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Photo by Astrid Cortez | The Valley Star

Valley College attendees come to campus during a historic California downpour on the first day of the spring semester.

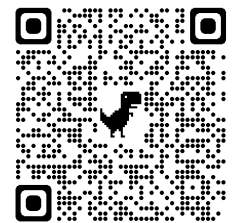
SPRING SHOWERS

Kaia Mann, Opinion Editor

In the midst of a historic downpour, Valley College shut down several buildings but kept the campus open.

Despite flooding in the Campus Center and campus utility tunnels, Valley seemed to be operating under normal conditions during the extreme weather. Certain buildings including

the north and south gyms, pool, and parking structure have had the power shut down to remedy possible water problems.



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PARKING PASSES NOW REQUIRED

Valley College will start requiring \$20 parking passes or \$2 day passes to make up for the loss of federal funds.

Star Eisenberg editor-in-chief

Valley College will now require students to purchase a \$20 parking permit or a \$2 daily pass in the spring semester, a change in policy from the temporary pause since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Valley is providing a two-week grace period from Feb. 5 to Feb. 19 before issuing citations. Students can purchase parking permits from the Business Office or obtain daily permits at parking lot kiosks. In previous semesters, ticket prices ranged from \$35 for staff parking violations to around \$65 for red-zone violations.

“Valley College has had parking fees for decades,” said President Barry Gribbons. “The parking fees

were suspended in the early days of the pandemic, and that was with the benefit of the federal stimulus money that the college received. That money, of course, was only for a limited time period, which has ended.”

Gribbons said before the semester started, students received an email containing details about parking fees and bus passes.

The Feb. 3 email entitled “Welcome to LAVC’s Spring Semester 2024” contained information about parking regulations, including permit requirements, pricing, and a grace period. It also mentions the option for free Metro GoPasses for public transportation.

“We work with Metro



Photo by Astrid Cortez | The Valley Star
Campus Sheriffs patrol the student parking lot during the first week of the spring semester.

to provide free passes to all of our students,” said Gribbons. “This enables students to ride on any Metro bus or rail line for the

rest of the calendar year. This is good for any location, not just coming to and from Valley College, but students who receive

this Metro pass can ride Metro for free anywhere. It’s a great resource for students.”

The change comes on the heels of stricter enforcement of parking regulations, following faculty complaints that led to new ticketing policies last semester. During that time, Valley sheriffs began issuing parking citations to students parked in restricted areas, including faculty spaces, illegal zones, or electric vehicle spots without a charging receipt.

“There’s barely any parking right now,” said Britney De Leon, a first year political science major.

“There’s one parking structure with four levels, but the lots still get re-

ally, really packed.”

Students with valid parking permits can park in the Parking Structure (2-4 floors and Parking Lots A, B, D, E, F, G, and the Coldwater Canyon Extension. Daily parking permits are valid for any student lot, including Lots A, B, C, D, E, and G, Coldwater Extension, and the 2nd-4th floors of the parking structure, and are only valid on the date of purchase, according to Valley’s website.

“Anticipate crowds and heavy traffic, especially during the first week,” says Valley Senior Accounting Tech Nick Tekie. “It’s best to arrive early and remember to display your parking permit.”

PROTECTIONS END

California residents brace for rent increases post Covid.

Milan Rafaelov, editor-in-chief

As Los Angeles ends years-long renters’ protections, tenants must repay Covid-era debts or face eviction.

Starting Feb. 1, 2024, L.A. renters must settle outstanding debts between Oct. 1, 2021, and Jan 31, 2023, or risk losing eviction protections. Simultaneously, a freeze on rent control units expires, allowing up to a 6 percent rent increase. Of the 93,000 residents with overdue rent, about half owe three months or fewer, while others grapple with debt spanning a year or more. According to the L.A. controller’s office, over 77,000 evictions were filed from February to December of 2023.

Barbara J. Schultz, director of housing justice at Legal Aid, expresses concern over the scarcity of lawyers with the expiration of tenant protections, and fears

this could exacerbate L.A.’s already elevated rates of homelessness. “The concern is that if there will be more evictions filed, tenants will not be able to find representation and they will be displaced and potentially rendered homeless,” she said in an interview with LAist. An estimated 50 specialized eviction defense attorneys are available for Angelenos, but despite initiatives to boost legal assistance, many tenants lack representation. “At trial, tenants without lawyers almost always lose,” said a UCLA study. The Los Angeles City Council approved rent hikes by a 10-2 vote, on November 14, 2023, impacting nearly three-quarters of the city’s rent-controlled properties.

