” Newsom said. “Our State Operations Center is actively working with federal, state and local law enforcement partners in assessing threats and sharing intelligence and information to ensure those disgraceful actions are not repeated here.”

Newsom added that there would be “no tolerance” for violence and that the events that occurred in the U.S. Capitol would not happen in California.

As far as measures taken for the inauguration in Washington, D.C., more than 25,000 National Guardsmen from across the country were called to service, with each one being vetted after the FBI raised concerns over an attack from within, according to the Associated Press.

Despite reports, Acting Secretary of Defense Chris Miller said they received “no intelligence” of such threats from within.

“While we have no intelligence indicating an insider threat, we are leaving no stone unturned in securing the capital,” Miller said in a statement. “The D.C. National Guard is also providing additional training to service members as they arrive in D.C. that if they see or hear something that is not appropriate, they should report it to their chain of command.”

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THE NEW GRAIN TRADERS IN WEHO

BY MICHÉLE STUEVEN

Venezuelan born chef Gisela Salazar-Golding, together with Javier Perez, have brought the unique flavors of Grain Traders from Singapore to its first U.S. location in the heart of West Hollywood. The new all-day cafe, coffee shop and market in a repurposed auto repair shop on Fairfax is open for takeout and delivery and focuses on plates composed of whole grains, fresh vegetables, beans and legumes, nuts, seeds, lean proteins and a flurry of fermentation.

The long building with two different outdoor seating areas pays homage to its previous life, with cavernous ceilings and the old garage doors. Inside the light and airy space there’s a market counter, dessert bar and coffee shop. Art from Argentinian muralist Franco Fasoli adorns the walls as well as antiques from local L.A. antique stores.

The dining concept for Grain Traders is composing your own original plate with a base layer from a grain selection that features a variety of organic whole grains like tricolor quinoa Hainanese style and forbidden rice with caramelized leeks and onions. Top that with a choice of one protein, side and two vegetables, along with a variety of house-made pickles, sauces and toppings. Menu items can all be ordered a la carte as well.

One of Salazar’s signature plates represents many of the ingredients and flavors the chef discovered during the years she worked in Asia, Spain and France. It’s a grain base of Nasi Lemak brown rice with coconut milk, grilled salmon with lemon and curry leaf dressing nestled alongside a warm baby carrot salad with spiced lentils and feta crumble and heirloom tomatoes and spring onion with yuzu dressing. That comes with two sides – in this case Japanese cucumber and kaffir lime pickle as well as mixed mushrooms and seaweed pickle. It all gets topped off with activated mixed nuts with turmeric and black pepper. Sauces include coconut curry and beetroot feta yogurt.

“In terms of nutrition, this is a balanced plate where you can find all your macronutrients, carbs, protein and fats for a complete and concise meal,” Salazar tells L.A. Weekly. Dishes are rotated seasonally, catering to all types of dietary preferences and sensitivities.

It’s a pretty mind-blowing dining experience and combination of textures and flavors unlike anything else available right now, and an inspiring break from the current usual takeout and delivery suspects like pizza, fried chicken and burgers. There’s a diverse selection of vegetables including green curry eggplant casserole, roasted root vegetables with caramelized onions and grapes as well as roasted miso and ginger butternut squash with basil and pepitas pesto. All the dishes travel well and can be served safely at room temperature.

The pickle selection alone – like the spiced radish pickles or cauliflower, carrot and curry leaf pickle – is a gut lover’s dream and the pineapple kimchi is a perfectly spiced crunchy mouthful. If you like jackfruit, their Char Siu pulled jackfruit might be one of the best versions in L.A. and the bakery also offers sweet jackfruit empanadas.

If you’re looking to keep up your immunity, go with your gut on this one.
January 15 saw the arrival of local alt-country/indie-folk artist Pearl Charles’ third album, Magic Mirror, and it’s a thing of beauty. Gorgeous, warm and understated vocals in a Linda Ronstadt realm bring honest, relatable lyrics to life, all framed by the sweetest of melodies.

It took her a while to get to this point; Charles started taking piano lessons when she was five after pestering her parents for a year. That led to guitar lessons, then musical theater and summer camps, as her folks encouraged her passion.

