

## Students Still Wrestle with Gazan Conflict

As the one-year anniversary of the Israel-Palestine conflict passes, protesters continue to speak out.

Angel Silva,  
Managing Editor

One year after the start of the conflict in Gaza, Palestine, the conflict remains contentious on college campuses across California and the United States, including at Valley College.

"When it comes to student protests, it's been going for a while," said Milan Rafaelov, 23. "I think it really took a turn and skyrocketed into this big national thing right before the summer hit."

Last Saturday several organizations held a pro-Palestinian rally in Pershing Square in downtown Los Angeles. On Monday, pro-Palestinian students at different campuses across Southern California marched in support of Palestine. At the University of Southern California, students from the USC chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) led a walk out protest, gathering to protest around campus on the one-year mark of the start of hostilities. At UCLA, pro-Palestinian students also marched that evening.

The protests at UCLA made national headlines earlier this year when counterprotesters showed up to an encampment on campus by pro-Palestinian protesters, leading to skirmishes and clashes on May 1st. The encampment would later be dismantled by the Los Angeles Police Department the next day.

"I was there the night that they got attacked," said Rafaelov. "That was very intense and I think really just made people double-down even more in their beliefs and what they felt they were fighting for."

On LAVC's campus, the protests have not extended to major campus actions.

"We haven't personally had protests on our campus, but other campuses in our area have had huge issues. Take CSUN, for example. Even if we haven't personally faced protests, we all know someone who has," said Elliot Adlof, 18, and Blake Frumkin, 22, president and



Victoria Saxxon for The Valley Star

A protestor wearing a kippah holds a Palestinian flag high at a pro-Palestine march in Downtown Los Angeles on Saturday.

vice-president of Valley's Hillel Club, via email in a joint statement to the Valley Star.

Despite the lack of protests on campus, the conversation has been on students' minds.

"On this campus I haven't seen that much in terms of protests, but I have seen more individuals who are more politically active, like I'll see people wearing keffiyehs occasionally," said Rafaelov. "I'll see stickers in different places so I know it's a conversation happening on campus, I'm just not seeing protesting the way I did at the protests in UCLA."

However, tensions have emerged on campus across different sides due to this issue.

"On one hand, we've had

people absolutely refuse to engage with us for being a Jewish club, going as far as to exclaim 'Jews? Ew!' upon learning about our cause," said Adlof and Frumkin via email.

"I had a student come in after a piece I had written and basically tell me that I was being anti-Semitic - I'm Jewish by the way, so that was a funny thing to say to me - but telling me that my piece was anti-Semitic and that I was this and I was that," said Rafaelov.

The online discourse on the conflict has mirrored tensions in the real world as well.

"People are also much braver with the anonymity that comes with being behind a screen. With all of these fac-

tors combined, it's nearly impossible to have a civilized conversation with someone you disagree with, which further polarizes the groups. As a result, tensions rise in real life spaces and there's even more animosity," said Adlof and Frumkin via email.

"What happened at UCLA, the amount of people that came to the encampment protest in the middle of the night to attack them, they were all talking on Facebook groups," said Rafaelov. "They were all communicating online - we're gonna meet up, we're gonna bring bear spray and metal poles, we're gonna shoot fireworks" - and they organized all of that online and

then they met up in person."

According to a Pew Research study done in July, "finding a resolution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians" was a priority for 71 percent of people ages 18-29, with 31 percent of those polled stating that it was a top priority.

No matter your opinion, it's important to remember that there are real, innocent human beings on both sides of this. It's very easy to get so caught up in the adrenaline that you forget that real people are being affected by everything that's going on," said Adlof and Frumkin via email. "Please just remember to be kind and try to see where the other person is coming from."

## Studies Say a Breath of Fresh Air Leads to Good Grades

Poor classroom air quality leads to lower attendance, a decline in grades, and higher risk of illness.

Hilary Van Hoose,  
Copy Editor

Students have grown so used to stale classroom air that many overlook its impact on cognitive performance. However, improving air quality through filtration or even basic ventilation can lead to significant gains in focus and learning.

A study in PLOS ONE found not only that a combination of ventilation and cooling reduced illness-related absences and down-time, but also increased test scores significantly.

A study published in Environment International found that even small changes in indoor air quality can have a significant impact on student absences. For every tiny increase in indoor particle pollution (PM2.5) by 1 microgram per cubic meter (µg/m³), the number of school days missed increased by 7.37 per year. On the other hand, improving ventilation—by increasing the amount of fresh air

by just 1 liter per second per person—led to a 5.59-day reduction in absences each year.

Long-term exposure to polluted air also has cumulative effects on health.

Many recent and past studies show that exposure to the kinds of PM2.5 you find in urban areas like Los Angeles increase rates of cerebrovascular damage like strokes and neurological disorders like dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and Parkinson's disease.

