



VALLEY LIFE: TIME TRAVEL
VAN NUYS CIVIC CENTER TRANSFORMED INTO A SUPERFAN PARADISE FOR A NIGHT.

the VALLEY STAR

The Independent Student Newspaper of Los Angeles Valley College



OPINION: LAKE MEAD
THE SITUATION ON THE COLORADO RIVER CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION.

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Monarchs endure heat wave amid return

This fall brings high temperatures, increased enrollment and new COVID-19 policies.

KEVIN ZUNIGA
STAFF WRITER

As the fall semester fires up, many Monarchs were relieved to lower their masks as temperatures stayed above 100 degrees throughout the first week.

The bustling campus welcomed new and returning students on Aug. 29. The return to campus aligned with a severe heat wave, bringing about a new policy that allows instructors to switch to an online class forum if the indoor temperature exceeds 82 degrees, according to the office of academic affairs.

"I think I'm gonna die from the heat," said Micha Marcelo, a second-year nursing major. "Without masks we could breathe normally and I think having them on would make it worse."

The new semester also brings new COVID-19 policies. Though the LACCD strongly recommends wearing masks indoors for the fall semester, students are not required to be vaccinated. This is a stark change in policy, as previous semesters enforced both a mask and vaccination guidelines.

"I think the COVID-19 policy is both good and bad," said first-year nursing major Genesis Lara. "I don't like wearing masks so that's good. What's bad is that some people get sick or are sick but don't wear a mask."

Due to the surge of the omicron variant of COVID-19 during the spring semester, the district issued a preference for N95 masks. Although the rules for masking differ from previous semesters, disposable masks are still available at the entrance of some buildings.

Valley instituted Cleared4 scanner stations during the spring semester for students and faculty to verify that they

had taken a symptom self-check survey before accessing any facilities. They were displayed at the entrance of all buildings, however due to lack of enforcement and engagement, they have been subsequently removed.

If students have not received the email regarding the new policy, they may find information regarding Valley's COVID-19 policies at the school's web-

site, on the home page under "LAVC COVID-19 Updates".

According to Tanya Sirkin, executive assistant of the office of the president, Valley will abide by the LACCD's COVID-19 policy, and will not go beyond any recommended guidelines.

Headcount has been on the decline for the last three years, however Valley College has seen a seven percent spike, or an in-

crease of 924 students between this semester and last spring according to Valley President Barry Gibbons. Along with a higher headcount comes a demographic shift towards diversity with historically underrepresented groups seeing an increase. The Black and African-American student population increased by 12 percent and Latinx by 10.3 percent. With the growing student

population, clubs and organizations such as the ASU, Umoja Black Scholars and the Gay Straight Alliance have proposed ambitious calendars of on-campus events. Students can check the calendar of events to stay up to date.

With contributions
by Cassandra Nava



VALLEY STAR | GRIFFIN O'ROURKE

RETURN- Groups of students make their way through the outdoor corridor on Valley College's campus in the second week back to school. There has been a resurgence in the student population on campus in the semester of Fall 2022.

Former members join first in-person ASU panel

Valley's student government hosted a panel with the aim of recruiting new members.

NATALIE METCALF
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

As enrollment increases, Valley College's Associated Student Union met with four students in-person on Thursday for a panel discussion about future events.

Newly elected President Ani Ramazyan, Treasurer Deigo Enriquez and Fine Arts Commissioner Mia Sanchez spoke on the panel. Student engagement coordinator Raquel Sanchez asked the panelists to discuss their experiences, event plans and advice in order to recruit students to fill vacant positions on the ASU board. Three previous members of the board were in attendance — Kai Haaland, the former commissioner of political affairs, Sandra Sanchez, the prior president and Kimberly Perez-Solis the past parliamentarian.

"My definition of leadership is someone who will take action," said Enriquez during the panel. "I would rather have leaders that want to create events, participate and have fun."

The discussion focused on student engagement, networking and leadership. Four Monarchs were in attendance during the seminar, one leaving after the first question.

During her campaign, Ramazyan promoted student engagement on campus. In agreement with her fellow officers, the ASU will be hosting more events on campus. The President also mentioned an interest in updating Valley's website.

"When I see students engaged it makes me motivated to create more events," said

Ramazyan. "If I double the size of students involved, I will consider my role a success."

The board expressed their joy in the surge of student engagement. Despite the lack of attendance at ASU's first in-person event of the semester, the campus has seen an increase in student activity.

