

Valley Travels with GoPass

JC Rosa, Assistant Sports Editor

Valley students can benefit from free transportation through the Metro GoPass program, allowing community college students to commute without the burden of transportation costs. The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) partnered on Dec. 2021, offering a free Metro GoPass for students funded by a \$21 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration. Since the partnership, more than 400,000 community college students in the greater Los Angeles area have taken advantage of the opportunity. After factoring in the cost of maintenance and gas, students spend an average of \$9,500 a year when traveling by car, an amount that can be saved using the pass. "It's definitely helpful just for getting from place to place," said Valley student Soledad De Mucha Flores. "I use it for a wide variety of things." The GoPass allows students free access to ride the Metro bus and rail and regional metro systems across Southern California. Some students use the pass not only for school but to get around the city. Metro buses and transit lines are reliable, typically arriving at each stop every 10 to 15 minutes at peak hours of the day. Students can track their bus or transit line using the Metro app on their phone.



Angel Silva for the Valley Star

The Valley College Station on the corner of Burbank Boulevard and Fulton Avenue serves as one of the many transportation hubs for students on campus.

"I can rely on taking transit," said Valley student Adrian Allen. "The amount of stations you can get to using the Metro GoPass really helps." Students can visit the Welcome Center in the Student Services Building or the Valley Business Office in the Student Union to claim a free Metro GoPass with their student ID number and a form of identification. There, they will receive a TAP card with an activation code and can receive assistance with activa-

ting the card. Students will be able to use the Metro GoPass anywhere between one and three hours after activating it. "It does not take long," said Valley student Gareth Klein. "Everyone should sign up, especially if you're already taking the bus." In addition to the Metro GoPass, students also qualify for the Student Adventure Pass, a pilot program that allows for free Metrolink access. Available until June 2025, this pass provides access to Metro-

link's seven lines criss crossing six counties across Southern California. Interested students can sign up at metrolinktrains.com/students. These passes ensure that no college students are held back by transportation costs, offering a way to commute to school and other destinations across Los Angeles. With the campus having five metro routes within half a mile, students can access plenty of options when taking public transit. Popular buses that

drop students off near campus include the Orange Line, the Van Nuys Clockwise Dash, and bus routes 154, 167 and 237. College financial administrator Robert Medina said the partnership between LACCD and LA Metro can "provide other opportunities for students in the community." "This Metro tap card would help them [students] be able to move around the city and be able to come to campus," said Medina.



Scan QR code to read more

Increased Seismic Activity Rattles Californians

Valley College has taken measures in training faculty and retrofitting buildings to ensure student safety during potential earthquakes.

Kaia Mann, Editor-in-chief

Los Angeles has had an unusually shaky past few months with a record-breaking 14 earthquakes magnitude 4 or higher in the past year. With "the big one" on everyone's radar, Valley College students should be informed on what to do if the world starts moving under their feet. In the wake of the recent 4.7 magnitude earthquake in Malibu on Sept. 12, reports of frequent and unusual seismic activity over the past year have heightened awareness and anxiety about earthquakes. Although Valley Glen, about 30 miles from the quake's epicenter, only felt a brief jolt, the tremor may still have left students feeling uneasy. "We have the San Andreas Fault, and it's been moving a lot so it does kinda worry you a lot more," said Nanci Santos, an education major. "Everyone's always talking about the big one coming, these little ones might lead up to the big one, so it's more scary now that they are happening so often." The college's website outlines emergency response plans including fires, bomb threats, and active shooters. In the event of an earthquake, Valley advises students to "duck and cover and hold," ensuring they remain away from windows and hanging fixtures indoors, and to

steer clear of power lines and buildings if outdoors. After shaking stops, students and faculty are instructed to exit buildings and meet up at one of the three emergency assembly areas on campus. These zones include the sports stadium, and parking lots A and B. "First thing to do if there is an earthquake is to take cover and then calmly exit the buildings. They (students and faculty) will be directed on what to do from there," said President Barry Gribbons on the school's earthquake protocol. "The college will immediately undergo an assessment of the campus including all of the buildings to identify any safety issues or anyone who needs assistance." The last major earthquake to rattle Southern California was the infamous 6.7 Northridge quake of 1994. The quake resulted in 57 deaths, thousands of injuries and billions of dollars in damages. The Northridge quake left a lasting emotional impact on students and faculty at Valley, as documented in an archived edition of the Valley Star. This publication reported on the extensive damage the college sustained, particularly highlighting the library, where over 100 bookcases were destroyed, rendering significant portions of the building unusable. Reflecting on her experience at the epicenter of the quake, former Valley student Stacy Steele told the Valley Star in 1994, "I'm not sure how we