In addition to ventilation, air filtration is also a vital

factor in both student health and academic performance.

A working paper by NYU's Michael Gilraine outlined how caution following the 2015 gas leak in Aliso Canyon promp-

amount as results from reducing class sizes by one third.

While industrial air filters cost approximately \$1,000 per class per year, more affordable options exist. The Environmental Protection Agency and the UConn Indoor Air Quality Initiative found that "60 DIY 'Corrosional Box' filters are 99% effective at removing aerosols

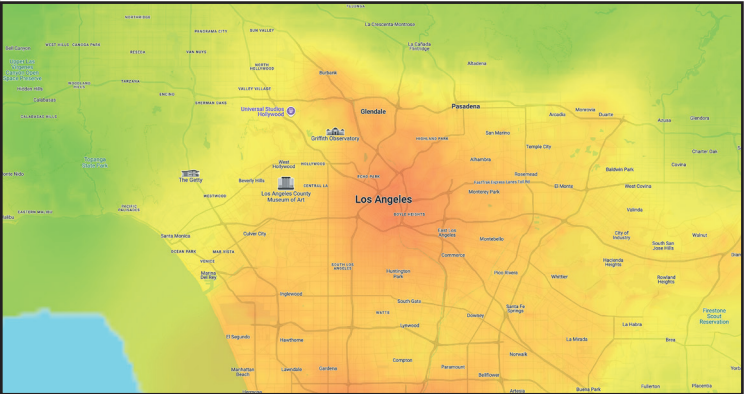
from classroom air. Reducing levels of CO2 and PM2.5 are not the only benefits to filtration and ventilation either. Viral infections such as

COVID-19 cause a drop in intelligence and cognitive ability.

A recent study in the New England Journal of Medicine found that those who have recovered from a mild COVID-19 infection have a 3 point drop in IQ, each reinfection causes a 2 point reduction, those with long-covid experience a 6-point drop, and those with severe infection lose 9 points.

Given that HEPA filters effectively remove PM2.5 but not CO2, one might wonder if using an air purifier alongside open windows negates benefits. However, a study published in Building and Environment revealed that the reduction rate of PM2.5 was only slightly higher with windows closed, suggesting that the advantages of purifiers still hold with windows open.

Student GPAs would skyrocket and absences would drop significantly if Valley College and other schools in the LACCD system followed common sense guidelines on implementing filtration and ventilation to make the indoor air in classrooms and common areas cleaner.



A Google map of Los Angeles shows varying air quality levels from Oct. 9

ted all LAUSD schools within five miles to place air filters in every classroom, office, and common area - resulting in math and English scores increasing by about the same

infectious classroom air. Reducing levels of CO2 and PM2.5 are not the only benefits to filtration and ventilation either. Viral infections such as

## Whippets Stir Up Health Concerns

A rise in the abuse of flavored nitrous gas by young adults has medical professionals concerned about health effects.



Daniel Padilla for The Valley Star

A dealer in downtown Los Angeles distributes nitrous oxide balloons to buyers.

Daimler Koch,  
Online Editor

A dangerous new trend is spreading across social media, where young people are using "whippets"—nitrous oxide canisters to get high.

Besides its uses in the medical industry, nitrous oxide, commonly known as laughing gas, has been used in the culinary world as part of whipped cream chargers that create the treat for desserts and coffees.

Young people are inhaling the gas from these cartridges for a quick high; some post videos online in an effort to seem cool and gain views. Some videos show participants shopping for vanilla cupcake and strawberry cream flavored canisters.

"Consciously or subliminally, the message is, this is OK for kids," said Dr. Gail Saltz, a physician at New York Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medical Center according to the New York Times.

The videos have circulated widely on social media, to the point where it features its own tab under TikTok. Nevertheless, out of ten students that were approached for an interview on the subject at Valley College, only two knew enough about it to comment.

Student Daniel Frausto became aware of the trend during the summer, when he first saw a video on social media of a high schooler trying a strawberry-flavored canister, making his voice become deeper.

"It's mostly peer pressure," Frausto said. "There might be some kids out there pressuring you to do something

cool and trying to gain some views, to be one of the cool guys or something like that."

Frausto believes the algorithms of social media platforms are partially to blame, as they function to serve viewers' interests first and foremost.

If a viewer likes a video, the algorithm is more likely to suggest videos with similar topics later on.

Engineering major Andy Sola has seen the consequences manifest outside of social media.

"I've seen it happen in public, just people doing it," Sola said. "I've seen people just filling balloons with it, and they'll breathe out of that."

In an interview with CBS News, Megan Paquin, a spokesperson for Galaxy Gas, one of the top canister vendors, revealed that the company stopped selling them on Sept. 19 due to the widespread consequences of the product. "While Galaxy Gas has been the focus of many news reports and social media videos, many of the videos show individuals misusing other, unrelated nitrous oxide products. Galaxy Gas is neither the only nor the largest nitrous oxide brand," she said in the report.