“They enrolled me in all of that, and that was really great,” Charles says. “Then I got in some trouble in high school — smoking weed, nothing really serious, but it kinda kicked me off the path of musical theater and more into the path of rock & roll. Once I started doing that, my parents were like, ‘If you’re going to pursue doing music in a mainstream sense, we encourage you to look into writing songs, pursue doing music in a mainstream sense, that, my parents were like, ‘If you’re going to the path of rock & roll. Once I started doing nothing really serious, but it kinda kicked me some trouble in high school – smoking weed, was really great,’ Charles says. “Then I got in pass the Carter Family – he taught me how to listen to guitar. He was a great guitar player, and we autoharp and eventually moved on to playing guitar. He was a great guitar player, and we would do close harmony duets. It was great, we loved it. It was so fun.”

Hutson is now having success of his own, signed to Anti-Records and working with Phoebe Bridgers. Charles went on to play drums in the garage rock band the Black Tapes, before going the solo route. She says that both of her previous bands taught her a lot.

“[Hutson] taught me how to sing harmony,” she says. “I had sung in the choir and done a little bit of harmony study. But he really taught me about Gram Parsons, Emmylou Harris, the Carter Family – he taught me how to listen for the harmonies. That’s changed my life and been such a crucial part of my music ever since.”

Charles describes her sound as a little bit of country, a little bit of soft rock, and even a little bit of disco in the ABBA, “pure pop” sense. She adds that her sound has organically evolved through the three albums, climaxing with Magic Mirror. Naturally, she’s delighted with the way it has turned out.

“I feel like my songwriting and my vision has become more clear,” she says. “I think I started in a very different place than I ended up. But on this record, I got to really use the band that I tour with. We had spent the last two years promoting my last record and touring that, but at the same time we were working on the new songs and really getting to road test them. I think that’s something that is unique to this record, that the other two records didn’t have. Because I’m actually a musician out on the road now, I had the time to really workshop the tunes and get to know the people who are going to play them, and they get to know me. They were trapped in a car with me for eight hours a day, and I was just blasting the music at them that I wanted my record to sound like. I think that really seeped in.”

The singer and songwriter, who splits her time between Los Angeles and Joshua Tree, says that the new album is a record about identity and self-reflection.

“However that comes to pass, whether it’s through a break-up or a psychedelic experience,” she says. “Whatever it may be. There’s a song called ‘Imposter’ about imposter syndrome. Whether it’s coming from a dark place or a positive place – that’s life, we have two sides to ourselves. The yin and yang of life. I think it’s really about looking at yourself. That’s the ‘magic mirror’ – there’s the two sides. You might not always like what you see, but it’s always going to show you the truth.”

This region has a great history of folk-rock and alt-country, not least the incredible music that came out of Laurel Canyon in the ’60s. Charles says that she couldn’t help but be influenced by that.

“I grew up in Hollywood, but just blocks away, I would say in the shadow of, Laurel Canyon,” she says. “So whether I knew it or not, it was always influencing me. Then my parents bought a place in Joshua Tree, and only this year in the pandemic I decided I wanted to live out here even though I’ve been coming out here to visit forever. I feel like, between L.A. and Joshua Tree, the history of this kind of music is so strong. Obviously, it initially comes from maybe English folk and African music then it comes to the south and east of America. But the way that it’s come to be now really started I think with the Byrds, Gram Parsons. This is the birth of that style. I think it’s always going to have that magic and mystique to it, and that draw.”

With the video for new single “Take Your Time” about to drop, Charles is looking ahead to a better (fingers crossed) 2021.

“I’m ready to get on the road, when it’s safe,” she says. “These songs were born on the road, like I was saying before. Regardless, I’ve been writing the whole time during pandemic. It might be a blessing in disguise that I can be ready to release even more music sooner than I would have been if it wasn’t for the pandemic. I’m trying to see the bright side and hope that we can get back on the road. That’s the main thing.”

Pearl Charles’ Magic Mirror is out on January 15.
Important Facts About DOVATO
This is only a brief summary of important information about DOVATO and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about DOVATO?
If you have both human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV-1) and hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection, DOVATO can cause serious side effects, including:

- **Resistant HBV infection.** Your healthcare provider will test you for HBV infection before you start treatment with DOVATO. If you have HIV-1 and hepatitis B, the hepatitis B virus can change (mutate) during your treatment with DOVATO and become harder to treat (resistant). It is not known if DOVATO is safe and effective in people who have HIV-1 and HBV infection.