got down, but we made it out and I just sat there (on the sidewalk) in shock and started to shake uncontrollably." Community colleges have to comply with the Field Act, which mandates earthquake resistant construction, and Division of the State Architect-certified inspectors to oversee construction. Valley is "built to a very high seismic standard" according to Gribbons, "even a higher standard than CSU's and UC's" Valley administration has undergone the community emergency response training (CERT) training to aid in any emergency the college faces. The training includes basic information one should know when navigating an emergency such as first-aid, gas line management and fire safety. California residents are encouraged to secure heavy and potential hazardous objects as well as keep a stash of food and water in case of an earthquake. A resource that can be utilized is the MyShake App that uses ground motion monitoring to send alerts before or during shaking. The speed in which this alert is delivered depends on the distance from the quake's epicenter. "Our college and city command team has spent a lot of time in training and preparation, starting just before the pandemic," said Gribbons. "We developed a lot of capacity during that time to be able to respond to emergencies."

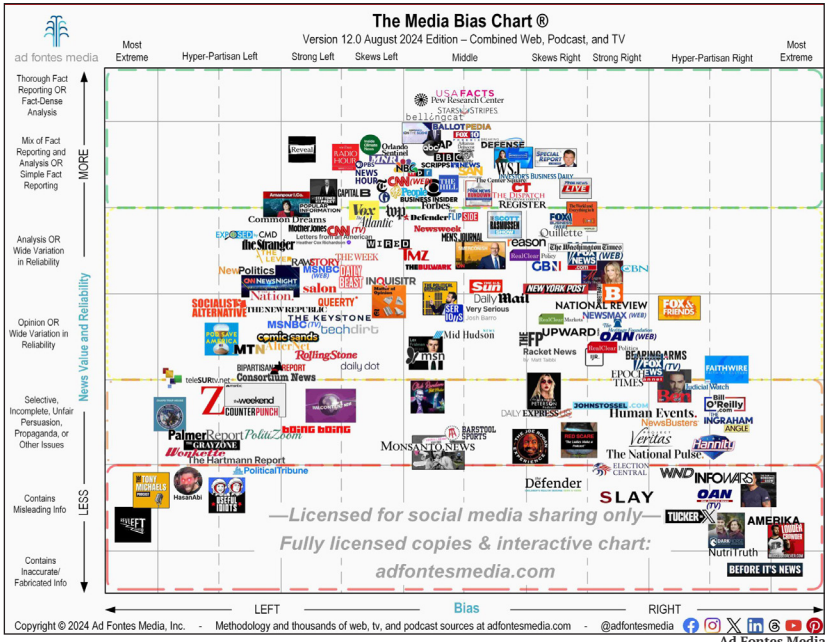


Valley Star Photo

The 6.7 Northridge earthquake of 1994, toppled over 100 of the bookshelves in Valley College's Library. This photo was recovered from the first Valley Star paper following the quake, published Feb. 10 1994.

The Search For Accurate News Takes Some Digging

In today's social media landscape, electronic resources put the hunt for reliable information at students' fingertips.



Ad Fontes Media has tracked the accuracy and slant of information sources.

Angel Silva, Managing Editor

As more students rely on social media for news, they have a larger array of tools to determine the accuracy of information in news stories they consume. A Pew Research Center study from September breaks down social media and news consumption shows that for adults between 18 and 29, TikTok was the main social media platform where they received news, followed closely by Reddit and Instagram. "Social media does influence the way I get news, you can't always have a TV but you always have your phone. You can get information faster, you just have to fact check it," said business major Mya Vicks. A separate Pew study done in February by the Pew Research Center on social media and

news trends showed that 40 percent of people surveyed are concerned about accuracy in news shared on social media. The same study mentioned that 36 percent of adults under 30 prefer social media over news outlets, and 35 percent use social media to get live info on events as they occur. Concerns on accuracy drive students to seek news from several sources. "Frankly, I don't trust any news. Fox News, any of those I just think they are bullshit," said cinema major Hillel McDonald. "I get my news pretty much online or through newspapers I use social media more, but I would say I use a bit of both." The rise of uncertainty over the truth of news is driving the creation of fact sites focused on analyzing newsworthy events and topics through as unbiased of a

lens as possible. An example is USAFacts, a site launched in 2017 by former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer, that solely uses government data sourced from federal sources. Another source is the Media Bias Chart, published by Ad Fontes Media, that ranks news sources such as newspapers, talk shows, podcasts and publications on how partisan, fact-dense and factual their information is. The impact of how accurate stories are, as well as how biased they can be, is a determining factor in how students consume news online. "I do trust the news but there are certain news programs that are biased more towards liberals, or conservatives. I'm looking for what's factual," said Valley student Mario Ramirez. "I get my news through social media and YouTube, a little bit in the New York Times."

