

# MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

## A CONVERSATION WITH A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Epic Games, a video game publisher, has seen its properties like *Fornite* regain popularity during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Video Games During the Pandemic

MITCH CLAXTON

CARY, NC - Video games have struck their highest ever level of usage during this pandemic. The reason for this is because people are always home and they want to be doing something. So they choose to play video games. These choices combined with the new generation of gaming consoles have stoked usage even higher. Games such as Fortnite, Roblox, R6 have experienced even most use than their prime years.

The video game industry, including video game publisher Epic Games have made more money in these treacherous Covid-19 times than any other time. Increased usage has led to many people to spend 60% more money in video games than all time and those numbers are still increasing. People are also putting more time in their games and are having fun said by Epic Games.

But one problem this comes with is the servers. Microsoft had to upgrade their servers because they had too many crashes. The reason for these system failures is overuse due to the higher number of people gaming. Microsoft spent more money on their servers to meet these increased needs. Video games have improved so much over the past year and are still going up.



Representative Susie Lee discussed her experiences during the Capitol Hill Riots with Chandler School reporter, Topher Mason. (Photo Credit: Benjamin Hager *Las Vegas Review-Journal*)

## Representative Susie Lee (NV)

TOPHER MASON

On Friday, January 29, 2021, I interviewed House of Representative's member, Susie Lee (Rep. Lee), with great zeal. She represents Nevada's Third District in "the People's House" of Congress. Congress is the term for both chambers of our legislative branch of Government. The House of Representatives is one of the two houses in our bicameral legislature. A Congressperson's schedule is chalked full of events. Rep. Lee graciously agreed to work an interview with me into her schedule. (Topher) "I am very ambivalent about political polarization and discord; do you think the Right and Left sides of our democracy are leaning too far to their own sides to the point of hatred for the other?" (Rep. Lee) "I do. There's a documentary called *Social Dilemma*. If you haven't seen it you might want to check it out, but basically whether it's the social media, or mainstream media, there definitely has been polarization in our politics. I do feel that the past president had a hand in basically promoting and glorifying at the very least Right-wing extremism. I don't condone extremism or violence whether it's Right or Left but I do feel that there has been a pull by certain segments of our society to

both the Right extreme and the Left extreme. Yes, it has gotten to the point of either hatred or just non-cooperation and total discounting either side views." (Topher) "What are your election campaigns core values?" (Rep. Lee) "My core value is really just getting things done for people. I spent 25 years in Nevada working in education policy helping kids graduate from high school. My core value is really just getting things done for people. Like I said, I spent 25 years in Nevada working in education policy helping come up with solutions, bipartisan solutions. I'll work with anyone, to get things done for people. Education has been my core passion in my career so I will continue to be an education champion in Washington. From a values point of view, I think it's basically respecting people where they are and doing everything I can in my power to make sure they feel that they are being heard and that I'm working for them." (Topher) "After the protest turned violent on Capitol Hill, were you present at the protest, and how did you react to the tragedy?" (Rep. Lee) "Yes, I was present. I was in my office. My office is in Cannon Five which was  
**Continued on page 5**



SPORTS

# The Treatment of Transgender Athletes

ANNA BOLTON

BOSTON – Recently, in Australian sports officials have altered the guidelines for transgender athletes that now allows them to play like tennis, rugby, hockey, netball, and water polo. But gender has been discussed in sports for years. In 1967, during the Boston marathon, an official dragged a woman, Kathrine Switzer, off of the all-men's race. Over the years, women have been allowed to join in the marathons. However, the guidelines for transgender athletes have become less clear. Some trans runners have chosen not to run in races because they are scared of what might happen.