- **Worsening of HBV infection.** If you have HIV-1 and HBV infection, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking DOVATO. A “flare-up” is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before. Worsening liver disease can be serious and may lead to death.
  - Do not run out of DOVATO. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your DOVATO is all gone.
  - Do not stop DOVATO without first talking to your healthcare provider. If you stop taking DOVATO, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly for several months to check your liver.

What is DOVATO?
DOVATO is a prescription medicine that is used without other HIV-1 medicines to treat human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV-1) infection in adults who have not received HIV-1 medicines in the past, or to replace their current HIV-1 medicines when their healthcare provider determines that they meet certain requirements. HIV-1 is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). It is not known if DOVATO is safe and effective in children.

Who should not take DOVATO?
Do not take DOVATO if you:
- have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine that contains dolutegravir or lamivudine.
- take dolutegravir.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before using DOVATO?
Tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:
- have or have had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C infection.
- have kidney problems.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. One of the medicines in DOVATO (dolutegravir) may harm your unborn baby.
  - Your healthcare provider may prescribe a different medicine than DOVATO if you are planning to become pregnant or if pregnancy is confirmed during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.
  - If you can become pregnant, your healthcare provider will perform a pregnancy test before you start treatment with DOVATO.
  - If you can become pregnant, you should consistently use effective birth control (contraception) during treatment with DOVATO.
  - Tell your healthcare provider right away if you are planning to become pregnant, you become pregnant, or think you may be pregnant during treatment with DOVATO.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeeding. **Do not breastfeed if you take DOVATO.**
  - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
  - One of the medicines in DOVATO (lamivudine) passes into your breastmilk.
  - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some medicines interact with DOVATO. Keep a list of your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.
- You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that interact with DOVATO.
- Do not start taking a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider can tell you if it is safe to take DOVATO with other medicines.

What are possible side effects of DOVATO?
DOVATO can cause serious side effects, including:
- Those in the “What is the most important information I should know about DOVATO?” section.
- **Allergic reactions.** Call your healthcare provider right away if you develop a rash with DOVATO. Stop taking DOVATO and get medical help right away if you develop a rash with any of the following signs or symptoms: fever; generally ill feeling; tiredness; muscle or joint aches; blisters or sores in mouth; blisters or peeling of the skin; redness or swelling of the eyes; swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue; problems breathing.
- **Liver problems.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening changes in certain liver tests during treatment with DOVATO. Liver problems, including liver failure, have also happened in people without a history of liver disease or other risk factors. Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your liver.
  - Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following signs or symptoms of liver problems: your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice); dark or “tea-colored” urine; light-colored stools (bowel movements); nausea or vomiting; loss of appetite; and/or pain, aching, or tenderness on the right side of your stomach area.
- **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms that could be signs of lactic acidosis: feel very weak or tired; unusual (not normal) muscle pain, trouble breathing; stomach pain with nausea and vomiting; feel cold, especially in your arms and legs; feel dizzy or lightheaded; and/or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **Lactic acidosis can also lead to severe liver problems, which can lead to death.** Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis). Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following signs or symptoms of liver problems which are listed above under “Liver problems.” You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female or very overweight (obese).
- **Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome) can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having new symptoms after you start taking DOVATO.
- **The most common side effects of DOVATO include:** headache; nausea; diarrhea; trouble sleeping; tiredness; and anxiety. These are not all the possible side effects of DOVATO. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.
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DOVATO is a complete prescription regimen to treat HIV-1 in adults who have not received HIV-1 medicines in the past or to replace their current HIV-1 medicines when their doctor determines they meet certain requirements.

Results may vary.
*As compared with 3- or 4-drug regimens.

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Where can I find more information?
• Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
• Go to DOVATO.com or call 1-877-844-8872, where you can also get FDA-approved labeling.

August 2020 DVT4PIL
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New to treatment? Considering a switch?
Ask your doctor about DOVATO.
Karen Carson has been an insightful practitioner of modes of abstract painting that for decades have touched on, by turns and in combinations, minimalism, pop, and Op Art. Most of this conversation centers on formalist ideas of optics, perception, text as image, and the power of pure color. A great deal of her practice also seeks to wrest control of these same art historical frameworks away from the patriarchal tropes that defined them early on.