Ukrainian Refugee Makes Her Mark at Valley

Alina Lysak made her way to Valley to sharpen her skills before heading to the university.



Artavazd Ovakimyan for the Valley Star

Valley student Alina Lysak is the founder of the Ukrainian Student Union and is the ASU Commissioner of Student Life.

Sara Lemon,
Staff Writer

In 2022, Russian bombs exploded near Alina Lysak’s hometown of Vinnytsia, Ukraine, forcing her and her family to run for their lives. “I left Ukraine on February 27, 2022. There were loud explosions next to my hometown so my family decided to flee,” said Lysak. The then-17-year-old and her family crossed the Polish border and would later arrive in Germany, while their American relatives worked to bring them safely to Los Angeles. Lysak remained committed to her education, to pursue a career and help her war-torn community. “My old life was completely gone,” Lysak said. She graduated from North Hollywood High School, taking extra classes in order to graduate on time. When looking at attending a university, Lysak found that she needed more preparation after high school to be competitive for college - which led her to Valley College in 2023. “I realized community college was the correct option for me,” she said. “Going to Valley has changed my life for the better, and now I am starting my applications for transfer in 2025.” Lysak met Valley’s Dream Resource Center coordinator Javier Carbajal-Ramos at orientation. Carbajal-Ramos said that the former high school valedictorian will be “an amazing business leader.” The business major hopes to transfer to UCLA or Stanford to pursue a degree in business after she leaves her mark at Valley. “I am still deciding on my exact major, but I love mathematics and I want to pursue it and I hope to utilize it a lot in my future major,” said Lysak.

In May she was elected as the 2024-2025 commissioner of student life. “If I had to describe her in one word, it would be ‘bright’ — her energy, leadership, and talent for bringing people together stand out in everything she does,” said ASU President Georgi Almazyran. “She always goes the extra mile to create great experiences for everyone involved.” Lysak also founded the Ukrainian Student Union and serves as its president. She hopes to bring Ukrainian culture to Valley and provide opportunities for students to learn more about her homeland. “Everyone is welcome to join us,” said Lysak. “We had a successful on campus screening of the film ‘Mavka,’ where everyone had fun and learned about our mythology.” She aims to share Ukrainian history with the campus through events, such as holding a remembrance day for “Holodomor,” a genocide that occurred in the 1930s in Ukraine. “The dynamic of seeing Alina recognizing the need to support her fellow Ukraine students that require help with interpretation, and expanding into acting in the capacity to help others, is a wonderful role I have seen her take on admirably,” said Carbajal-Ramos. Through the club, Lysak also plans to share the importance of her native Ukrainian language, noting how oppression throughout history has bolstered its complexity. “After the war began, many people started to understand that our language is vital to our people to preserve our cultural identity,” said Lysak. “Russian media propaganda uses the story that Ukrainians do not have their own language to support their own political agenda. When you see me and I look fine on the outside, please know that inside I have PTSD from my war experience.”



Snapshot of the war in Ukraine

The Russian war against Ukraine, which started in 2014, escalated to new heights in February 2024, with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine resulting in a historic refugee crisis. Deaths on both sides are nearing 500,000 people. The above map outlines the state of conflict in Ukraine as of Sept. 8. Map by the New York Times.

Concert Series Goes Classic in Latest Show

Community meets kindred spirits every Wednesday in music department.

Katherine O’Hara,
Copy Editor and Staff Writer

Los Angeles pianist and Valley College professor Natalie Pang and partner Joe Hagen, guest artist on viola, thrilled and inspired the audience this week at the music department. Every Wednesday, from Sept. 11 through Nov. 27, the community is invited to hear curated classical works from professional musicians. At the inaugural performance of the free Wednesday Concert Series at Valley College, the mastery of the classical duo, both Eastman School of Music graduates, engulfed the hall in classical sound and the warmth of bodies cozier the atmosphere. “The computer gives all the music of the world to you, to hold in your palm. But that is a solitary experience -- you are alone with your device, and probably with headphones,” said Valley’s music professor Christian Nova. “Here, you are invited into the lives of others -- of the composers, the performers, and the people sitting around you. It is three parts of the triangle -- three kinds of souls seeking art and each other.” The doors opened at 1:30 p.m. for the first performance in the series, titled “Music for Characterization – Film, Ballet, and Opera Music.” Professor Nova’s program proposed the idea that music advances the development of a character – which can be a setting or a person. For “Intermezzo for Viola and Piano,” by Nino Rota, Pang explained that Rota, who wrote the score for dozens of films including “The Godfather,” was best known as a film composer. But in his native Italy, he was a long beloved classical artist. The piece revealed Rota’s ability to immediately convey a visual setting – in this case, the performers suggested honorable solemnity, perhaps a moor or an ancient church. Tchaikovsky’s “None but the Lonely Heart,” from “Six Romances, Op. 6,” was used in the 1944 movie of the same name. Derived from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s poem, “Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt” (“Only he who knows yearning”), the artist laments that, only those who know the