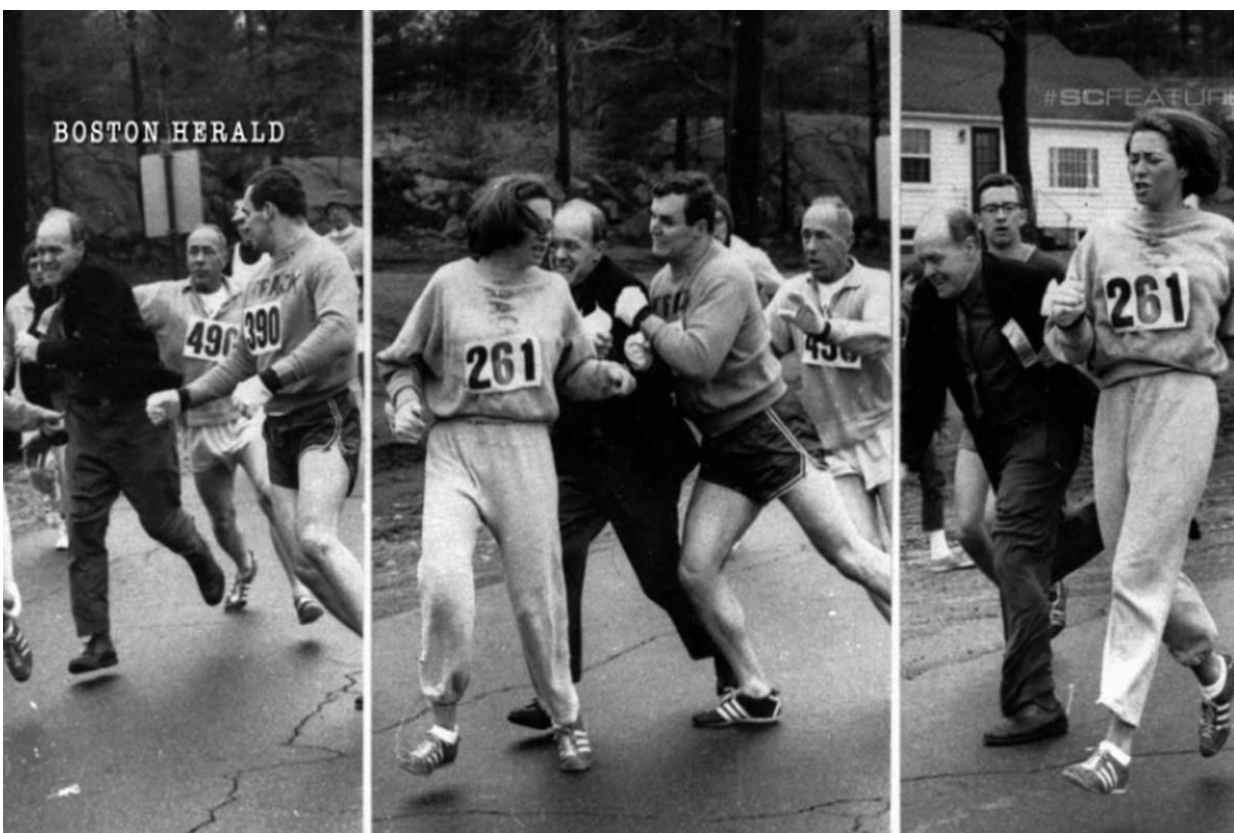
In 2018, Tom Grilk, who is in charge of the Boston Athletic Association, said “Members of the LGBT community have had a lot to deal with over the years, and we’d rather not add to that burden.” The support the B.A.A showed has partially helped transgender women feel more comfortable joining the Boston Marathon. Before, it was uncertain how they would be treated, and now more openly trans athletes have signed up for the marathon. Several marathons have no official police but are doing something kind of similar. People that organize the marathons in Chicago, New York City, London, and Los Angeles say they support and allow trans people to join their marathons.

Critics of this movement have said trans women have an unfair advantage since they have higher testosterone levels after going through male puberty.

Most large races require both professional and amateur trans athletes to prove they have lowered their testosterone levels either through medication or surgery. Australian sports have been criticized in the past by trans advocates for not making similar moves to such races to be inclusive to trans athletes. Hannah Mouncey who played in the AFL (Australian football league) before becoming a woman, was not allowed to play in the 2017 season. We really need to show more appreciation to trans people and people in the LGBTQ+ community.



Amelia Gapin, a transgender runner, qualified for the Boston Marathon after taking testosterone blockers.



In 1967, Kathrine Switzer (wearing bib 261 above) became the first woman to run the all-male Boston Marathon. During the race, a race official tried to drag her off the course and rip her bib number off. Switzer evaded the official and finished with a time of 4 hours 20 minutes.