Now the new exhibition Middle Ground at downtown’s Gavlak Gallery pairs Carson’s surprising new paintings on wood with a presentation of her seminal 1970’s sewn “zipper” works -- the better to understand the foundations of her current evolution. Though on sight seeming disparate -- large-scale essentially monochromatic canvases hand-stitched with industrial zippers, and smaller scale gestural, kaleidoscopic paintings on roughly hand-hewn wood constructions -- the juxtaposition highlights the persistent manifestation of the hand of the artist, as well as the role of identity and context in an artwork’s ultimate meaning.

“Color is expressive,” she says. “It is emotional and symbolic and strident color has been a hallmark of Carson’s aesthetic, complex and saturated color, and that’s still in effect in these works, even though the quality of shape and line has gone a bit feral. “Color is expressive,” she says. “It is emotional and symbolic and
Karen Carson, Red Diamond, 2019. Acrylic on bas relief wood. 21.5 x 32.5 x 3 in (54.6 x 82.6 x 7.6 cm).

Karen Carson, Blue Triangles, 2020. Acrylic on bas relief wood. 21.5 x 29.5 x 3 in (54.6 x 74.9 x 7.6 cm).

Karen Carson, Yellow Diamonds, 2018. Acrylic on bas relief wood. 27.5 x 33.5 x 3.5 in (69.9 x 85.1 x 8.9 cm).

Karen Carson, Red, Black, White, 1972 - 2016. Unstretched canvas, zippers. 88” x 68” x 6”. Dimensions variable.

is both deeply personal and outgoing. It’s amazing how different color systems give each painting a different temperature. I make conversations between colors -- intensity against dull, high contrast, primary vs. tertiary. The color also works to create optical movement for the viewer. I adore color and plotting it out for each new painting is a treat."

Commenting further on these and further questions of color, tactility, and creative evolution in a career of abstract paintings, Carson explains that, “Experimentation in the studio seems to be a mainstay of my art practice. Since I was a child, I have built things. My art has always embraced a certain material strength, both physically and graphically. The carpentry in my latest bas relief paintings allows me to make strong commitments early on in the work. This alleviates illusion. When the wood is cut and glued the composition is solid and it dictates the rest of the painting. I can work within its contours and I can contradict them," she says. “It’s an eyeball kind of game.”

Gavlak Gallery, 1700 S. Santa Fe, downtown; by appointment through March 6; gavlakgallery.com.
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UNBINGED
Cobra Kai, Sabrina and The Stand Reinterpret Nostalgic Stories for a New Generation
BY ERIN MAXWELL

There's a battle brewing, and it's being fought by streaming services, cable TV and Primetime television. If you're too weak to resist, UnBinged is here to help, telling you what to hate, what to love and what to love to hate. In pandemic times, we need it more than ever. This week: a new season of Cobra Kai waxes on; Sabrina's Chilling Adventures come to an anti-climactic conclusion; and Stephen King's The Stand gets a creepy chronological makeover.

Cobra Kai – Season 3 (Netflix)
Based on the Karate Kid franchise of yesteryear, the former YouTube series follows the exploits of Johnny Lawrence (played to perfection by '80s bad boy William Zabka), a one-time bully trying to get his shit together after 25 years of bad decisions. To do so, he re-establishes his former karate dojo to foster a new generation of misguided teens, much to the dismay of his high school nemesis Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio). Now on Netflix, the third season explores the tension between the two rivals and their students, takes a moment to appreciate Karate Kid II, and spotlights a common enemy: Johnny's former sensei/leg-sweeping enthusiast John Kreese (Martin Rove).

Much like Stranger Things and GLOW, Cobra Kai relies heavily on nostalgia to garner the attention of 40-somethings, but its ability to reinvent '80s movie tropes is what makes it clever. The show breaks the mold set by the original movie, rewriting the standard underdog format. Watching Johnny's arc develop after a three-decade hiatus adds depth to a previously two-dimensional character, while following Daniel and Johnny as they repeat...
a horse with a broken leg. In its rush to finish
the series slugs its way over the finish line like
complexity. Now in the final season (aka Part 4),
narrative suffered under the weight of its own
and characters felt underdeveloped while the
lost its footing and got a little messy. Story arcs
Satan worshipper happy. However, as the
and bitchcraft to keep even the most cyni-
enough blood, guts, Lovecraftian monsters,
the teenybopper sect, the series was filled with
sense of humor. An
American Horror Story
the show had a mirthful feel and a devilish
Riverdale
footsteps of its campy older sibling
Starring Kiernan Shipka and following in the
ics made her debut on Netflix back in 2018.

past mistakes with a new generation through
the lens of adulthood.
With this, Cobra Kai ably adapts the legacy of
the Karate Kid into an action-packed dramedy
that is both relevant and incredibly fun. Pulling
tension and humor from a historic rivalry
the show also offers well-choreographed fight
sequences fans would expect. With a touch of
heart and soul thanks to crackerjack writing,
Cobra Kai leaps from enjoyable flashback to
something new and exceptional.