Future events at Valley will

include a Bob Ross painting day, bubble soccer, origami making and chess tournaments. Bob Ross painting day will be on Sept. 15 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Student Union Plaza.

"You're going to be watching a Bob Ross tutorial on how to paint," said the fine arts commissioner. "We'll provide all the materials for you to use

and it'll be a fun way to relax."

As of right now, nine positions are still open — including Vice President. Student union officers and commissioners earn a \$250 monthly stipend and are expected to work five hours a week. Monarchs can contact ASU advisor Monica Flores or go to the second floor of the Student Union Plaza.

Office hours will be posted on a bulletin board in the Student Union Plaza located on campus. According to Sanchez, ASU officers and commissioners schedule their office hours around their class schedule.

"Leadership doesn't have to be big," said former President Sanchez. "It could be something small, like student government or starting your own club."

IMPORTANT INFO

Sept. 11

The deadline to drop classes without receiving a "W" and to add classes with a permission number is Sept. 11.

The deadline to apply for Extended Opportunity Programs and Services is also Sept. 11.

These features and more can be found in full @ www.thevalleystarnews.com

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VALLEY STAR | JEREMY RUIZ

FORUM- (L-R) Associated Student Union (ASU) treasurer Diego Enriquez, ASU president Ani Ramazyan, former ASU commissioner of political affairs Kai Haaland and former ASU president Sandra Sanchez.

Law and disorder

CASSANDRA NAVA
MANAGING EDITOR

Amid an investigation from the Los Angeles Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission on LASD's "deputy gangs," Sheriff Alex Villanueva may be held in contempt at a now expedited hearing on Sept. 7.

The commission began the public hearings in early July. Both Sheriff Villanueva and Undersheriff Timothy Murakami were scheduled to testify, but did not attend the first hearing. According to the LA Times, Villanueva and Murakami steered clear of Loyola Marymount University (where the hearing took place) for fear of their safety, as opponents of the LASD wore clothing that criticized the department. Their refusal to obey court orders prompted Judge Michelle Williams' clerk to hold the next hearing six months ahead of schedule. The oversight commission hopes to share their findings by Oct. 5.

Villanueva stated he believes the investigation was created in order to bring negative press to his name ahead of re-election in November.

"I await whatever new FACTUAL information they can provide," reads a statement posted on March 25 by Villanueva on the official LASD website. "I can see this for what it is, the weaponization of government in order to influence the outcome of an election, nothing more."

The oversight commission released a statement earlier this year, stating that gangs or gang-like conduct within the district would be thoroughly investigated. This follows decades-long suspicions of misconduct within the department, including use of excessive force within jails, bullying tactics on non-gang affiliated deputies and assaulting civilians to "earn their ink." According to an investigative series by Cerise Castle on Knock LA, there are at least 18 deputy gangs within the department, and members are identified by matching tattoos specific to their station.

Oversight commission chair Sean Kennedy penned a report on deputy gangs last year, as he and the commission aim to investigate the impact these cliques have on other deputies and on the general public.

"By glorifying shootings and other uses of force against community members, LASD deputy gangs and cliques undermine the sanctity of human life and deny the dignity and respect owed to all people," states Kennedy's report.

Sergeant Jefferson Chow has gone on record stating he was ordered to not ask questions about "subculture groups" despite having detailed logs of gang-like activities. Chow revealed at a hearing on Aug. 19 that he feared for his job after questioning the events of an alleged 2018 deputy gang brawl in East Los Angeles in 2018.

The East L.A. deputy gang, known as the Banditos, attacked newly hired deputies at a bar — which left several members unconscious or on the verge of passing out. According to the LA Times, Villanueva and other LASD officials tried to stop Chow from testifying.

The next hearing will take place on Sept. 7, and like the previous hearings, will be available on Youtube.

Counseling is a lifestyle for Natalie Guerrero

The Rainbow Pride Center offers a wide range of services through its empathy driven counselor.

ISAAC DEKTOR
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Natalie Guerrero shines as head of the three-month-old Rainbow Pride Center, a one-stop counseling shop for LGBTQIA students at Valley College.

The 37-year-old started working at Valley in June, temporarily setting up shop in the Mosaic Center on the second floor of student services. Her office will take permanent residence in the old bookstore in Campus Center once it reopens in the coming weeks. The Rainbow Pride Center offers a wide range of services, everything from help applying for CalFresh and Medi Cal to academic and mental health counseling.

Guerrero grew up in East Los Angeles, jumping from school to school, which was a formative experience for her.