REVIEW

# The Cloud Appreciation Society

VALESHKA DIAMOND

IN THE CLOUDS - Some people in this world admire clouds so much that they take pictures of them to show on a website, so other people all over the world can admire them as much as they do. As of March 2020 people from 120 countries had visited this website. It is called the Cloud Appreciation Society. It was founded by Gavin Pretor-Pinney in 2005. The reason he started the website was that he was “enchanted by clouds from a young age.” He also wanted people to be allured by the beauty of clouds. He obviously struck a chord with many people as the website has over 50,000 members.

When I first opened the website, it had a small paragraph trying to apprise people to join their society. At the top of the page, it had different links. For example, it had the gallery, news, the community, and more. Also, there was a whole page about the clouds of the month. As I scrolled down, I saw pictures about clouds from different countries and states. Also, there was an advertisement for their new book that costs \$21.95.

Even though there were two or three sentences under each picture I would have liked the captions to elucidate more on why the person chose to photograph that specific cloud. I thought this topic was a very interesting thing to learn and research. It’s riveting to me that this is a normal hobby for some people.

Below are some pictures of the interesting clouds that the Society’s members took.





ARTS

Is Juice WRLD Dead?

WILLIAM “GRASSHOPPER” BOLTON

CHICAGO - Jared Anthony Higgins (Juice WRLD) was born on December 2, 1998 in Chicago. He was a rapper who died of a drug overdose, but still has new songs releasing that he made before he died. His most recent song was “Bad Boys,” featuring Young Thug. His record label has posted many songs after his death. He already had the music ready, but it needed to be edited. Because of this high musical output, some people think he is still alive, but I do not believe he is. His latest music video looks real, but it might be faked because Juice WRLD had sunglasses on the whole time.

Part of why his songs are still coming out is because he had many features on his songs that took a while to be edited. A song went out with Benny Blanco called “Real S\*\*t” on Juice’s 21st birthday. In January 2020, almost a month after Juice passed, CNN reported that the Cook County Medical Examiner’s Office said, “He died from oxycodone and codeine toxicity.” The medical examiner thinks that the rapper’s death was accidental. CNN also noted that Higgins suffered a medical problem soon after arriving at Chicago’s Midway International Airport in December.

Some people believe that Juice is still alive, but I do not think he is because Juice WRLD has

made many songs that had stuff about him doing drugs. In one song, he said, “Just wanna be John Lennon.” At first, you don’t think much about it, but he died on the same day as John Lennon. I feel that this is a crazy coincidence. He might have faked his death for that reason, and he also said, “What’s a 27 club, we ain’t making it past 21,” and died when he was 21.



**Above:** The cover of Juice WRLD’s posthumous album, *Legends Never Die* that included the hits “Wishing Well,” “Come & Go” “Righteous,” and “Hate the Other Side.”

**Left:** Juice performing at Bonnaroo Music Festival in June of 2019, 7 months before his death.

OPINION

Should Broadway be Opened?

LILIANA GREENBAUM

NEW YORK CITY - I think everyone can agree with me when I say that COVID 19 has ruined more things than anyone can count. I’m going to elucidate one of those things... Broadway. Obviously, Broadway couldn’t stay open when COVID-19 started. It involves a ton of people crowding themselves into a room. So the question here is... is there a way for Broadway to stay open without letting COVID spread too much?

Well, to start off Broadway theaters could allow less people inside and then they could space people out. But that wouldn’t work because then I doubt they wouldn’t make enough money to pay for everything they need for the show. They could also have people wear masks but that would only work for the audience. Imagine being an actor and trying to sing clearly with a mask on for several minutes.

You wouldn’t have to be irascible to get annoyed by that. So then is there really much you can do? Masks and social distancing are the main ways to protect people from the CoronaVirus.

As we have covered, there’s not really any way to continue Broadway during COVID. I suppose we’ll just have to wait it out. In fact, it’s been so long *Wall Street Journal* writer, Michael Riedel, said, “Never in its 120 years has Broadway been dark this long.” At least we know that eventually COVID-19 will no longer be a problem so don’t launch into a diatribe.



Productions like Disney’s Aladdin have been hurt by COVID-19 as the virus has forced theaters to shut down.



