

Iger's Disney regains footing

Challenges remain, but the company's stock is climbing and its CEO is on the offensive again.

By MEG JAMES AND CHRISTI CARRAS

After a bruising year of Hollywood strikes, wrenching job cuts and stock setbacks, Disney Chief Executive Bob Iger finally is racking up some wins.

While delivering stronger-than-expected earnings last week, Iger made several announcements designed to keep the Burbank giant firmly ensconced in pop culture: ESPN will anchor a new sports streaming service launching next fall. Disney+ will be the streaming home for Taylor Swift's concert tour movie. And Captain America and Baby Yoda could soon infiltrate the hit online game "Fortnite," thanks to Disney paying \$1.5 billion for a minority stake in Epic Games.

Investors who've been fretting over Disney's troubles are beginning to see some relief. The company's stock is up 20% since the start of the year. Disney had its best day since 2021 on Wall Street following the earnings report. On Monday, shares gained nearly 1% to \$109.29.

The strong showing could help thwart activist investor Nelson Peltz's Triun Fund Management and a second shareholder, Blackwells Capital Group, which are trying to stage a boardroom shake-up at Disney's annual shareholder meeting April 3.

"Whatever chance of success these activist investors had is being buried by 100,000 tons of Disney carbonite," TD Cowen media analyst Doug Creutz said in an interview after the earnings. "The market likes what it sees."

On Monday, Disney sent a letter to shareholders touting the "significant steps Disney is taking as it successfully executes a strategic transformation of the Company."

However, analysts said Iger still has his work cut out [See Disney, A7]



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

CALIFORNIANS in both parties complain that the state has become too expensive, with roughly 8 in 10 state residents and nearly 9 in 10 in the rest of the United States holding that view, last month's Leger poll found.

Cold splash of reality for the uninsured

Flood and mud risks are rising, but most Californians lack coverage

By CONNOR SHEETS

Dakota Rivas was getting out of the shower the evening of Jan. 4 when she heard a dull roar behind the home her family rents in West Hills. A fast-moving mudslide had begun on the rocky hill behind the property, overwhelming a clogged drain, backing up against the house and tearing across the yard where her children and dogs play.

"It sounded like thunder or something big rolling," the 32-year-old said, surveying the damage after the rain finally stopped last week. "I went to go check what it was and saw a bunch of mud and water flowing into our driveway."

She pointed up at a cascade of water still flowing down the hillside.

"This waterfall behind our house," she said, "was not here at all before."

For many Southern Californians, this is the new normal. Homes once

prized for hillside views and apartment complexes on low-lying urban streets alike are increasingly under threat from severe flooding, mudslides and heavy winds. Wildfires and earthquakes have long been the focus of concern, but the consequences of wet storms are only now beginning to generate similar levels of alarm.

The Rivases had renters insurance when they lived in a house a few doors down. But when they moved in [See Insurance, A5]



MEL MELCON Los Angeles Times

DAKOTA RIVAS, with husband Walter and daughter Maleeyah, 9, inspects damage to their West Hills home after a Feb. 4 mudslide. Because of the home's precarious location, no company would insure them.

A career dedicated to doing right

Senate candidate Lee has stayed steadfast in her beliefs

By BENJAMIN ORESKES

OAKLAND — On a rainy January day, Rep. Barbara Lee wandered the campus of Mills College pointing out sites from her momentous past.

The leafy, seminary-like grounds in Oakland look different from when she attended. To her frustration, even the school's name has been changed to Northeastern University Oakland.

But for Lee, her time on campus is preserved in amber — the years of student activism, her first trip to Africa, and a political awakening.

It's where she met Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to Congress, and where she volunteered with the Black Panthers during the tumultuous late 1960s and early '70s. Her [See Lee, A10]



LOREN ELLIOTT For The Times

REP. BARBARA LEE visits her alma mater, Northeastern University Oakland, formerly Mills College.

Ex-player Foster hired to lead UCLA football

Days after leaving Bruins to accept a Raiders assistant coaching job, he takes over for Chip Kelly.

By BEN BOLCH

UCLA went with a familiar, beloved name in selecting the football coach to lead it into a new era. The Bruins hired DeShaun Foster.

The former star running back for the school who appeared in its last Rose Bowl game will replace Chip Kelly, the school announced Monday after completing a warp-speed search that lasted less than 72 hours and included 11 interviews and correspondence with more than 20 potential candidates.

While galvanizing a large swath of the fan base, not to mention current players loy-

al to Foster as the team's longtime running backs coach, the move comes with considerable risk. It will give UCLA the least experienced head coach in the Big Ten as it transitions into the conference in August and is reminiscent of the school's hiring of Karl Dorrell more than two decades ago.

Like Dorrell, who was hired by UCLA in 2003 at a time when he was the Denver Broncos' wide receivers coach, the 44-year-old Foster has worked only as a position coach and never called plays. Dorrell went on to coach for five largely uninspiring seasons before his dismissal.

Foster will be introduced at a news conference late Tuesday morning inside Pauley Pavilion's Pavilion Club.

UCLA athletic director Martin Jarmond cited Foster's integrity, energy, pas-

[See UCLA, A7]

In poll, Golden State has lost luster

Half of U.S. adults in survey say California is in decline; 48% of Republicans say it's 'not really American.'

By NOAH BIERMAN

WASHINGTON — California's national reputation as a place of dreams and prosperity is in jeopardy, battered by Republicans who dislike almost all aspects of the state and many Democrats who see it as too costly and a poor place to raise a family.

Nationwide, 50% of U.S. adults believe the state is in decline, according to a new survey for the Los Angeles Times.

Political polarization has intensified the negativity: 48% of Republicans believe the state is "not really American," the survey found. Three in 10 Republicans say the home of Yosemite's sheer peaks, Sequoia's towering redwoods and Malibu's beaches has a worse natural environment than other states.

Nearly 40% of Republicans don't even think California is a good place to visit, though a majority in both parties say they have been to the state, according to the survey of 1,004 adults, conducted Jan. 26-28 by Leger, a Canadian firm that has polled extensively in the United States.

"If you are a more conservative American, you basically do not like California," said Christian Bourque, Leger's executive vice president and the poll's supervisor. "Of course, we all expected some of that, but the differences are actually quite striking."

California has, however, maintained its reputation as a new frontier, particularly among young people, who have long fueled the state's energy.

Six in 10 adults nationwide think that the state is a trendsetter and that it has had a positive impact on the country. The share who see [See Poll, A5]

Israeli forces free 2 hostages

Airstrikes providing cover to troops during the rescue operation leave dozens of Palestinians dead in the Gaza Strip. **WORLD, A3**

Inequities in child-care wages

Report finds Black and Latina workers in the field are paid less and given fewer leadership roles. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Voters pick up on Bidenomics

Economic growth, lower inflation and low jobless rates are part of package, says Michael Hiltzik. **BUSINESS, A6**

Weather

Cool and partly sunny. L.A. Basin: 63/46. **B6**

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