“When you grow up in chaos, sometimes you quickly learn things like right from wrong,” said Valley’s new counselor. “I always wanted better for myself. I didn’t know how I was gonna get there, but the

chaos somehow made me want out of that — like an escape.”

A daughter of immigrants and the first person in her family to graduate from college, Guerrero first set her sights on higher education in the second grade, while riding the school bus through Cal State Los Angeles.

Guerrero would attend that same campus ten years later as a psychology major, later returning to receive a master’s degree in counseling. During her time at university, the psych major was the beneficiary of two mentorships that developed her personal and professional life, cementing her path towards Valley.

“That’s how I got into this field — because I’m built on mentors,” said the mentee-turned-counselor. “I didn’t have a lot of family support but I did have great mentors.”

Guerrero worries that the pandemic has adversely affected the social skills of incoming freshmen, who spent their final years of high school behind a computer monitor.

“I keep the students’ mental health in mind always,” said Guerrero. “Given that we’re still



JEREMY RUIZ | VALLEY STAR

ADVISOR- Natalie Guerrero is an academic counselor and LGBTQ+ representative at the Mosaic Center of the Student Services building.

going through a pandemic, I feel that kindness and empathy are needed more than ever right now. I make sure that I go above and beyond with students, so if I can walk a student over to another department and stay with them through the process, I will do it.”

Guerrero’s empathetic nature stems not only from a

deep rooted kindness, but also a lived experience that may be relatable for LGBTQIA students. At 13 she realized she liked girls.

“I wasn’t able to put a name to it,” said the counselor. “But I feel like I’ve known my whole life. I just wasn’t, I didn’t have a language to identify it.”

At 33 years-old, Guerrero

cut off her long curly hair in favor of a shorter style. She recalls being afraid to challenge traditional gender norms at first, but feeling empowered afterwards.

“I just felt ready, I felt confident, I felt like ‘hey, this is me,’” said Guerrero. A lot of times, especially for women, hair is a form of femininity. It’s

safer. And so when you are going against what a woman looks like, it’s scary. So cutting my hair off was probably one of the scariest things I’ve ever done. But I did it anyway.”

Four years later, she still rocks the same haircut.

Guerrero has big plans for Valley. She has already charted the Gay Straight Alliance for the fall semester and is looking for members.

The Rainbow Pride Center, in collaboration with the Dream Center, has a wide variety of scheduled events for the new semester. A film screening of “Ni de Aqui, Ni de Allá” is on Oct. 18. The center will also be hosting a LGBTQIA self defense class on Nov. 15 and an end of the year celebration on Dec. 8.

“I do think it’s important that we have spaces for our LGBTQIA students where they feel at home,” said President Barry Gribbons. “We’re excited to open the [Rainbow Pride] Center in Campus Center for them. It’s going to be a nice space.”

Van Nuys travels back in time with 80’s classic

My Valley Pass hosted an event on Saturday called Back to the Valley at the Van Nuys Civic Center.

NATALIE METCALF
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

As a clueless Marty McFly stumbles through Hill Valley, the iconic 80’s film “Back to the Future” illuminates the Van Nuys Civic Center on Saturday night, sending 500 fans back in time.

My Valley Pass — the official guide to the San Fernando Valley — hosted a “Back to the Future” themed event called Back to the Valley. Two DeLorean time machines could be seen from Sylvan St., one time machine from the first film and the other from the second — the only difference being the Mr. Fusion energy reactor. Another notable film car from the 80’s classic was Marty McFly’s 4x4 Toyota truck.

“We wanted to find a nice way to involve the community,” said the co-founder of My Valley Pass, Jared Cowan. ““Back to the Future” is a fan favorite, it really is amazing



AVA ROSATE | VALLEY STAR

DELOREAN- Inside the DeLorean, the time circuit board shows various dates destination time, present time and last time departed.

the power this movie has.”

Tickets for the screening cost \$5 with all proceeds being donated to the San Fernando Valley Tournament of Roses organization. My Valley Pass will design a float for the Rose Parade this year, centered

around the San Fernando Valley.

Before the screening, the official “Back to the Future” franchise band, The Flux Capacitors, performed memorable 80’s songs such as The Power of Love by Huey Lewis and the News, Just Like Heaven

by The Cure, Ghostbusters by Ray Parker Jr and Dancing With Myself by Billy Idol. Two songs from the “Bright Lights, Big City” (1988) soundtrack — which also starred Michael J. Fox — were added by a DJ before the live band performed.