Still, that has not kept the canisters, or the dangerous side effects of nitrous oxide out of young people's hands. Abuse of laughing gas, which cuts off the oxygen to the brain, can produce a range of symptoms from frostbite to hypoxia (a lack of oxygen), to death.

"I'm a little concerned, if I'm going to be honest," Frausto said. "People buy them just for attention. It's messed up."

## LACCD Maneuvers Around State Cuts

Kaia Mann,  
Editor-in-chief

The LACCD's budget for the 2024-25 school year stands at \$10.2 billion, approved after Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the new budget act in June. The state budget amounts to \$297.9 billion, reflecting a 4.2 percent decrease from the previous year.

Despite the shortfall in the state budget, there will be no no significant cuts to core programs or services across any of the nine community colleges in the district, according to the official 2024-25 final budget approved by the LACCD Board of Trustees in Sept. 2024.

To navigate the budget cuts, Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez urged the district to call on reserves and operational savings to ensure the budget remains balanced, while focusing on monitoring expenses and boosting revenue.

According to the budget document, "the district will anticipate and prepare for the fiscal headwinds that may lie ahead, while carefully and closely monitoring the 'deficit factor' and 'Deferrals' language that is outlined in the 2024-25 state budget, should state revenues not meet projections."

How much money is allocated to community colleges depends on the Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF), which was officially enacted in 2018. Rather than basing a college's funding purely on enrollment, the SCFF also factors in the proportion of low-income and underserved students, as well as the number of students who earn degrees or certificates, or transfer to four-year institutions.

Valley's total SCFF apportionment allocated comes in at just over \$100 million, ranking 10th in the district, below East and Pierce College.

According to the budget document, the primary strategy for increasing revenue focuses on improving outcomes within the Student Centered Funding Formula, specifically by enhancing success rates for "high-need" students. This approach will make campuses eligible for additional state funding and grants. Additionally, there will be an emphasis on boosting philanthropic contributions and strengthening fundraising efforts.

Overall expenses will be tracked through the examination and potential delay of vacant job positions as well as by limiting overtime, travel, and food costs.

The \$10.2 billion in the new LACCD budget is divided into eight funds: general funds, bookstores, food services, child development, special reserves, building bonds, student financial aid, and debt services. The general fund accounts for 14.6 percent of the total budget, further divided into unrestricted (which can be used for any purpose) and restricted (which is designated for specific purposes).

Notably, Valley College has an unrestricted balance of \$9.1 million, allowing these funds to be used for any purpose that aligns with the campus's objectives and needs.

Out of Valley's general funds, restricted funds total \$26 million spread across multiple campus programs including CalWORKS, health services and EOPS.

Almost \$10 million of the budget will be going into various construction projects and damage repairs for various buildings, as well as general maintenance for Valley's campus. Just under \$50,000 of the final budget will be put into the Valley Academic and Cultural Center.

"This is a time to be prudent, vigilant and resourceful," according to LACCD Chancellor Rodriguez.

Despite the 4.2% statewide decrease, Newsom has pledged not to make any significant cuts to community colleges and their programs. "The Governor largely left the community college's budget intact," said President Barry Gribbons. "I certainly appreciate the governor showing his commitment to the mission of the California community colleges by keeping us whole."



VALLEY LIFE

Filmmaker Makes Impression

Student Chase Martinez sells his passion paintings on campus.

Toby Douglas,  
Staff Writer

Chase Martinez recalls the first time he fell in love with painting - the same year he started attending Valley College. While his passion for filmmaking has always been strong, he found new creative fulfillment in painting, spending free time creating and selling his artwork on campus. The 22-year-old artist first discovered his passion for painting in July 2020 while taking art classes at Tierra Del Sol art school via Zoom. He credits Bob Ross, the late famous naturalist artis, as his main inspiration. "Me and my mom call him the Mr. Rogers of painting because of his voice," Martinez says. "Beauty is everywhere, you only have to look to see it." Similarly to Ross's iconic work, Martinez enjoys painting outdoor landscapes and capturing the beauty of nature, with watercolor and acrylic as his mediums of choice. Initially, he gave away his paintings until his friend encouraged him to sell them. It wasn't until September 2023

that he finally decided to start selling regularly on campus. Martinez's artistic journey, however, began in filmmaking during his time at Grant High School. He has made 11 short films, winning a best docu-

*"It does take a lot of courage to become a great artist and filmmaker, but if you really want to change the world you have to find the things that take you back to your passion."*

Chase Martinez

mentary award for "Remembering Stanley" at the Digital Arts Film Festival. He credits his passion for filmmaking as his inspiration for painting. The fourth-year cinema

major originally planned to transfer to CSUN but has since decided to pursue a career in filmmaking and editing with the support of his parents. For his art endeavors, Martinez has switched to in person classes at Tierra Del Sol, on Sunland Boulevard in Burbank while also working at Tierra's Treasures thrift store. His father, Clayton Martinez, has played an influential role in his journey. Clayton has worked as an actor in films such as How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000) and The Haunted Mansion (2003), while also costume designing and mold making for the Marvel and DC universes. "I got into filmmaking because of my father, who long ago worked at Universal Studios," said Martinez. "Since high school, my dreams of becoming a filmmaker have inspired me to paint and draw." As of now, Martinez will continue to paint and sell his art at Valley while working toward an associate degree. "It does take a lot of courage to become a great artist and filmmaker," he said. "But if you really want to change the world, you have to find the things that take you back to your passion."