## POLITICS

## Section 230 &amp; Freedom of Speech

MAKSIM DIAMOND

WASHINGTON, D.C. - What is Section 230 and why should we care? In 1996, Congress passed Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which says internet websites cannot be treated as the publisher or speaker of third-party content. This law protects a website owner from being sued for illegal or offensive content users posted on their website. This law also allows websites to “restrict access to or availability of material” that the website or user considers being offensive or “objectionable”.

In 1791, the First Amendment was adopted to preserve and bolster our freedoms of speech, religion, and expression. The First Amendment ‘prevents the government from making laws’ that would restrict our freedoms.

Section 230 provides technology companies and websites the ability to restrict speech. For example, Facebook bans hate speech on their sites, even though it is legally permitted and protected by the First Amendment. Therefore, Section 230 protects Facebook from being liable for what their users post, and it allows them the ability to remove content they think is “objectionable.” However, there is a much bigger issue that affects our American freedoms.

Protecting companies that have the power to restrict free speech on their websites and to remove certain types of content without any clear rules or supervision soon could cause discord with their users.

I believe that both technology companies and private citizens that post content all should be held responsible and held accountable for providing and posting true and accurate facts.



Twitter suspended Donald Trump's account citing Section 230.

## Continued from page 1 – Representative Lee

near where the pipe bomb was planted. I went back to my office because they really didn't have a good evacuation plan. I spent five hours in the dark barricaded in my office with two of my staff members. Did I feel like I was in danger? I didn't feel as threatened while I was in the building that day because I really didn't understand what was happening inside the Capitol. A lot of the coverage was from outside the capital. It really wasn't until days later when I realized just how at risk we all were that I realized how dangerous the situation was.”

**(Topher)** “How many terms have you served in the House of Representatives and do you hope to work towards being a Senator?”

**(Rep. Lee)** “This is my second term in the House. I was elected in 2018 and reelected just in November of 2020. I really did this because I was frustrated with how grid locked Washington was, how congress was. I felt like Washington needs more people who have on the ground experience running non-profits and. So, my answer is probably not, but never say never. I am happy being a Congressperson. I am going to do this for as long as I feel like I can be effective.

**(Topher)** “What is the most important part of your day as in the life of a congresswomen, and why is that?”

**(Rep. Lee)** “Well, I think the most important part is just making sure I am connected with my constituents. The House of Representatives is 435 people and we each represent a unique group of constituents, and it is especially important now, with this pandemic that we're not out in public as much as we used to. Therefore, I spend time you know making sure that I'm doing constituent phone calls. In fact, later today, I'll be calling a bunch of my constituents and making sure we're answering their letters and their questions, but also understanding what's going on the ground, and how I can be most helpful. So, for instance, right before this phone call I had a phone call with our county commissioner. Biden just signed an executive order to limit drilling on all public land. That's great. I am totally in favor of that but what it did in Nevada was halted the building of parks we are trying to build. So, my commissioner called me and said, hey, can you help us out? So anyway, it's that type of work that is most important and then being their voice in Washington. Whenever we're having conference calls, or committee hearings, making sure that people know what's going on in Nevada is paramount because I'm their advocate. I'm their voice. So, those are the two most important things I do every day. “

**(Topher)** “Follow up question: What is the greatest needs of your constituents?”

**(Rep. Lee)** “Right now Nevada has the second highest unemployment rate in the country. Just getting past this pandemic, getting our economy open, making sure that we get people back to work is most important. Also, along those lines access to quality healthcare is an issue that every family faces. So, making sure that we're just getting funding through these vaccines and putting this pandemic behind us is the most important issue right now.”

**(Topher)** “In your opinion what was the most outrageous/nonrealistic bill you have seen pass the House of Representatives?”

**(Rep. Lee)** “The most outrageous was the tax cuts of 2017 that gave incredible tax cut to your top 1% and left the middle class behind and so I think that was a pretty outrageous bill that was obviously passed on a party line vote.”