sorrow of lost love, know how he feels. Reaching, wistful, sorrowful, Tchaikovsky’s music reflects the main character’s plight, as he had squandered his love in an ill-suited match. With an easy and humorous rapport, Hagen introduced Bizet’s “Adagietto from L’Arlesienne Suite No. 1.” The performers had a palpable chemistry, sweet, yet serious. Bizet’s piece qualified as “incidental music,” meant for an intermission. This was the popcorn and drink moment in a nineteenth century playhouse. Bizet’s theme was infatuation and limerence, and while entertaining, had apparently guarded the story by giving nothing away. Pang played solo on “Finale” from Stravinski’s “The Firebird Suite.” From a Russian ballet, the piece begins with a spring fairy, casting transformative greenery over the land. Unfortunately, she disturbs the Firebird, who lashes out at her with fire and destruction. Wounded and trembling, she clings to life. She recovers, and builds back to a finale of power and resurgence, claiming the right of spring. Pang’s crescendo gave full embodiment to spring’s triumphance. Ennio Morricone’s “Love Theme” from “Cinema Paradiso” closed the performance. The piece tells the story of a Sicilian boy remembering his childhood through two themes of love. One of the pieces has him reminisce about his close friendship with the town’s movie theater projectionist and when he fell in love with cinema. He is also cast back to his first love, who was spirited away from him by her father. The piece repeatedly interchanged between the minor (Gm) to the major (Bb), the wistful to the happy, to capture the bittersweet nostalgia of childhood memories. Listening to Natalie and Joe play together with such sympathy and mastery reminded me of why we go to concerts,” said Valley instructor Frank Garvey. The sympathy and mastery of the players touched the audience, and all the souls in the gallery began performing a thunderous applause. The free Wednesday Concert Series will take place in the Music Department, Room 106 at 1:30 p.m.



Carson Tarabochia-Martin for the Valley Star

Classical musician plays the violin in the music department’s room 106. The Concert series occurs each Wednesday.

‘Beetlejuice Beetlejuice’ has Been Wrongly Summoned

Tim Burton’s latest onscreen endeavor brings some fun but is complicated with opaque storylines and underdeveloped characters.

Kaia Mann,
Editor-in-chief

“Beetlejuice Beetlejuice” aimed for nostalgia but is plagued by plot holes and an overcrowded cast, losing the original spirit of Tim Burton’s 1988 film. This newest installment into the world of perverted demons and gothic teenagers follows the now grown up Lydia Deetz (Winona Ryder) returning to her original home with her wacky stepmother, Delia (Catherine O’Hara), and estranged daughter, Astrid (Jenna Ortega). Lydia is troubled by visions of her old foe, Beetlejuice (Michael Keaton), but it is not until she has to save her daughter from the underworld that she summons him to finish the business they started 30 years prior. The plot of “Beetlejuice” defies easy summary. Many of the film’s scenes introduce unexplained characters that obscure the already confusing narrative. A seemingly major aspect of the film, Beetlejuice’s ex-wife, Delores (Monica Bellucci) is positioned as a key storyline

that falls flat. While it is great to see Delores sensually staple herself back together and steal the souls of evil men, “Beetlejuice Beetlejuice” is simply battling too many storylines. The movie ends as one big mess, albeit a mess that has some creative and stunning art design. Anytime the film takes a trip down to the bureaucratic yet campy underworld, the true strengths of the movie shine, and so does the colorful lighting, putting an end to the gray and lifeless trend of Hollywood blockbusters. The character designs of the “recently deceased,” whether they be half eaten, drowned or blown up, provide the movie with the essence of the original. Danny Elfman’s score adds to this, returning viewers to the world of the strange and unusual. A cornerstone of the original “Beetlejuice” was its unique visuals that blended stop motion, CGI and practical effects. The haunted suburban vibe mixed with the off-the-wall and irreverent performance by Keaton turned it into a cult classic. One particular scene in the 2024 film that stands out as

an ode to the original involves a mix of classic animation and claymation to depict an outrageous character death. Although “Beetlejuice Beetlejuice” avoids coming across as a mere cash grab, in many ways it feels too modern, missing the charm of the first. What saves the movie from disaster, meeting the fate many other sequels have before, is the all-star cast. O’Hara is a force of comedic power, coming in swinging and never letting up, and Ryder and Keaton fall right back into what audiences loved about Lydia and Beetlejuice the first go-around. As for the newcomers, Ortega stands out, fitting right into the mix, adding yet another Burton classic to her repertoire. Yet, with too many storylines converging into a lackluster final act, “Beetlejuice Beetlejuice” ends up underutilizing these great characters. While any sequel set three decades later is not free of logistical problems, it seems like someone needed to tell Burton to scale it down. Or rather question if it is a movie that really needed to be made in the first place.