Geza Tokes, owner of 18 rent-controlled Units in L.A., initia-

lly supported the rent freeze, considering it reasonable during the pandemic. However, significant challenges in maintaining his properties amid rising costs leaves him with limited choices.

“I’ve got to put a roof

on a property in Echo Park — it’s \$14,000,” said Tokes to LAist. “Last winter’s rains got us. It’s leaking, and we put a Band-Aid on it ... I want to take the roof off and get permits and do it legit. But I can’t throw \$14,000 down right now.”

Valley’s Unity Center offers programs like Pride Plus, Basic Needs and the Dream Resource Center to support students aca-

demically, including counseling for those facing financial challenges but eligibility for certain resources vary. “I think we’re definitely going to see an increase in our unhoused student population because I already see it a lot,” said Pride Plus Counselor Natalie Guerrero. “These laws that are being stripped are just going to aggravate everything even more. I’m hoping that we get

some more guidance from the district on how to be able to help students because our local agencies are swamped.” A recent mandate now requires that Los Angeles keep eviction records, aiding outreach to vulnerable residents. Nonprofits now use this data to assist those at risk while the Housing Department has set up a hotline for tenant support at (866) -557-7368.



Photo illustration by Milan Rafaelov, editor-in-chief

FAITH, HOPE

“HOPE: PART II OF A MEXICAN TRILOGY” AND VALLEY COLLEGE PERFORMERS SHINE AT THE LOS ANGELES THEATRE CENTER.

Kaia Mann Opinion Editor

Set in an era of a promising presidency, “Hope: Part II of a Mexican Trilogy” brings to the stage a family that uplifts one another while navigating the changing landscape of 1960s America.

The Latino Theatre Company in collaboration with LACCD campuses presented Evelina Fernandez’s Mexican Trilogy: Faith, Hope & Charity, directed by José Luis Valenzuela. Valley College performed part two, ushering in the new frontier and intriguing audiences.

With a runtime of

2 hours, including a 10-minute intermission, Hope flew by. The pacing was quick, each scene melting right into the next.

In Hope, the Morales family grows closer, faced with global and familial threats. Despite the name, there is a sense of dread throughout, with audiences aware of the coming tragedy set for the new president. While the country is going through a difficult change, so is the titular family.

Elena (Raylene Marquez Lopez), is forced to reevaluate her life and marriage to Char-

lie (Ruben Gabriel Hernandez), a cheating and abusive husband and father. This realization set several events in motion, changing the lives of our main characters.

While the play deals with heavy themes like suicide, abuse, and war, it is full of humor. The funniest scenes involved Betty (Justine Ortega), “speaking” to JFK on the phone. These calls served as an intensely creative way to show the thoughts and feelings of the main character while remaining lighthearted.

The Los Angeles Theater Company is the perfect venue to

display this trilogy, with a tantalizing ‘60s set, large TV screens, and projection of narratively connected videos. The screens on the stage dually serve as set pieces. Audiences could look into them and see bedrooms where the actors, not on center stage, would sit in character.

This set would not have been nearly as captivating if not for the creative sound design. Nuclear sirens pierced the air and there was nary a quiet moment. Through the usage of sound, the play was able to take on the correct tone for each scene whether it