Bob Gale, the co-creator, writer and producer of the film, recorded a message at the end of the movie for fans.

“I’m here to tell you you’re in for a great treat,” said Gale. “Seeing a movie like this with an audience is the best way to see it.”

Lenny Hockteit, a Valley resident, owns an infamous time-traveling DeLorean. The film car fanatic has owned the car for 10 years. During the film’s 35th anniversary back in 2015, he participated in four “Back to the Future” events a month. The time machine owner has met cast members from the film, including Claudia Wells (Jennifer Parker), Lea Thompson (Lorraine Banes McFly) and

Donald Fullilove (Goldie Wilson).

“The roots [for the car] are basically my son,” said Hockteit. “He was born in 1985, so he grew up watching the movie. It took 30-some years and he was graduating from college.”

The film ‘Back to the Future’ was released in 1985 and instantly became a hit, making \$388.8 million in box office revenue worldwide. Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) accidentally travels back to 1955, interrupting his parent’s first meeting. With the help of Doctor Emmett Brown (Christopher Lloyd), Marty struggles with returning to present-day 1985. “Back to the Future” was filmed in the Valley. The original Hill Valley town square and the clock tower were filmed at Universal Studios Hollywood. .

“This is my Hill Valley, I was born and raised here,” said an actor portraying Doctor Emmett Brown at the event. “It’s heartwarming that a movie stuck

around for that long and touched so many people.”



AVA ROSATE | VALLEY STAR
GREAT SCOTT- Dr. Emmet Brown greeted event go-ers, presented the bands and film, while staying in character.

Theaters celebrate Movie Day with \$3 tickets

Theaters across the country are selling low priced tickets to celebrate the jump of box office sales.

NICHOLAS OROZCO
SPORTS EDITOR

Theaters across the country celebrated on Sept. 9 was the successful special event of Cinema Day as ticket prices were low as during the 90’s.

AMC, Pacific Theaters, Regal and many more all celebrated movie day with the sale of \$3 tickets. This event also allowed tickets to be bought for any special screening as well, including AMC’s IMAX, Dolby Cinema and Regal’s Screen X, which is a 270 degree movie screen. The event is in response to a massive boost in ticket sales this past summer, thanks specifically to “Top Gun Maverick” and “Minions: The Rise of Gru.” These two movies were the hottest of the summer, with Minions earning \$790 million at the box office and Top Gun earning over one billion dollars at the box office.

“I will always always take advantage of movie tickets being \$3” said 25 year old, movie-goer Maria Martinez. “If I missed out on this [movie day], I would have been bummed out.”

Movie Day proved to be a success, with eight million people who took advantage of the limited low prices, and ticket sales reaching \$24 million according to the National Association of Theater Owners.

Prior to this summer, theaters were struggling with ticket

sales due to COVID-19. Once case numbers began to drop and the vaccination rate rose, social events and public areas began to see a jump in attendance.

“When they opened back up, I was a little hesitant because COVID was a scary thing,” 21 year old theater goer Caitlyn Murphy said. “When I had COVID, it felt horrible, I did not wanna get it again”

Ticket sales have nearly doubled within a year. During 2020 only 221 million tickets were sold. This year there have been approximately 850 million tickets sold thus far. As theaters are returning to pre-pandemic levels, major film companies have been delaying films that were originally to be released during 2020 to now, with some opting to delay further as the market continues to change.

Digital and Blu-ray Disc releases are coming to the comfort of movie watchers’ own homes shortly after or even during the film’s theatrical release. With the digital releases of films, major film studios saw a significant drop in revenue. Due to COVID-19 people were only allowed to watch digital releases of films that would’ve been released in theaters.

“I was excited to finally be able to come back to the theaters to watch movies the authentic way,” said Murphy.



JOSEPH ACUNA | VALLEY STAR

FILM- Sept. 3 was national cinema day. Movie go-ers gathered to AMC 16 in Burbank to watch any currently showing film for \$3.

Back to the basics: Keep remedial classes

California community college students will suffer with the passing of AB 1705.

CASSANDRA NAVA
MANAGING EDITOR

Assembly Bill 1705 passed unanimously on Aug. 29. It will cause more harm than good while remedial courses continue to phase out, in the academic environment that needs them most. Placement tests at Valley College are a thing of the past. With the passing of Assembly Bill 705 in 2017, the college started archiving remedial level classes in english and math, leaving students to enroll in transfer-level courses. The recently passed AB 1705, which is awaiting a signature from Gov. Gavin Newsom, will expand on the existing bill, working to fast track the community college experience with the hopes of a quicker transfer process.