Photo by Parisa Taghizadeh

Director Tim Burton and Michael Keaton stand on the set of “Beetlejuice Beetlejuice.” The film was released on Sept. 6 and made \$111 million in ticket sales in its opening week.

OPINION

There’s No Debate About Social Media and Politics

The presidential debate on Sept. 10 revealed an aspect of politics hidden by previous debates: humor.

Daimler Koch,
Online Editor

On the night of September 10, many Americans dialed in on their TVs and devices, and watched what was perhaps one of the most entertaining broadcasts in recent American history. From Donald Trump falsely claiming that Springfield, Ohio’s immigrants were eating cats and dogs to Kamala Harris flaming Trump for being “fired by 81 million people,” it seems as if a kind of dark comedy has entered into politics this time around. Surprisingly, televised presidential debates were a fairly recent invention in American politics. The first major one was between JFK and Richard Nixon, a debate that was broadcasted on both radio and TV. Its sway was unmistakable: those who listened said that Nixon performed better, but those who watched said that JFK had the better showing, as he looked far more composed than the sweaty, unshaven Nixon. The popularity of presidential debates only continued to climb. The most viewed presidential debate in U.S. history is the Hillary Clinton-Trump debate in 2016, which clocked in at 84 million viewers. The Jimmy Carter-Ronald Reagan debate comes in second at 80.6 million views, with Trump and Joe Biden’s debate in 2020 garnering 73.1 million viewers. One might call it challenging to find a debate that might be considered funny. Triumphant? Yes. Dismal and disheartening? Also yes. But none as outright humorous as the Harris-Trump debate, which, if one is curious, clocked in at 67 million



Photo Illustration by Sydne Santiago

viewers on Tuesday night. The way Harris set up so many traps to let Trump expose his own stupidity is a rhetorical marvel. His outlandish claims and defensive remarks – and the slow dawning on viewers that this is somehow one of the best America has to offer for the presidency – makes one realize how quickly one can fall from appearing to be an unstoppable force to the most clownish of farces in two

hours. And if you do not believe this, ask his Republican friends – or the man himself, for that matter. According to a Republican strategist who talked to Politico, “He is taking all the bait from Kamala and not focused on her being a part of the current administration and awful policies. Simple strategy that he is not executing. Total missed opportunity and failure from Trump.” It is possible that Trump will be seen this way for a

while, at least through election day, due to the myriad of news stories, TikToks, and yes, memes pointing out his buffoonery on social media. In fact, Americans have probably learned more about the candidates online than through this debate, which is another layer of irony and deviation from the debate norm. In a time when information did not spread as quickly, these debates served as precious windows into not just

the policies but the characters of the candidates, too often condensed into brief news stories on televisions and in newspapers. Now, though, voters see them all the time, whether they would like to or not, and know far more about them than candidates can ever project onto a TV camera. And, to be honest, that’s pretty funny.

Buyer Beware: Finding the Truth in News is Up to You

Finding accurate and trustworthy news is more important than ever in the face of misinformation.

Hillary Van Hoose,
Copy Editor and Staff Writer

According to recent Gallup polls, only about 12 percent of Americans have confidence in television news, 18 percent have confidence in newspapers, and 16 percent have confidence in news on the internet. Where did it all go wrong? During a recent interview with businessman Steve Ballmer on The Daily Show, host Jon Stewart asked “Why do we fight so hard against the government being a proper check on [corporate power], against that exploitation?” In order to understand why, and how, it’s necessary to know a little bit of history. Almost a century ago, Congress passed the Radio Act of 1927 as a temporary stop-gap solution and tasked the Federal Radio Commission to provide regulation for burgeoning new forms of broadcast communication that had never existed before. Seven years later, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the Communications Act of 1934 “established the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), an independent U.S. agency responsible for the regulation of interstate and foreign communications by radio, television, wire, and, later, satellite.” These regulations remained largely unaltered until Ronald Reagan’s FCC Chairman Mark Fowler pushed the regulatory body to favor an approach resembling laissez-faire capitalism in the 1980s. PBS journalist Bill Moyers noted in an episode of the show Moyers & Company that while 50 corporations con-