Chilling Adventures of Sabrina - Part 4
(Netflix)
Netflix’s Chilling Adventures of Sabrina has
come to an end following a flurry of cancella-
tions from the streaming service that left the
cast and crew seemingly scrambling to con-
clude their storylines. And sadly, this led to a
few tragic decisions regarding the tale of the
teen witch.
The white-haired sorceress of Archie Com-
ics made her debut on Netflix back in 2018.
Starring Kiernan Shipka and following in the
footsteps of its campy older sibling Riverdale,
the show had a mirthful feel and a devilish
sense of humor. An American Horror Story for
the teenybopper sect, the series was filled with
enough blood, guts, Lovecraftian monsters,
and bitchcraft to keep even the most cyni-
cal Satan worshipper happy. However, as the
story traipsed on, the teen witch melodrama
lost its footing and got a little messy. Story arcs
and characters felt underdeveloped while the
narrative suffered under the weight of its own
complexity. Now in the final season (aka Part 4),
the series slugs its way over the finish line like
a horse with a broken leg. In its rush to finish
the season, the show disregarded continuity,
character development and good storytelling,
leaving gaping plot holes and disappointment
in its wake.
The final season is not without some merit.
The show goes all-in for its conclusion, dou-
bling-down on gore and absurdity, including
a fantastic and hilarious callback to the ’90s
Sabrina sitcom. But talking cat puppets and
walks down memory lane aside, the season
was rushed, and it showed. Storylines were left
unfinished, leaving dozens of threads hanging
from the fabric of the show. Worse is the fate of
poor Sabrina Spellman/Morningstar, an icon
who transcended the funny pages to become
a small screen sensation and who warranted
an ending worthy of her hero’s journey, but
got shafted by stilted writing and unforeseen
circumstances. A hex on you, Netflix. You have
done these characters dirty. They deserved a
fate much better than what they got.

The Stand (CBS All Access)
Back in 1978, horrormeister Stephen King
debuted The Stand, his behemoth tome about
a virus that wipes out 99% of Earth’s popula-
tion and pits good against evil in a battle for
the planet. It was a sensation ripe for adapta-
tion and it is especially relevant right now. But
sadly, this is not the version of The Stand you
are looking for.

When adapting a beloved book that defined
a generation, not everyone is going to be hap-
py, of course. It is hard to satiate a devoted
fanbase. This CBS All Access’ miniseries is
filled with good intentions and offers mo-
ments of bliss for any King fan to dig into,
but as a whole, the decision to butcher the
chronological order of the original narrative
creates an uneven viewing experience riddled
with confusion.

For the most part, The Stand delivers on a
lot of promises. It’s extremely well cast with
actors that embody the characters, physically
and emotionally. Stand-outs include James
Marsden, Owen Teague and Brad William
Henke, but Alexander Skarsgard deserves a
special shout out as Randall Flagg, who brings
to mind his old vamp character in True Blood,
evoking evil on a low simmer.

Also great are the many small details, Easter
eggs, and modern touches that were added to
modernize the 40-year-old story. It’s clear that
the creators of the series are super fans who
respect the material. It’s a shame the change in
continuity sinks the adaptation for anyone not
well versed in the King universe.
Parallel timelines and flashbacks are narra-
tive devices that have been used to success in
recent reboots such as 2019’s Little Women. But
this strategy only works when everyone knows
the story. The Stand has dozens of characters,
locations and story lines, so using this format
to do all the heavy-lifting is not only jarring,
but destructive. There are gaps in the plot that
remain unexplained for those unfamiliar with
this story and character development becomes
nil due to the new framework.
In the end, The Stand is a series built on good
intentions, but with little thought for the indoc-
trinated, creating a bumpy ride for any newbie
looking to get into Stephen King. For morbidly
curious super fans, it’s worth a look-see but
those unfamiliar with the story should read the
book and skip the series, as it doesn’t clearly rep-
 resent what is considered King’s greatest work.
Just in time for politically active cannabis enthusiasts to kick off a new president in style, Chelsea Handler’s America is Back Kit is ready to help you celebrate inauguration day.