Luis Gonzalez for The Valley Star

Chase Martinez displays his painting for sale in front of the Foreign Language building.

100 Years of Latino Film Event Honors Hispanic Heritage

Latino author Luis Reyes discusses his book "Viva La Hollywood" and the rich legacy of Latinos in film with students on campus.

Alex Diaz,  
Sports Editor

Valley's Chicano Studies program brought author Luis I. Reyes to discuss Latinos' contributions in Hollywood for the "100 Years of Latino Film History" presentation, as part of the department's Hispanic Heritage Month event series. Reyes, a Latino kid from New York who loved films, has worked in film for 40 years as a publicist and has been an author for 25 years. He delved into film history on and off screen while addressing a room full of students, professors from various Chicano classes, and Valley President Barry Gribbons. "There are more Latinos working now than ever," said Reyes. "It's our image we are creating now, not the stereotypes they put us in." The presentation mentioned many famous figures such as Jennifer Lopez, Jenna Ortega, Salma Hayek, Rita Moreno, and more. Reyes expressed how many of these figures are role models and have made way for the Latino community to thrive. Reyes addressed myths about Latinos that have arisen in the film industry. He did note that Latinos have



Sydne Santiago for The Valley Star

Author and film historian Luis Reyes gives a presentation on Latino film history at the Student Services Center.

been involved in the film industry since the beginning, whether in the construction of sets, props, or in front of the big screen. A popular myth he did address was that Latinos had to change their names - in fact, several actors of all backgrounds did. "I'm proud of my Latino heritage. It's a sense of identity," said Reyes. "It defines where you come from and your family. It's important to share that." Mexican-American director Robert Rodriguez, born in Texas, has made way for many Latinos, debuting Salma Hayek and Danny Trejo in successful films. Reyes shared that many Latinos who helped pave the way were born in the United States, such as Rodriguez and Leo Carrillo, best known as Pancho in "The Cisco Kid." According to Reyes, the film industry is embracing Latino talent, with actors like Jenna Ortega starring in "Wednesday" and "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice," Ana de Armas playing the iconic Marilyn Monroe in "Blonde," and America Ferrera in "Barbie." "It's empowering to be as centered and identifying with both," said Chicano professor Peter Lopez, host of the event. "Being excited about who you are is profound."

Students Hit the Mark with Archery at Valley College

Students can improve their skills and focus in a fun, welcoming environment with Valley's archery program, unique to the district.



Hui Wang for The Valley Star

Valley student Samantha Sagan aims her bow towards her target at the archery range.

JC Rosa,  
Assistant Sports Editor

Ready, aim, fire! Valley College's archery class is giving students the chance to have fun while sharpening their focus, improving their skills, and hitting their targets - literally. Valley is the only campus in the district that offers archery classes, instructed by Professor Val Khamenia for the past two years. Open to both beginners and experienced archers, the course provides a hands-on approach that emphasizes safety and technique. "It's all technique work. Understanding the muscles and proper technique," said Khamenia. "Safety is number one." The class is held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:20 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at the archery range, between the baseball field and Monarch Stadium. Archery serves as a challenging yet rewarding physical activity for students. It provides a full-body workout that improves strength, coordination, and posture. According to archery spe-

cialists, drawing a bow engages the muscles in the arms, shoulders, chest, and back, while maintaining a steady stance helps strengthen the core and legs. The repeated motion of aiming and shooting also enhances hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. Although the sport offers more than just physical exercise, it provides significant mental health benefits for students. The focus and concentration required to aim and shoot can help reduce stress and quiet the mind, creating a meditative effect similar to mindfulness practices. The sense of accomplishment from hitting a target, combined with the discipline of the sport, can boost self-confidence and improve emotional well-being. Furthermore, the rhythmic nature of archery helps promote relaxation, slated as a great way to unwind from the pressures of school and daily life. "It's therapeutic. You have to remove everything from your brain and just be in that moment," said communications major Gabe Braunstein. "In this class, it's just you and the bow."

This class prides itself on being inclusive, welcoming students of all skill levels, from beginners to experienced archers. With a focus on teamwork and personal growth, it creates a supportive environment where everyone can thrive. By providing tailored instruction and encouraging camaraderie among participants, Khamenia hopes that everyone feels empowered to improve their skills and enjoy the sport. "Archery is for everybody," said mechanical engineering major Rafael Aguilar. "Anybody can shoot."