Photo Illustration by Astrid Cortez

trolled the majority of U.S. media in 1983, media consolidation shrank that number to 23 corporations by 1990, only 10 corporations by 1997, and a mere 6 corporations by 2012. In the middle of this new era, one of the biggest blows to fairness in media came in the form of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Among other things, the legislation massively accelerated the creation of a media oligopoly not

only by drastically increasing the number of newspapers and television stations a single corporation was allowed to own in a given location, but also by raising the percentage of the national audience that a given corporation could have access to. Fewer sources of news with greater control over what messages people get to hear made for less competition and less accountability,

and likely resulted in the lack of trust we are seeing today that pushed people to look to other sources of information, like social media. An analysis by Pew Research Center shows that 39 percent of adults under 30 regularly get their news on TikTok, with another fact sheet by Pew showing that 54 percent of U.S. adults “at least sometimes” get news from social media. So, given the increasing lack

of net neutrality and consolidation of corporate control over social media, have online news and social media made the situation better or worse? In some ways, both. On the one hand, each social media platform is a corporation that is subject to few regulations compared with what we commonly consider traditional media, and false claims of government interference have resulted in Supreme Court cases such as Murthy v. Missouri, which found that social media companies have been allowed to run wildly unchecked and that any claims to the contrary are spurious. As a matter of fact, a study published in Bulletin of the World Health Organization found that up to 29 percent of all social media posts about COVID-19 during the first phase of the pandemic contained misinformation that likely caused incalculable harm. On the other hand, social media practices were exposed to public scrutiny when Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg was called to testify before a 2018 joint hearing of two Senate committees, on how a Russian propagandist group used Facebook to sway the 2016 elections and how Facebook profited when data firm Cambridge Analytica received unauthorized access to the private data of about 87 million Facebook users. If every type of media is rife with bias and misinformation, what can college students do to stay informed? Take classes that teach you necessary skills for the modern age, like critical thinking, reading comprehension, research, and media literacy.



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GOT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR?

Letters to the editor can be submitted online at www.valleystarnews.com. Letters must be limited to 300 words and may be edited for content. Full name and contact information must be supplied in order for letters to be printed.

VALLEY VIEW | Where do you get your news?

Text by Brian Nemorin
and Alex Diaz

Photos by Ryan Ortiz
and Daisy Tapia



“TikTok, has always been my source of news. I do not watch television news. Also, my personal interests in the news are broad. Based upon my personal experience, TikTok is proficient enough to report on all of the broad interest of mine 365 days a year.”

-Dayne Rose, psychology major



“Both of my parents have always watched the news in Spanish on television. As for me personally, I have always been an Instagram girl whenever it came to national information, news stories or current event reports.

-Belen Moran, accounting major



“I was born and raised in the area of Palm Springs, Southern California. I personally modified my newsfeed to Palm Springs news only. My number one, go-to source for news; has become Instagram.

-Jonathan Givens, nursing major



“I get my news from TikTok and Google. That’s about it.”

-Eva Arianna Banos, business major

SPORTS

Monarchs Hit the Rams Hard for a 20-Point Win
Valley jumped out to a 7-point lead for a second consecutive victory.



Valley wide receiver Evan Gregorio runs to the endzone Saturday for the Monarchs as Victor Valley defensive back Jordan Duran attempts to pull him down.

Rogers Levitt,
Staff Writer

Coming off a much-needed victory against Compton College last week, the Valley College football team notched another win Saturday against Victor Valley College 55-35.

To open the game, defender Tierre Butler immediately recovered a fumble by the Rams, giving the Monarchs the ball early in the contest.

The Monarchs (2-1) struck first at the 8:46 mark in the first quarter with an 8-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Daryus Warren to wide receiver Maxwell Weir. Kicker Daylen Ortiz nailed the extra point, putting the Monarchs up 7-0. The lead was short-lived, as the Rams returned the subsequent kickoff 94 yards to tie the game at 7.

After a Monarch punt, the Rams marched 80 yards in eight plays, consummating the drive with a

4-yard run from running back Larayon Minor. The Monarchs blocked the extra point attempt, limiting the visitors to six points.

The Monarchs quickly responded with a short drive, ending in a 19-yard touchdown pass to receiver Tevon Mitchell. Ortiz successfully kicked the extra point, putting the Monarchs back on top.

