



DARIO LOPEZ-MILLS Associated Press

PEOPLE hold pictures of missing relatives in Mexico's Iguala area in 2015. By 2022, Mexico's list of the "disappeared" topped 100,000.

Mexico's missing vanish again

In November, Susana García Colorado received a call from a man who said he was from the Mexican government commission charged with finding the more than 100,000 people officially classified as "disappeared."

"We have information that your brother has appeared," he told her. "We would like to have an interview with him."

That was news to her. She checked with relatives, her brother's friends, his old co-workers, the police and the hospital where he worked in the port city of Veracruz. No one had seen or heard from Osvaldo Julián García Colorado since October 2020.

"It was all a lie. My brother is still disappeared," she said. "And everything was the same."

Except for one thing: Her brother's name was removed from the online government register of the disappeared.

The government has been purging what it says are false entries, including duplicate names and cases of people who are dead or discovered to be alive at home or in jails. But scores of people who have been

Scores of families say loved ones were purged from 'disappeared' list but have yet to turn up

By Patrick J. McDonnell and Cecilia Sánchez Vidal

REPORTING FROM MEXICO CITY



FERNANDO LLANO Associated Press

ANDRÉS Manuel López Obrador says foes "infiltrated" the government and inflated the numbers of the missing.

struck from the list are still missing, according to their families.

In a country with a surfeit of clandestine graves and unidentified bodies, the crisis of the missing has become intensely political, with critics of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador accusing him of trying to whitewash his administration's record on violence in the run-up to national elections in June.

The families accuse the president of "disappearing the disappeared."

"They're going to close the files and shut down all the cases," lamented Virginia Garay Cazares, whose 19-year-old son vanished in 2018 on his way to work at a hot dog and hamburger stand in the western city of Tepic. "They don't understand the pain and heartbreak for those of us with missing loved ones."

López Obrador has denied any plan to cook the books or stop looking for the missing.

"There is no intention on our part — there never has been — to erase any of the disappeared," he [See Mexico, A4]

Finding racial bias in medical device

False pulse oximeter readings are more common in Black patients, prompting concern and a lawsuit.

By CORINNE PURTILL

Roots Community Health Center was slammed in 2020, with lines for its COVID-19 testing stations stretching around the block and exam rooms full of people struggling to breathe.

Patient after patient at the East Oakland clinic extended their fingers so that healthcare workers could clip on a pulse oximeter, a device that measures the degree to which red blood cells are saturated with oxygen. For healthy people, a normal "pulse ox" reading is typically between 95% and 100%.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had instructed providers to give oxygen therapy to any COVID patient with a pulse oximeter reading below 90%. Like their counterparts around the country, Roots doctors advised concerned patients to buy inexpensive pulse oximeters so they could monitor their levels at home.

As the pandemic ground on, it became clear that Black and brown patients were dying of COVID at disproportionately high rates, both across the U.S. and in Roots' own Alameda County.

In the rare hour when she wasn't in the clinic, Roots founder and Chief Executive Dr. Noha Aboulata read through medical research in search of answers that might help her patients, the vast majority of whom were Black or brown.

One paper in the New England Journal of Medicine [See Oximeter, A7]



AL SEIB For The Times

JASON AND CAROLINE Stuckey, parents of a pupil at Porter Ranch Community School, last month protest a proposal to move some grades to another school.

At LAUSD's only overcrowded school, parents fear a breakup

By HOWARD BLUME

In the deep northwest reach of Los Angeles Unified, tucked among foothills carpeted with newish subdivisions, Porter Ranch Community School has a rare problem. At a time of declining public school enrollment in L.A. and throughout the state, this campus is overcrowded — the only one in the nation's second-largest

school district that is full and turning away families.

Angry parents of the combined elementary and middle school worry that one proposed solution would break up a community they cherish and also one that they dearly paid for — through home prices they believe are boosted by the lure of its neighborhood school. One plan that was under consideration in recent months calls for lop-

ping off the middle school, grades 6, 7 and 8, and sending those students to an under-enrolled high school nearby.

On Jan. 29, about 200 people demonstrated outside the school — a group that included parents and students who boycotted classes for the day. They spoke of how their community would be sundered and friendships lost, because [See School, A10]

Volunteers pick up slack in hepatitis C fight

By EMILY ALPERT REYES

As evening fell in her Glendale apartment, Dara Bruce fed her pet rats George and Fred, poured herself a glass of water, and dialed a complete stranger to discuss the dangerous virus detected in his blood.

"Is now a good time to talk?" she asked.

Bruce is a volunteer in the enduring fight against hepatitis C. The stealthy

killer claims the lives of roughly 14,000 Americans each year, even though it can be readily cured with a few months of pills. Many people have no idea they are infected, going years without symptoms before the blood-borne virus devastates the liver.

Yet public funding to combat hepatitis C is so scant that in Los Angeles County — an area more populous than many states — the crucial work of con-

tacting those who are infected is being done by unpaid emissaries like Bruce through a fledgling initiative called Project Connect.

A partnership between USC and the county public health department, Project Connect trains volunteers to call people who have tested positive for the virus to make sure they know their results and encourage them to get the medication they need.

Sitting behind her desk [See Hepatitis C, A10]

Wedding venue forced to close

Shifting land threatens scenic Wayfarers Chapel in Rancho Palos Verdes, leaving couples in the lurch. **BUSINESS, A6**

Ohtani homers in batting practice

Facing live pitching for first time since undergoing elbow surgery in September, slugger dazzles crowd. **SPORTS, B7**

Weather
Heavy morning rain.
L.A. Basin: 59/52. **B6**



DANIA MAXWELL Los Angeles Times

RAIN PELTS SOUTHLAND

A cyclist rides past the Broad museum during a storm in downtown L.A. Mudslide and flood warnings were issued Monday. **CALIFORNIA, B1**



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