**(Topher)** “Concerning COVID-19, how would you go about handling it if you were president?”

**(Rep. Lee)** “Well, I think we're off to a good start. I mean the previous administration didn't believe in the science behind the pandemic and refused to do a national mask mandate. I would have done a mask mandate from the very beginning. I also think that we still can do more work to rapid in-home testing and of course you know making sure we get these vaccines out distributed. They're producing them now. We just have to get them into the arms of people. So, making sure that we have a national strategy for doing that I think those are the most important things to be doing right now because the economic fallout isn't going to end until we get past the pandemic. So, we have to do whatever we can to make sure that we're stopping the spread and you got to get it below one, you got to make sure that the spread is below one present. At like 1.0 and that's when you're going to start to see infection rates and deaths come down.”

Susie Lee works with the president and other important and powerful people. As a Congressperson, she could decide the casting vote whether to go to war or not. The fact that she could take her valuable time to take this interview (for a small-time newspaper) is very humbling. Thank you, Representative Lee for your time.

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By Michael A. Macdonald / Ed. Rich Norris

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**ACROSS**

- 1 One of the Three Bears
- 5 Pro concerned with Apr. 15
- 8 Like one liable for libel
- 14 Tons
- 15 The Boston Bruins retired his #4 in 1979
- 16 Like mosaic stones
- 17 Ilk
- 18 \*Nostalgic place for a walk
- 20 Patella
- 22 Sign of summer
- 23 D.C. figure
- 24 Alabama march city
- 25 Porcine sounds
- 27 \*Place to pursue pleasure
- 33 Brought back to its original condition
- 36 Song for a diva
- 37 Sturdy tree
- 38 Some shower components
- 42 Overnight option
- 43 Plumbing concern
- 45 Fixed, as old shoes

- 47 \*Place with no options
- 51 Relaxed
- 52 Trivial, as issues
- 56 Have debts
- 59 Without end, to the Bard
- 60 Cry of approval ... and what the end of each answer to a starred clue is
- 62 \*Evidence in white-collar crime
- 65 Dunkable cookie
- 66 Aphrodite's love
- 67 Web address
- 68 Measure of versatility
- 69 Renter
- 70 Map part
- 71 Measure of proficiency

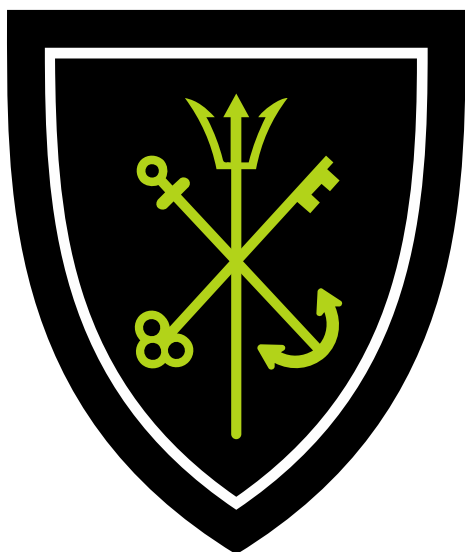
**DOWN**

- 1 Batman and Robin wore them
- 2 Without help
- 3 Type of mushroom
- 4 NFL passing stat
- 5 Robin Cook's breakout 1977 novel
- 6 Pre-cooking job

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- 7 Limb on a rest
- 8 Fire alerts
- 9 Break up, as a bovine team
- 10 Without exception
- 11 Ewe sounds
- 12 One drawn in the sand
- 13 First home
- 19 Potpourri
- 21 Pool shot
- 25 Said, "I'll have the lobster," say
- 26 Health resort
- 28 Rage
- 29 Bumped into
- 30 Seed cover
- 31 Diner sticker
- 32 Round of applause
- 33 Went in a taxi
- 34 Merit
- 35 Icy street risk
- 39 "\_\_\_ the ramparts ..."
- 40 P-like Greek letter
- 41 Sordid
- 44 Author of macabre tales
- 46 Remove from text
- 48 Spenser's "The \_\_\_ Queene"
- 49 Fly to avoid
- 50 Bonn mister
- 53 Like Odin and Loki
- 54 Curved moldings
- 55 Fowl pole
- 56 Australian gem
- 57 Walk in the shallows
- 58 Grand-scale poetry
- 60 Line with a plug
- 61 One on your side
- 63 Sunny pair?
- 64 Arctic diving bird





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