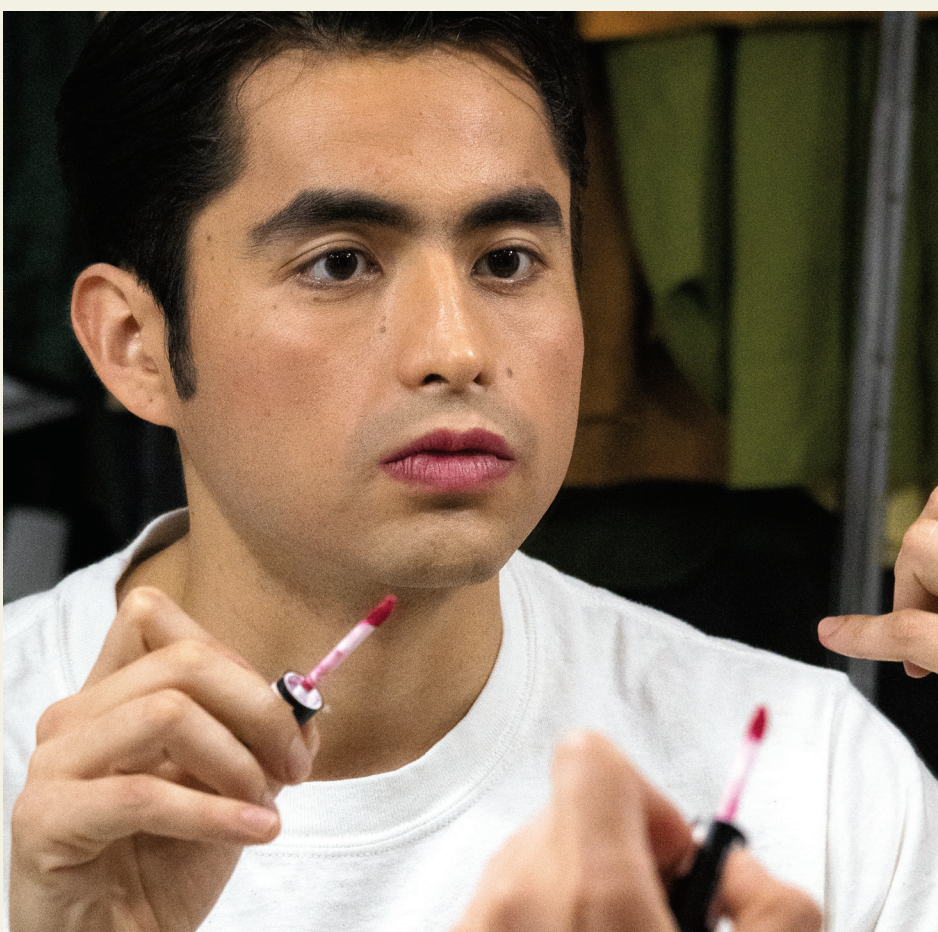
be surreal, humorous, or melancholy.

This being said, the sound mixing was troublesome, especially during the musical numbers. Hope featured iconic ‘60s songs like “Shout” and “Please Mr. Postman,” which were hurt by too-loud music and too-quiet singing. The songs added little to the story and halted the movement of the play.

Despite this, Alejandro Cuauhtémoc, who played Enrique, was captivating, serving as a powerful presence in both acting and singing. Ángel Vásquez playing Bobby was another standout,

able to convey sibling and parent dynamics while capturing the audience’s attention.

“Hope: Part II of a Mexican Trilogy” was an entertaining look into the Morales family after the Mexican Revolution. Those involved are dedicated to telling this story, and the story is worth being told.



(L-R) Rubén Gabriel Garcia, Roman Aviles, Raylene Marquez Lopez, Alejandro Cuauhtémoc, Joel Cantañocano, Ángel Vásquez getting ready before their preformance of Hope at Los Angeles Theatre Center on Thursday Jan. 25, 2024 (Astrid Cortez | Valley Star)

E, CHARITY



Photo by: Ivone Elias | Valley Star



(From left to right,) Clair Gonqora, Joel Cantano, Justine Ortega. Valley College Hope cast at the Los Angeles Theatre Center during curtain call on Jan. 25

THE VALLEY COLLEGE ACTORS PLAY THEIR PART

The Latino Theatre Company Initiative brings community colleges students together using art to supplement their educational journeys.

Maïa Richaud Valley Life Editor

Community college students from around the city gathered to put on Evelina Fernandez's award-winning Mexican Trilogy: Faith, Hope, and Charity with Valley College headlining the second act.

Produced by The Latino Theater Company, and directed by its founder, José Luis Valenzuela, the trilogy is organized into three parts: Faith, Hope and Charity. Three LACCD colleges converged last month to present the plays together and individually. East L.A. College performed

Faith, Valley performed Hope, and L.A. City College performed Charity.