While some celebrities have gone in the “build their own” brand direction, Handler, as she’s done in the past, has collected an assortment of cannabis products she’s using across a spread of companies. She previously teamed up with Sweet Leaf on a kit to go with the launch of her HBO special.

People may not actually realize how intertwined politics is with her cannabis adventure. Nearly two years ago, when she first started dabbling her toes in the industry after an intensive research period she shared with the world via her Instagram, Handler would call the trump administration taking the reins a big part of her move to using more cannabis.

While launching a previous collaboration with Canndescent in February 2019, Handler told the L.A. crowd she didn’t want to drink when she was angry, so she began dabbling in vapes and edibles. “I couldn’t deal with everything. I just needed to take a timeout, and Netflix has always been really, really good to artists in saying whatever. Let me take some time off and really think about what I want to move to using more cannabis.

Handler would reveal on The View a few months later a combination of an extreme reaction to Trump taking office and other personal months later a combination of an extreme reaction to Trump taking office and other personal stuff had her in going to therapy, but at the time she said the L.A. cannabis industry crowd in attendance at The Montalbán she generally thought pot was a better look than popping Xanax at her age.

The relief that cannabis provided helped Handler get back to working on New York Times bestsellers and HBO specials, each of them a wild endeavor in their own right. Then, when Handler dropped her Evolution special in October, she had her first kit to go with it.

For her inauguration collection, the only product returning from her last kit is the CANN Beverages. I think it’s safe to say she enjoys them. The rest of the America is Back Kit features Pure Beauty pre-rolls, Garden Society chocolates, a Sundae School mask, inside a branded tote with a lighter. The kit hit shelves late last week in celebration of the presidential inauguration on January 20.

If a new president isn’t hype enough for you, 100% of proceeds from the kit will be donated to Cage-Free Repair, a cannabis reform non-profit helping the cannabis industry and its consumers repair harms of the War on Drugs. Cage-Free Repair is a National Expungement Week partner and helped with organizing the original incarnation of the event that held 40 events in over 30 cities across the United States in 2020.

National Expungement Week is credited with leading 298 people to record clearing and sealing, with organizers saying the resulting public benefit is over $3 million. Los Angeles has been one of the most active communities in the nation for National Expungement Week since its inception.

“We’ll all have a lot to celebrate on January 20 – not the least of which is the launch of my new kit: ‘America is Back,'” Hander said when announcing the kit. “I curated a fun collection of uplifting cannabis products from brands who share my values, designed to celebrate President Biden, Vice President Harris, and the most diverse cabinet in history. 100% of the proceeds will support the important work of a great organization: Cage-Free Repair. Feeling good has never felt so good!”

Local partner Sweet Water, now on to their second kit with Handler, are excited to help her kick off the Biden administration according to Chief Marketing Officer Kiana Anvaripour.

“We are thrilled to partner with like-minded dispensary The Apothecarium and Chelsea Handler for the second time, to launch this unique and timely Kit,” Anvaripour said. “Chelseasea is such a champion for the cannabis industry and has helped educate and destigmatize the community; thus, we thought there would be no better time to launch this program celebrating America, the inauguration with 100% of proceeds going to a great cause, Cage-Free Repair.”

For Cage-Free Repair, the resources will help them to continue to change peoples’ lives while working to diversify the cannabis industry. “Cage-Free Repair appreciates the awareness being raised by Sweet Flower, Chelsea Handler, Apothecarium, and the other companies involved in this promotion, and we encourage all cannabis companies to show a sustained commitment to racial equity in the cannabis industry, as well as community-led efforts to heal from the devastating effects of our government’s decades-long War on Drugs,” said Andrew Epstein, co-founder of Cage-Free Repair.

The America is Back Kit will retail for $85. It’s exclusively available at Sweet Flower shops in Los Angeles and The Apothecarium’s Bay Area locations. Sweet Flower’s four retail locations in Westwood, Melrose, Downtown and Studio City will all have them available in the shop or via curbside pickup and delivery through www.sweetflower.com.

In the Bay Area, you can get the kit at The Apothecarium’s locations in The Castro, SF’s Marina District, SF SOMA, Berkeley and Capitola.