In order to properly excel in higher division courses, the fundamentals should not only be known, but ingrained in a student's brain.

But students should be offered the ability to refresh — or relearn — the basics. In order to properly excel in higher division courses, the fundamentals should not only be known, but ingrained in a student's brain. "There is no way you can say this is a successful program," said

Valley professor Ruby Christian-Broughm at an LACCD board meeting earlier this year. "To strip away the one level below, which AB 1705 will do, will make this situation worse." Not all community college students are the same. At least recent high school graduates are somewhat familiar with preparatory knowledge needed to succeed in transfer-level courses. But those who come to a community college after years away from a school environment may need a refresher. In this case, those individuals should have the option of remedial courses. Imagine sitting through the transfer-level statistics course, without knowing the core ideas of algebra. This new bill will not set students up for success — those who brave it out may be deterred from pursuing their education further if they receive a low grade. While the bill states that one-year completion of transfer-level courses increased by 18 percent and math by 24 percent from fall 2015 to fall 2019, the optimism of streamlining curriculum seems promising. But speed should not be the goal of community college. Although the additional regulations on AB 705 will continue to propel students into universities, it disregards a huge population of students with other responsibilities. This bill helps individuals who may otherwise fall through the cracks of a community college, but single parents or people with full or part-time jobs may not be able to devote themselves to a more challenging course. Another flawed aspect of AB 1705 is the additional work that will be placed on counselors and staff. The bill's text states



PHOTO COURTESY OF ASSEMBLYMEMBER JACQUI IRWIN

BILL- Chidi Agu (far right), a program coordinator for the organization Students Making a Change, provides a testimony at the presentation for Assembly Bill 1705. The bill was passed on Aug. 29 and is awaiting approval by Gov. Gavin Newsom. Expanding on AB 705, the bill will rid of remedial courses.

that counseling and other education planning services will need to be done by either college districts or the individual college. In very limited cases, remedial classes will be offered. The bill will create a new standard using students' high school grade point average as a basis for expected student success in a specific course. If

that information is not accessible, college or district staff will have to compare how previous students in similar situations fared. This creates a tedious plan of working on a case by case basis for every student which, in turn, may allow students to fall through the cracks. Students should at least have an option of taking reme-

dial courses; they should not be taken away completely. That way, if a student does feel comfortable, they can choose to proceed with the one to two year track schedule to transfer. But the only person who knows best is themselves, so students should be able to choose when they are the ones deciding to pursue their education.

Lake Mead one hundred-fifty feet from disaster

The crisis on the Colorado River continues as lawmakers avoid making change.

AVA ROSATE
STAFF WRITER

Due to being mismanaged, abused and over estimated, the Colorado River's water level has dropped dangerously low since 2000. If the level sinks 150 more feet, 40 million people and 5.5 million acres of vital agricultural fields will lose their water source. Politicians and state officials must move quicker than the receding water line if they want a fraction of hope for the mere conservation of remaining water. The main source of drinking water and hydroelectricity for Southern Californians comes directly from the dying source, but Californian officials aren't batting an eye. As the owner of the oldest and largest rights to the water, California should be spearheading the effort to save its most precious resource. "Here in Los Angeles I think the goal should be to increase the recycling of water, stormwater capture and groundwater replenishment," said Valley College geography professor George Leddy. "Los Angeles is using the same amount of water we did in the late 1980s with a large increase in population. All the measures at conservation work."



AVA ROSATE | VALLEY STAR

RIVER- A small boat "Blown Away" pulls into the dock at Lake Mead, where the "bathtub ring" is visible on a mountain behind. The ring indicates where the water level once was.

When the reservoirs sink 150 more feet, a state of "dead pool" will occur — when water contained by Hoover Dam is so low it is unable to flow through intake towers, thus ceasing turbine activity resulting in the catastrophic failure of all hydro-

electric and water production. The negligence from the Bureau of Reclamation and federal in the states the river flows through was obvious in June when they were pressed with two options: come up with a collective deal to increase water con-