"The biggest thing is I let the players settle down," Head Coach Lester Towns said. "All the players are nervous. I

try to call simple plays at the beginning. Simple plays carry out the first quarter, but then

second quarter by scoring two touchdowns and converting the extra points. The Rams added a touchdown and a field goal to trim Valley's lead to 29-23 at the half.

After a pair of punts to open up the second half, Warren connected on a 49-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Ben Baker to extend the Monarch's lead to 35-23. Both teams exchanged touch-

Valley put up the first 13 points in the fourth quarter. Victor Valley scored late on a quarterback Haidyn Hinojos pass to wide receiver Christian Macias, but it wasn't enough as the Monarchs triumphed 55-35.

The offense has scored 101 combined points in back-to-back games, which has the Monarchs looking at a two-game winning streak. Towns said they have found a good formula moving forward.

"Sometimes as coaches, we can out-scheme ourselves," Towns said. "Not only are you playing Victor Valley, but you're playing against Valley College because now you have to make sure you execute your plays and your assignment. Now all we have to do is worry about one opponent and not ourselves and hurting ourselves."

The Monarchs travel Saturday to face the West LA Wildcats for a 1 p.m. kickoff.

"Sometimes as coaches, we can out-scheme ourselves," Towns said. "Not only are you playing Victor Valley, but you're playing against Valley College because now you have to make sure you execute your plays and your assignment."

Head Coach Lester Towns

second quarter they start to relax, now they start to play faster." The Monarchs dominated the

chdowns, bringing the score to 42-29 in the Monarchs' favor entering the 4th quarter.

Valley College Sports Grapples with Statewide Budget Cuts

Monarch Athletics begins the fall semester with a financial drawback that affects students.

Alex Diaz,
Sports Editor

Ahead of the upcoming fall sports season, Valley College finds itself navigating substantial statewide budget cuts with repercussions for athletics.

The amount of the cuts, which were not disclosed by administrators, will result in reductions in staffing, new equipment, and players' meals. However, planned renovations for the athletics facilities, including the football bleachers, a new sound system for Monarch Stadium, and new turf for the soccer field, will not be impacted.

"Being in the district for 24 years, it's easier said than done," said Athletic Director Dave Mallas expressing the troubles with managing cuts. "You get what you get, and you make it work"

The athletics department had to face the loss of two positions last semester, the sports secretary and the sports information specialist. These roles remain vacant.

Many coaches have been known to fundraise to support their teams. Head Coach Monica Hang fundrai-

ses for women's basketball at home games. Sophomore player Madison Guerrero expressed not having to worry about meals for away games because Hang fundraises.

This year, the athletic department will partner with a fundraising company "eTeamSponsor" to support all 10 teams. Softball raised 20 percent of its goal in the first two days, which equaled \$1,485 of the \$7,500 goal.

Coaches had asked for an increase in meal money for students, but the cuts limited any boost in funding for meals. As a result, coaches had to determine which games they could provide meals at. Many athletes were instructed to bring food for away games.

"We want to keep them nourished and going throughout the day so they can compete with their all," said Mallas. "Not everyone has the resources to keep them fueled throughout the day."

As for away games, the experiences vary for different sports. Baseball players often struggle because the team can only provide meals for a few away games; many players bring their food in coolers. On the other hand, in football, the team has a we-



Taylor Cowhey for the Valley Star

The sports programs are feeling the pressure over slashed funding from the state.

ll-stocked kitchen, and players don't have to worry about bringing food to away games.

"It's my 21st year this has happened before and it

goes in cycles," said Mallas. "It's gonna be two to three years until it turns around."

There will be no new sports introduced in the fall season,

such as men's soccer, women's volleyball, or track and field, yet the athletic director looks hopeful for this year's athletics and all that is to come.



Luis Gonzalez for the Valley Star

Freshman midfielder Andrea Enciso looks down solemnly after the recent loss against Allan Hancock College.

Soccer Comes Up Short at Home
Tenacious Bulldogs stifle Monarchs 3-0.

JC Rosa,
Assistant Sports Editor

Allan Hancock scored three first half goals to defeat the Valley women's soccer team 3-0, blanking the home team and limiting them to three shots on goal.

Allan Hancock's (3-4-0) early offensive pressure and swift movement allowed them to work the ball to the middle of the pitch, netting them 10 shots in the first half. They would see three of their shots reach the back of the net, leading to a decisive win.

"They had a really good movement, not much you could do about that," said Valley defender Samantha Valencia. "We tried to mark them as best we could. They were very fast."

In the 16 minute, the Bulldogs showcased their passing ability early as forward Zorah Coulibaly crossed the ball to

the middle of the field, setting up teammate Ximena Hinojosa for the first score of the game.

