



VALLEY LIFE: LARAMIE PROJECT
A REVIEW OF THE VALLEY COLLEGE THEATER DEPARTMENT'S LATEST PRODUCTION.



SPORTS: AMPHIBIOUS COACH
JIM MCMILLAN'S JOURNEY FROM HUNTINGTON BEACH TO AUSTRALIA THEN VALLEY.

Apex predator hunts at Valley

Younger students flock to Valley and LACCD

CASSANDRA NAVA
MANAGING EDITOR



JOSEPH ACUNA | VALLEY STAR

FEAST- A juvenile red-tailed hawk residing on campus killed two squirrels on Wednesday as it dominated the Valley College ecosystem from the air. A fledgling hawk is fed by its parents until it leaves the nest for good. It will leave the nest as early as six weeks. As the hawk grows older, it begins to act on its ancestral instinct to hunt for itself. On a crisp fall morning, a raptorial bird swooped down from above, attacked and killed a fox squirrel in front of the Foreign Language building. While predatory birds like falcons use their mouths to kill their prey, hawks both catch and kill with their talons. They also use their talons to dismember food before swallowing it. "On my way back from psychology class, there was a huge crowd of people on the walkway surrounding a hawk that was eating a squirrel," said Valley student Bryan Casas. "I'm assuming this woman felt bad for the squirrel because she scared the hawk away. With the hawk gone, this man picked up the dead squirrel and began swinging it around after a bystander paid him \$5 to do so. You could see blood dripping from the squirrel's body. It was pretty gruesome." Within the hour, a hawk (who witnesses said was the same bird from earlier) preyed upon the squirrel in front of the Foreign Language building, hunted down another squirrel in front of the Student Service Plaza. More students gathered around the plaza, which frightened the hawk into a nearby tree. "After the crowd dispersed, the hawk came back down and flew away with the remains of the squirrel it was eating earlier," said Kiet Huynh, a Valley student who witnessed the hawk attack.

Text by Sean Scully

CAPs' speaker series takes flight

Victor Rios delivered an inspirational speech on Wednesday as part one of the CAPs' series.

KEVIN KHACHATRYAN
STAFF WRITER

Inspirational words echoed throughout Monarch Hall on Wednesday as Victor Rios shared his life struggles to a crowd of over 100 needle-focused audience members. Students, faculty and community members flocked to Valley College to see the first of two speakers in the series.

"I lived two lifetimes. My first 18 years of life was filled with misery and the next lifetime was full of redemption, education and living a life of happiness to help others in my community."

- Victor Rios, guest speaker at open house

rience of living on the streets, dropping out of school and being incarcerated as a juvenile. "I lived two lifetimes," said Victor Rios at the Career and Academic Pathways event. "My first 18 years of life was filled with misery, and the next lifetime was full of redemption, education and living a life of happiness to help others in my community." English professor Scott Weigand introduced Rios at the event in Campus Center. "We were really excited to have him come over to help our students," said Weigand. "He possesses a very inspirational story that students will hear in his lecture. As people are thinking about their pathways and what opportunities higher education provides, coming to share his story seemed like a really good fit." Anti-Racism is a focal point for Valley College's event planning and workshops. Chae is an Associate Professor in the department for the social and behavioral population sciences where his research focused on how racism is biologically embedded. Chae's goal is to discuss multiple levels of racism and how it compromises health, that students can reduce the spread. Weigand hopes for this to create a sense of community for students and colleges across LACCD, where this can be more involved in the public health department to help improve the health of people and their communities.

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



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

INSPIRATION- Over the shoulder of English Professor Scott Weigand, who organized the event, Victor Rios speaks at a Career and Academic Pathways open house in Monarch Hall.

Fall 2022 enrollment numbers reveal a stark shift in demographics across the Los Angeles Community College District with students under 20 as the largest portion of community college goers.

The district saw a 16 percent increase in younger students since 2021. The population of students aged 20 and older decreased, with the 25-54 year old age group at a decline of seven percent. Valley College's landscape shifted to match the district's overall changes, but saw a larger increase of high school aged students — 19 percent compared to the district's 12 percent. The boom is a direct result of extensive outreach by financial aid and admissions employees.

"Our outreach team did an amazing job," said Valley President Barry Gribbons. "Having the ability to connect with so many high school seniors in person, and have that big of an impact was huge."

Valley dived head first into assessing the needs of various paperwork that can assist incoming freshmen. Following nearly two years of online learning, the in-person exchange of vital information for high schoolers hoping to attend college was due for an upgrade. Rather than let the students trudge over to campus, Valley decided to make their way to local high schools on a weekly basis. Employees work with small groups of students to complete FAFSA and Dream Act applications.

In February, over 2,000 students completed their FAFSA applications with help from Valley and Mission College, which is about 20 percent higher than the state average. Mission and Valley partnered up to visit all high schools within the Local District Northeast, the local group of high schools in both districts.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2016-17, students' ages in the California Community Colleges were scattered across the board. The largest age group was 20-24 at nearly 31 percent, with under 20 year olds at nearly 27 percent. While enrollment suffers nationwide, the population of younger students increases.

The outreach for new students brought in a new wave of college goers, but Valley's work with the dual enrollment programs has been steadily increasing the younger population. As of last year, the college was looking into assessing the exact courses and programs that would not only entice high schoolers, but fit into their general education requirements.

"Too many of our local high school students don't go on to college, and we want to change that," said Gribbons, who partook in College of the Canyon's dual enrollment program when he was a high schooler. "We want to make sure that all of our local high school students know that college is accessible to them. We want to make sure that they know they will be supported here at Valley [College]."