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OPINION

Immigrants Should be Celebrated, not Condemned

The Republican Party’s tactic of using immigrants as a political boogeyman has gotten old.



Star Staff Illustration

Jessica Guo,  
Special to The Star

“They’re eating the dogs. They’re eating the cats. They’re eating the pets of the people who live there,” former president Donald Trump declared during the September presidential debate. The Republican presidential candidate’s 30-second statement translated into more than 30 bomb threats in the small town of Springfield, Ohio. Schools and government buildings were shuttered after Trump accused Haitian immigrants living in Ohio of eating pets. Due to safety concerns, two colleges moved to online learning and some elementary schools were evacuated. As threats continued, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine dispatched 36 troopers from the state patrol across the 17 schools in the Springfield City School

District. DeWine claimed that most threats were from foreign countries and refused to elaborate further. Despite the impacts of inflammatory rhetoric, Republican Vice President candidate JD Vance continued to defend Trump’s stories even after he admitted the rumors were false. In his first term, Trump warned against migrant caravans, claiming murderers and drug dealers were “invading” America. In reality, those attempting to migrate here were desperate for asylum. Though far from the truth, Republican candidates have employed scare tactics that criminalized immigrants for years. Former President Ronald Reagan encouraged voters to make the nation great again, implying a declining nation and demanding a crackdown on crime. In recent years, Republican politicians have pushed a narrative of cartels,

criminals, and murderers flooding American borders, urging voters to support Republican candidates for a decisive crackdown on border security. For all the fire and brimstone, the Republicans have actually deported fewer than their Democratic counterparts. Trump’s term numbered an annual 500,000 deportations. In contrast, the Biden administration averaged more than 1 million deportations in 2022 alone. In March 2020, Trump passed Title 42, a policy that turned away asylum seekers under the pretext of curbing the spread of COVID-19. Biden operated under the policy for two years and then terminated it as the pandemic came to a close. Throughout his term, Biden’s high number of deportations were partially due to the sheer number of asylum seekers and illegal crossings. Additionally, post-pandemic circumstances led to a spike of illegal crossings in compa-

risson to Trump’s presidency, warranting a greater number of expulsions from Biden. Republicans have also weaponized rumors of undocumented immigrants voting for Democrats. A recent Reuters headline reads “Eight US States to Vote on Amendment to Ban Noncitizen Voters.” The same article says that it’s “already illegal for noncitizens to vote” and that “independent state reviews show there is little evidence that noncitizens are voting in presidential elections. However, this is what Trump and his Republican counterparts are alleging. In the recent vice presidential debate, JD Vance would not admit that Trump lost the last election. Trump, Vance and the Republicans are ready to blame the electoral system, voter fraud and immigrants for his loss. Trump can’t accept the fact that in two presidential elections, he lost the popular vote twice, the first against

Hillary Clinton and the second time against Biden, and the general election once. Instead, he blames immigrants. What Republicans fight against is the very thing that defines our nation. The United States is a vibrant cultural hub where people can celebrate their distinct cultural traditions. We celebrate the lives of immigrants, and their contributions to this country. During WWII, Albert Einstein developed the equation that would lead to the atomic bomb. Later when the United States entered the war, the Bracero Program was launched and millions of Mexican men toiled on American soil to fill in the labor shortage and stabilize the economy. Today, immigrants not only contribute to fields such as the arts and sciences, but they also contribute to the vibrancy of a cultural melting pot.



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How True is True Crime?

The true crime genre often prioritizes entertainment rather than truth.

Kaia Mann,  
Editor-in-chief

“Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story” is built upon the rising popularity of the true crime genre. However, amidst growing controversy, the Ryan Murphy production, along with similar titles, raise critical ethical concerns about how to portray real-life tragedies. “Monsters” tells the story of the New Jersey brothers who were convicted of killing their parents, José and Mary Louise “Kitty” Menendez. Their trial began in 1993 and soon gained mass media attention. However, the story reaches much deeper than murder. Their actions, which ultimately to life sentences, came after years of physical, mental and sexual abuse at the hands of their parents. While there has been much debate over whether the boys were guilty, lying, or acting out of self defense, their story and Murphy’s show asks a much bigger question: How do you tell true crime stories properly? “Monsters” has dominated the charts with over 2.7 billion minutes watched in the first week of release. This attention has also brought increased discourse over the subject. Murphy is being

slammed with complaints from people who believe the show was not only glorifying the violence but twisting the narrative in ways that can be deeply insensitive to those affected by similar abuses. This obsession with crime and its consequences is nothing new; it has intrigued audiences since ancient times, often manifesting in cautionary tales or public executions. Over the decades, works like Truman Capote’s “In Cold Blood” and Vincent Bugliosi’s “Helter Skelter” have paved the way for the true crime genre, which has found a particularly robust platform in modern podcasts and radio shows. According to a recent research report, over 80 percent of the U.S. population 13 years or older consume True Crime through any medium. Another study showed true crime as the most common topic in podcasts and radio shows, at around 24 percent. True crime stories give audiences a voyeuristic glimpse into violent and disturbing events, offering a safe way to explore the taboo from a distance. The issue with a lot of true crime is how it sensationalizes the pain and suffering of real people, reducing their trauma to entertainment. While some true crime content is handled with care and sensitivity, some of it can feel like a blatant mockery. Murphy’s show is his second