"We all come from somewhere, we're all immigrants in this country, and though any audience that has seen this show has said the same, they really see themselves," said assistant director Israel Lopez. "We all have brothers and sisters, and moms and dads, and families that are trying to do their best and strive in this country. So although the story is about a Latino family, a Mexican-American family, it really

is a universal human story."

Each play follows the Morales', a Mexican-American family whose lives are greatly affected by world events. The trilogy travels with each generation from Mexico to Phoenix, Arizona, and Los Angeles.

Faith is set shortly after the Mexican Revolution and centers on preserving the family's cultural roots amidst a changing world. Hope details the shifting attitudes of the 1960s, and Charity the mourning of Pope John Paul II in 2005.

The trilogy is a part of The Latino Theater Company's Impact

Initiative, which provides a space where community college students can participate in cultural exchanges using the performing arts. The program includes the nine LACCD campuses, Pasadena City College, Mount San Antonio College, and Glendale City College. The initiative also provides students the opportunity to attend shows, participate in master classes, and engage in discussions with artists.

"We wanted to be able to do these three plays in three different schools so that, in this case, students from East L.A. College, L.A. Valley Colle-

ge, and Los Angeles City College could come together and help each other and share ideas and share stories and grow their support network all across L.A. County," Lopez said.

Fernandez premiered her plays in 2012, winning a Ted Schmitt Award from the L.A. Drama Critics Circle for a world premiere of an outstanding new play. Throughout the fall semester, the respective LACCD

colleges performed them on their campuses, and most recently, at the L.A. Theater Center. The final performance took place Jan. 28.

"I love how it brings representation to the Latino community," said Crystal Nieto, stage manager of "Hope." "They [the characters] still have some of that generational trauma that first generation kids go through."



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SPORTS



Photo by Astrid Cortez | The Valley Star

Lady Monarch Gizelle Moreno shoots a free throw in a game against Canyons on Jan. 10. Valley College lost a close one as the team dropped its first conference game of the seasons, 63-68.

LADY MONARCHS SET TO FACE TOP-SEEDED VAQUEROS

Antelope Valley College snapped Valley's four-game winning streak in an overtime battle.

Jabes Pascual Staff Writer

The Valley College women's basketball team strung together four-straight wins before dropping an overtime contest Wednesday against Antelope Valley College 63-55. The Lady Monarchs will be looking to return to the winning side at home Saturday against Glendale College.

The women's team helped Coach Monica Hang notch her 300 during their four-game winning streak. In those contests, the Lady Monarchs outscored their opponents 326-248, helping them to a 5-3 Western State Conference mark.

Valley defeated College of Canyons on the road Saturday 81-70 with three of its players scoring 20 points or more. Freshman forward Samantha Maldonado recorded a double-double, notching 22 points and collecting 14 rebounds. Madison Guerrero added 21 points, and freshman Laila Salazar scored 20.

Before the Canyon's game, the Lady Monarchs won their last three games in January. They defeated Bakersfield College 86-66. Mary Corbett recorded a season-high 34 points on the eve of her birthday. Corbett made 12 of 28 shots from the field and was 7 of 18 from the 3-point line.

The two contests before the Bakersfield game included victories over West L.A.

"I was very excited to be in the heat of the moment playing defense."

- Madison Guerrero

College, 75-60, and Santa Monica College, 84-52. Even though the Lady Monarchs have gone on a scoring run in their last few contests, they are also a defense-minded squad.

"Playing defensively is my favorite," Madison Guerrero said after a recent loss against Citrus College. "I was very excited to be in the heat of the moment playing defense."

The Lady Monarchs (5-4 conference record) find themselves at a pivotal point in the season and will likely face their toughest opponent when they host Glendale College Saturday at 5 p.m. Glendale defeated Valley 77-52 on Jan. 17, and the Gauchos sit in first place in the conference with a 9-0 record.



Astrid Cortez | The Valley Star
Samantha Maldonado drives around a Canyon defender.



Astrid Cortez | The Valley Star
Gizelle Moreno gets in perfect position for a rebound.



Photo by Astrid Cortez | The Valley Star
Mary Corbett holds her ground against a Canyon player.



Photo by Astrid Cortez | The Valley Star
Madison Guerrero drives to the hoop ready to score two.