servation, or face unprecedented cutbacks left to the discretion of the Bureau of Reclamation. Their utter disregard was apparent when the state's federal never cut a deal and the department's threat of severe cutbacks never materialized. The history of mismanaging and grossly overestimating the water flow of the river goes back 100 years, when the seven states on the basin formed a water usage pact. Evidence was presented to politicians in 1916 stating the river's supplies were "not sufficient to irrigate all the irrigable lands lying within the basin," according to Grist, a non-profit media organization. The term profit over people, reins true when acknowledging former state officials prioritized the monetary gain the river would bring at the time instead of the livelihood of future generations. When the turbines stop running and the water stagnates, look to California's own Salton Sea for a glimpse of what the river's future can hold. A "Mad Max"-esque hellscape with toxic water, dead fish and harmful air. The Salton Sea was an offshoot of The Colorado — described as an endorheic lake, its waters never drained to the ocean; they either seep into the

ground or evaporate. Its demise was met when the salinity levels rose due to the stagnant water evaporating. Along with salinity, agricultural runoff poisoned the lake which quickly catapulted the situation into what it is today. The death of the Colorado is increasingly inevitable. If California can instate major water cutbacks to regions that profit from the river, eradicate the use of nonessential water and declare a state of emergency, there may be hope. Until then, the decline of the lifeblood that sustains millions of people will continue.

EDITORS' NOTE

The views expressed on this page are solely those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Valley Star, its instructors, editors, staff or those of Los Angeles Valley College, its administration, faculty, staff or students.

VALLEY VIEW | HOW DO REMEDIAL CLASSES BENEFIT STUDENTS?

TEXT BY AVA ROSATE
PHOTOS BY AVA ROSATE



"Everybody progresses through life at a different speed. Students with disabilities and minorities need the option to take these [remedial] classes. They are not a waste of time, more education means more knowledge."

- CAMERON THIBODAU, FIRST-YEAR FOOTBALL PLAYER



"These classes provide an opportunity for students to catch up when they aren't at the level they need to be. Remedial classes aren't a waste of time for the people who take them. If people are learning, they aren't wasting time."

- JAIMIE ROISMAN, FIRST-YEAR ART MAJOR



"There are students here not trying to get a degree but just trying to learn, to take that away from them would be wrong. Some people need a refresher before going into a transferable class."

- STEPHEN ESCALANTE, FIRST-YEAR ART MAJOR



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GOT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR?

Letters to the editor can be submitted online at www.thevalleystarnews.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. Send by Thursday for the following week's issue.



Griffin O'Rourke | Valley Star

Above- Erie jumps on his skateboard at the North Hollywood Skate Plaza during a blistering 100 degree Fahrenheit afternoon.

Right- Erie performs an ollie on his skateboard at the North Hollywood Skate Park.



Griffin O'Rourke | Valley Star



Ava Rosate | Valley Star

Randy Robley has been skating at Pedlow Park in Encino since 2008. "I like this park because it's more difficult than others," said Randy after completing a trick.



Left- "We've lost a few people who skated this park," said Maleko Osbya city parks and recreation worker. "Their friends will come and tag (graffiti) their names and create murals but it affects the skaters who ride here, when they skate the bowls. It can really affect their vision," said Maleko.

Ava Rosate | Valley Star

Skate, Grind, Fly

Skaters battle the afternoon heat at two distinguished cultural skateparks

Los Angeles is widely considered the cradle of skateboarding culture with sites like Venice beach and dried up pools being a nexus for skaters in the 1950s. Over 70 years later the sport has not only evolved but has transcended borders and culture alike. The act of skateboarding has become a special form of expression for many and in some ways an art form. It's even a form of utility, an easy means of getting from point A to point B. Skateparks have been built around Los Angeles to offer a space for skateboarders to challenge their abilities and develop their style. A grungy but accepting community was formed out of sites like the North Hollywood Skate Plaza and the Pedlow Field Skate Park. Pedlow was the first public skatepark in Los Angeles when it opened on February 17, 2001. Since then it has hosted various skating events and has been a place of commune for skaters. Skaters have taken to spray painting graffiti art all over the sweeping concrete

bowls, highlighting the street culture of the area Noho skate park, which opened in 2010, was built with a design focusing on the streets rather than an empty pool. Featuring no pool, the park instead has a vast layout of concrete paths, steps and metal railings. A popular feature of the park is a ramp that allows daring skaters to leap and flip over a short gap. Graffiti art dots the concrete landscape at Noho while various stickers are seen slapped on signs. The features of these parks attract skaters from all over the valley where the sun-bleached concrete bowls and steps become hubs of activity where skaters show off and hype up tricks. Adrenaline fueled skaters perform stylish and daunting moves while friends record for social media.

-Text by Griffin O'Rourke