Star Staff Illustration

addition to the “Monsters” anthology, the first focusing on Jeffrey Dahmer, sparking similar outrage among victims’ families for its exploitative nature. The most egregious aspect of the Menendez show is the insinuation of an incestuous relationship between the two brothers. Lyle and Eric Menendez attributed their actions to the horrific sexual abuse they suffered at the hands of their father and the willful ignorance of their mother. This abuse led to emotional confessions between the brothers, as Lyle tearfully recounts in a court testimony. To reinterpret this trauma into a fanfiction-style relationship between the adult brothers in the film is not only dismissive of their suffering but also trivializes the severe consequences of sexual abuse. The show feels more like a

contrived excuse to showcase the two in an exaggerated scene, rather than a meaningful retelling of the Menendez story. Murphy has even captured the attention of Erik Menendez himself, with his wife releasing a statement from him the day after the show premiered claiming it is full of “blatant lies” and is a “dishonest portrayal” of their story. Whether you believe the brothers, their tale is extremely heavy and tragic, and one that real people go through every day. Given the real-world implications of their case, it should be handled with care. If Murphy wanted to make this story, which is obviously compelling for many, he didn’t have to tie in the real true crime event. The nine-episode show feels more like a made-for-TV superficial dramatization than a genuine analysis of the case.

This issue rings true for much of the true crime genre. Whether it be exaggerated TV shows, or weirdly lighthearted and commodified radio shows like “My Favorite Murder” or “Crime Junkie,” these interpretations often have an exploitative nature, amping up and making jokes about the story rather than prioritizing truth. There is a right way to tell true crime. Instead of attempting to only make a compelling entertaining piece of media, experts in the field agree to instead focus on fact. It’s not my job to spin the story; it’s not my job to add the emotion into the story,” said Steve Gregoy, a pioneer of true crime radio and the host of Unsolved on iHeartRadio. “My job is to tell the factual bases of the story based on a case file, based on a detective’s testimony.”

VALLEY VIEW | Do you feel a duty to vote?

Text by Daimler Koch

Photos by Alejandro Garcia



“I would say that. Ordinarily I would vote, but I will not be voting this election.”

-Christopher Monterosa, business major



“Yes, you do have a duty to vote. Whatever you agree with, if you want that to run in our country, you gotta vote. And you can’t make a change in our country if you don’t vote.”

-Matiel Arevalo, physics major



“Yeah, I do. Especially when you’re Latino and you have a lot of family members who can’t vote; you’re kind of a voice for them.”

-Bella Lopez, nursing major



“I do feel I have a duty to vote because no vote is a vote. Even if you feel like ‘I’m not gonna vote because it doesn’t matter,’ every vote matters.”

-Jacqueline Cisneros, nursing major



SPORTS

Kristjana Lewis Keeps Her Competiton at Arms Length

A dual-sport athlete who fuels her talent through softball and water polo at Valley.



Taylor Cowhey for the Valley Star

The 19-year-old Kristjana Lewis will take to the circle for Valley College for the first time in the spring semester.

Alex Diaz, Sports Editor

As Kristjana Lewis stands tall on the pitcher's mound, her eyes are fixed on the batter as she winds up for the game's first pitch. The hours tick by, and she is immersed in the pool, guarding Valley's net to secure a game-ending victory. For Lewis, it is all in a day's work. At Valley College, the 19 year old excels as a dual-sport athlete, demonstrating softball and water polo prowess. Taking after her mother, a former softball player, she aspires to play softball at a high level and become a mentor for aspiring athletes. "I've always wanted to help young athletes," said Lewis. "Become a coach, and maybe return to the park where I started sports." Hailing from Tarzana, Lewis developed a passion for sports at a young age, immersing herself in baseball, swimming, and soccer. Her softball journey began in fifth grade when she joined her local team. With her mother's guidance, she delved into the art of pitching and later sought professional lessons to sharpen her skills. During her time at Taft High School, the right-handed pitcher ranked in the top 20 in the Los Angeles City Section, top 7 in Division II, and top 4 in West Valley for her performance of striking out 66 batters in her senior year. Following her high school career, she began at Pierce College, where she played for one season before transferring to Valley. Notably, this year marks her debut in the sport of water polo. "I chose water polo out of wanting to try something new," said the goalie. "It was fun when I learned to swim, and starting water polo helped me build bonds