Twenty minutes later, Bulldog defender Ruby Graciliano was awarded a free kick. She capitalized on the opportunity as she sent the ball into the top right corner of the goal, increasing the Bulldogs' lead 2-0.

Allan Hancock capitalized in the 44 minute when forward Sylena Heredia took advantage of an awry free kick by the Monarchs, punting a through ball to midfielder Raquel Schmid for the third and final goal of the half.

Despite a lopsided performance in the first half, the Monarchs (3-2-1) kept things even in the second. Backup keeper Cynthia Femat-Gomez replaced Nina Diaz. Femat-Gomez denied all nine of the Bulldog's shots in the second half.

The goalie made a diving stop on a cross ball that she picked out of the air. "It was

the confidence I had," said Femat-Gomez about her second-half performance. "Being put into play gave me motivation to do better."

The Monarchs struggled on the offense end, taking only one shot on goal in the first half and two in the second. The team had been averaging at least two goals a game before Friday's contest.

"We were down a couple starters due to sickness," Head Coach Jonathan Horst said. "The players who normally start on the bench were able to step into the starting lineup and have a good experience."

Horst acknowledged the Bulldog's dynamic play. "You got to tip your hat off to Allan Hancock, they have a strong squad."

The Monarchs look ahead to their next contest as they go on the road to face Cuesta College Sept. 25 at 4 p.m.

There's No
Pride in MLB

Rogers Levitt,
Staff Writer

Sports represent an escape for many. Fans from diverse backgrounds enjoy playing their favorite sport or watching their favorite players. With professional sports leagues wanting to be inclusive, they often celebrate marginalized groups. Unfortunately, many fans and even players are unwilling to respect them.

Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in baseball in 1947 and suffered greatly from it. Robinson dealt with his teammates threatening to boycott games if he played, and fans hurled slurs and made death threats against him. Something similar is happening today with discrimination against athletes of the LGBTQ+ community.

Homophobia in the MLB can be traced back to the 1970s with Dodgers and Athletics outfielder Glenn Burke. Three years after Burke retired in 1982, he announced he was gay. Burke believed he was traded to the Athletics from the Dodgers because of his sexuality.

Four decades later, homophobic language is still used regularly in professional baseball. Former Cincinnati Reds announcer Thom Brennamen used a homophobic slur while referring to the city of San Francisco, not realizing he was being broadcast to millions of viewers. Later in that game, Brennamen issued an apology for his derogatory remarks. At the same time, Phillies player Nick Castellanos hit a home run and Brennamen called the play in the middle of his apology.

While many saw the decision to pause his statement to announce a home run as unprofessional and rude, the situation was turned into a joke within the sports community. Even though Brennamen faced backlash from his employers, those who watched the situation unfold saw it as a humorous moment for Castellanos rather than a moment offensive to the LGBTQ+ community. The clip is often reposted and played all over the internet, but the fact Brennamen said a homophobic slur on live television was overlooked.

Every year during pride month, MLB teams host a pride night, supporting the LGBTQ+ community. Except for the Texas Rangers. While this is somewhat concerning, there is not much discourse about their decision. In 2022, five Tampa Bay Rays players opted out of wearing a pride patch on their jersey during their pride night. This gained some coverage on the internet, but most fans didn't bat an eye at it.

As recently as this past summer, possibly the biggest incident occurred with Red Sox outfielder Jarren Duran.

Duran emerged as a star player this season by putting up MVP-caliber numbers. His struggles with mental health were extremely relatable to fans, leading to him exploding in popularity and earning his first all-star nod.

As Duran was waiting on deck, a fan was heckling him nonstop. Duran, beginning to get frustrated, told the fan to shut up and used a homophobic slur directed towards him. Not realizing a microphone on the field picked up his statement, the clip spread like wildfire on the Internet.

Duran issued an apology in a postgame press conference that same day, but the damage had already been done, or it had been supposed. All over the internet, fans supported the use of the slur and made statements calling people overly offended, snowflakes, and even blatantly condoning the use of derogatory slurs. Duran's jersey even sold out on the official MLB website, becoming the top rated item for a few days.

A professional player using a slur on television is alarming enough, but the amount of fans defending these actions are even more alarming. The overwhelming amount of people openly expressing their distaste of the LGBTQ+ community is a bad look for the MLB and pushes away people who have experienced discrimination.

Will the MLB make a statement about their fans? Probably not. Morally, they should. No company wants to be known for having homophobic supporters. As a business though, making a statement will probably deter a large majority of their current fans from supporting them.

If the MLB wants to continue to make money from their fans who support anti-LGBTQ+ antics, then they won't do anything about those fans. If fans want to change how the LGBTQ+ community is treated in baseball, it's going to be an uphill battle.