in different communities." Lewis received goalie training from Clarissa Robles, a former dual-athlete at Valley. Lewis shared the mental challenges of the sport, explaining that she finds it difficult to anticipate players' moves when blocking shots. Softball is Lewis's forte, a sport she has played for around 13 years. As she gears up for a game, she observes the differences between the two sports but attributes her enhanced endurance to her involvement in water polo. This newfound stamina has transformed her performance, enabling her to endure the entirety of the game, in stark contrast to her previous struggle to make it through the middle innings. "Pitching is easier than being a goalie," said the sophomore. "You have somebody behind you that can get your flaws, mistakes, and get the runner out." Women's water polo head coach Pete Loporchio is most impressed with the goalie's outstanding athleticism and open-mindedness to learn a new sport. He emphasized her exceptional hand-eye coordination and her ability to quickly grasp the intricacies of the game, which are proving to be pivotal in her success in her first year playing. The pitcher is passionate about her softball future and committed to honing her skills. She envisions herself positively impacting younger athletes as she matures, whether through coaching or other forms of mentorship. At this moment, she eagerly anticipates the opportunity to commit to a school, and she looks forward to the possibility of entering the transfer portal when the time is right. "I'm hoping I can find a school that suits me," said Lewis. "I want Cal State Northridge."



Taylor Cowhey for the Valley Star

In her first year playing water polo at any level, Lewis has managed to log time as goalie in every game this season.



Taylor Cowhey for the Valley Star

Attacker Nate Davis attempts to take the ball back for the Monarchs against Citrus's Utility Joseph Mikhail.

Valley College Men's Water Polo Shuts Out Citrus

The Monarchs build a strong first-half lead to defeat the Owls 22-9.

Alex Diaz, Sports Editor

The Valley College men's water polo team outplayed Citrus College recently, securing a 22-9 victory. The Monarchs defense contributed to the victory, only allowing only five goals. Offensively the team built a eight-point lead in the first half, and increased the lead to 11 in the second half. "This is our first conference game," said head coach Jim McMillan. "We've been training at a high level, and it paid off today." The Owls seized an early advantage, netting the first two points of the match. However, the Monarchs swiftly turned the tide, dominating the offense and scoring

eight goals against Citrus, concluding the first quarter with a commanding 8-2 lead. Citrus opened the second quarter with attacker Tommy Gibson scoring two and utility Trace Faskell scoring one of the three goals within the first minutes, leaving the score 8-5. Valley struck back with attacker Andy Gezalyan and assist from center forward Mason Martsof, scoring two goals 10-5. Freshman Nate Davis secured the eleventh goal for Valley against the Owls. With an assist from attacker Arman Hovhannisyan, sophomore Ryan Nevsky scored three consecutive goals in the final minute, solidifying the Monarchs' commanding lead at 14-5. Center forward Christian Perez capped off the quarter by slotting the ball into the net with

a diagonal shot, leaving just 13 seconds on the clock, 15-5. "We played to our maximum effort," said sophomore Christian Perez. "Coach always told us not to overlook someone, so we played with everything we had." In the third quarter, Valley was leading Citrus by 10 points. Center forward Perez scored the first goal of the quarter at 6:14 with an assist from attacker Colton Arnett, making the score 16-5. The Owls responded at 5:49 with a goal from sophomore Devon Dow, bringing the score to 16-7. Citrus freshman Faskell scored another goal for the Owls eighteen seconds later at the 5:31 mark, making the score 16-8. In the final moments of the quarter, at 2:49, driver Nick Zuniga scored a goal for the Monarchs, with an assist from

goalie Sasha Mnatskanyan, widening the lead to 17-8. Valley's Perez dominated by scoring five goals, assisted by Arnett in the last two minutes. The quarter concluded with an impressive added goal from sophomore Brian Sanchez, leading to a score of 22-8. "We didn't need any more goals," said Mcmillan when asked about the offense in the last quarter. "We were just trying to work on some defense at the end." In the final quarter, no goals were made from the Monarchs. Valley's defense only allowed one goal from the Owls. In the last minute, Citrus' Gibson made the game's final goal. The victory ended in Valley's favor, 22-9. The Monarchs will attend the Riverside City College Tournament Friday.

Valley's Football Team Limpes Into Conference Play Starting Next Week

The Monarchs Miss Game-Winning Kick, Look to Snap Two-Game Losing Streak Against Southwest.

Rogers Levitt, Staff Writer

With the Monarchs loss to the Santa Ana Dons last Saturday, the team's non-conference games are over. The Monarchs look to turn a new page on the season and compete in their last five games. To start the season, the Monarchs lost their opener to the Chaffey College Panthers 13-23. While the Monarchs offense was silenced through the first three quarters, they put up all of their 13 points in the last quarter. Their defense couldn't handle the Panther's offense either, giving up points in each quarter of the game. The Monarchs managed to bounce back after a tough first game and come out on top versus the Compton College Tartars the next week. Within

the first two minutes of the game, the Monarchs kicked a field goal to get on the board first. They would continue the scoring with 19 points in the first quarter and 46 total. While their offense showed up, the defense struggled to hold its own. Of the Tartars' 38 points scored, 31 were put up in the last half. The Monarchs handled the opposing offense the best they could, winning the game 46-38. The Monarchs' next game was a similar feat, scoring 55 points against the Victor Valley Rams. The first half was back and forth throughout with the score being 29-23 in the Monarchs' favor entering halftime. In the last half of the match, the Monarchs' offense delivered with 26 points to the Rams' 12. Even with the momentum of a two game win streak, the Monarchs would fall to the

West LA Wildcats and Santa Ana Dons subsequently. The Monarchs and Wildcats were neck and neck through the first two quarters, scoring 15 and 14 points respectively. The third quarter led to the Monarchs' demise, with the Wildcats scoring 16 unanswered points. Though the fourth quarter was close, it wasn't enough to offset the disastrous third quarter, leading to a 21-38 loss. In their final non-conference game, it looked like the Monarchs would fail to compete once again. At the end of the third quarter, the Dons scored 21 points and held the Monarchs to just six. While it looked like the game was over, the Monarchs started to rally in the last minutes. Two touchdowns brought the game to a two point deficit with only four minutes left. The Monarchs continued

to keep the Dons' offense at bay, giving themselves one last opportunity to win. Head Coach Lester Towns made the controversial decision to kick a 42 yard field goal while still having another opportunity to run a play. Kicker Daylen Ortiz missed the field goal, giving the Dons the win. The Monarchs will take a week to rest and return to host the LA Southwest Cougars on October 17. The Cougars, being 3-2, will prove to be a challenge for the Monarchs as they won their matchup last year 33-19. Each game for the Monarchs is a must-win game, due to the team going 1-4 in conference games last year. Coach Towns aims to lead his team to a ring this season, as well as getting his players scholarships to continue their playing careers.



Ryan Ortiz for The Valley Star

Monarchs defenders pursue Santa Ana's running back Owen Smith at Monarch Field on Oct. 5.



Victoria Saxxon for the Valley Star

Women's water polo goalie Mindy Hernandez defends the goal against Citrus Owl attacker Kori Cunningham.

Women Drop High Scoring Conference Opener to Citrus

Monarchs Fail to Match Owls Aggressive Play, Falling to 4-3 on the Season.

JC Rosa, Assistant Sports Editor

The Citrus College Owls bested the Valley College Monarchs 23-15 in the women's first conference water polo match of the season. The Monarchs failed to keep up with the Owls' sharp ball movement, as the visiting Owls scored the most goals allowed by the Monarchs this season. Owl attacker Ryan Price led all scores with seven goals, punching in three in the first half and four in the second. "They were very fast; they were very aggressive," said Valley goalie Mindy Hernandez, who made three stops in the contest. Valley managed to keep the game close at the start, only

trailing the Owls 6-4 at the end of the first quarter. The Owls jumped out to a 2-0 lead before Valley attacker Yarent Ramirez put the Monarchs on the board, scoring in the fourth minute of the game. The Owls responded quickly, scoring three unanswered goals in the next two minutes, increasing their lead to 5-1. The two exchanged one goal each before the end of the quarter, with Valley's Brisa Chajan scoring her goal with less than a minute on the clock. In the second quarter, the Citrus College Owls found their rhythm, breaking the game open and outscoring Valley 9-4. Their run was fueled by stifling defense and swift ball movement as the Owls quickly swung the ball around the pool for easy,

open shots. This offensive surge extended their lead to 15-8 by halftime, leaving the Monarchs treading water as they struggled to respond. "We got caught in a mix between a zone and a press [defense], which allows the ball to move around," said Pete Loporchio, Monarchs head coach. "consequently, we gave up a lot of shots." Despite the team's overall struggles, Valley attacker Yareth Ramirez emerged as a standout performer, scoring eight of the Monarchs' 15 goals. Her ability to find open spaces and capitalize on scoring opportunities kept Valley in the game and demonstrated her offensive skill. "It's a mindset going into the game," said Ramirez. "You want to play as best you can."

In the second half, Citrus was able to maintain its lead over Valley. The Owls' disciplined defense played a crucial role, limiting the Monarchs' scoring opportunities as Citrus outscored Valley 8-7, maintaining their lead. Despite a determined effort from Valley, who aimed to close the gap, the Owls effectively managed the game tempo and kept their advantage intact. This strong performance in the second half solidified Citrus' 23-15 victory and emphasized their overall team unity. The Monarchs will host Ventura College at 4:45 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct 16, in their second conference game of the season.