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UC workers protest low wages

Thousands of student workers traded class time for the picket line for better wages.

AVA ROSATE
STAFF WRITER

All 10 University of California schools halted classes in response to the nation's largest academic worker strike that began three weeks ago and is expected to continue through the final exam week.

Though bargains have been pitched to UC campuses, union workers have yet to ratify them into place. The bargains in question are an annual \$15,000 pay raise with adjustments by the end of a five year contract and a \$12,000 raise by October.

The picketers, consisting of students, student workers, teacher assistants and professors, are protesting low wages and poor worker benefits. The United Auto Workers represent all 48,000 academic workers in four fields: postdoctoral scholars, academic researchers, academic student employees and graduate student researchers.

"We need to stay out for a day longer than they expect us to be. One day longer, one day stronger."

- Michael Dean, UCLA Academic Researcher

"UCLA is the number one public school in the nation, because of us," Michael Dean, a Ph.D graduate and academic researcher said during the rally outside of the Powell Library. "We are the ones who do all their research, who find funding for programs, who write the grants. Our compensation should reflect that."

Hundreds of graduates and undergraduates alike, across seven different picket lines,

flood the campus over the course of several hours each day chanting messages through bullhorns and toting signs.

The inflation rate in California stood at 8.2 percent in September. The cost of living hike, combined with the average rent in Los Angeles being over \$36,000 each year, and topped with a \$23,000 annual pay, could make attending or working for a UC school difficult.

"We are asking for the rent burden to end, and for basic benefits such as paid childcare," said a teaching assistant in the physics department, Morgaine Mandigo-Stoba. "I get paid less than \$2,500 a month. Rent on campus is almost \$23,000 a year, which averages out to \$2,500 a month. This is outrageous."

According to the United Auto Workers, 36 unfair labor practices have been filed as of Tuesday, Nov. 15. The charges range from counts of union intimidation to surveying bargaining members.

The UC office of the President issued a statement to CBS 8 that said the school system is negotiating with United Auto Workers and is seeking a new multi year contract "with fair pay, quality health and family-friendly benefits and a supportive and respectful work environment."

The strike is expected to last after final exams, or until a bargain is reached. According to an email sent out to all students and faculty on Monday Nov. 14, representatives from each UC campus were traveling to UC Irvine to begin bargaining on Tuesday Nov. 15. Per a second email sent out Tuesday morning, the bargain meeting was canceled due to their inability to find a conference room.

"We will be out here tomorrow and everyday at 8 a.m. until our demands are met," said Michael Dean, a seventh year academic researcher for UCLA. "We need to stay out for a day longer than they expect us to be. One day longer, one day stronger."



PHOTOS BY AVA ROSATE | VALLEY STAR



PHOTOS BY AVA ROSATE | VALLEY STAR

STRIKE (ABOVE)- One thousand UCLA graduates and undergraduates alike flood the Powell Library courtyard during the ongoing strike for better wages. The strike is expected to last until finals are over - or until they receive a bargain deal. The bargains set by the strikers include child care subsidies and health care benefits, but the main focus is ending the rent burden employees face by heightening academic workers wages. Photos taken on Nov. 15.

REPRESENTATIVE (LEFT)- Hugo Soto-Martinez was elected as 13th district city councilmember while he was speaking at the UCLA rally.

CAPs

From page 1

KEVIN KHACHATRYAN
STAFF WRITER

"He's really involved in public health," said Weigand. "Valley College has a commitment to Anti-racism and the college has a task for us to continue to provide events and workshops to increase recognition on that. Chae was requested to come to campus from the child development department to address his story on how it affects students' health."

This is the first year that the open house will be in-person since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Last fall, there was an online open house, with more than 100 people showing up via zoom. Students were able to move from one event to another using the break out sessions on zoom and find out information about the different pathways.

"If you're ready to change your life around, I'll be here for you, but you have to start doing the work."

- Victor Rios, guest speaker at CAPs open house.

The event also includes funds from the ASU to help pay for Rios's visit on campus. Book



PHOTO BY | GRIFFIN O'ROURKE
DISCUSSION- Valley College President Barry Gribbons speaks with Victor Rios after the presentation on Wednesday.

store vouchers of up to \$500 will be included in a raffle for students to enter by taking a survey at the end of the event.

Valley's event serves as a resource for students who struggle with imposter syndrome. The lectures by each of the guest speakers will include their personal experiences and stories that may be relatable to students who are struggling with the same issue.

"If you're ready to change your life around, I'll be here for you, but you have to do the work," said Rios, sharing the guidance given to him by one of his high school teachers and mentors, Ms. Russ. "I care for you, but I can't carry you: something my teacher told me that applies to all students. We care for you, but we're not gonna do the work for you."



PHOTO BY | GRIFFIN O'ROURKE

SPEAKER- Victor Rios speaks at a Career and Academic Pathways open house event on November 30, 2022 at Los Angeles Valley College at Monarch Hall in the Campus Center.

NEWS BRIEFS

Kings tickets for Monarchs

The Valley College Foundation, a non-profit organization, recently partnered with the LA Kings to bring discounted hockey tickets to students and faculty.

The tickets are free of charge but subject to processing fees. Ticket seekers can choose from four games, all of which will be held at Crypto Arena in Downtown Los Angeles. The matches begin at the end of November, with the final game taking place in early January. Students and faculty can redeem tickets from the foundation's website by following a link on their page and filling out a short questionnaire.

To submit the form, Monarchs must provide either a LACCD or Valley email and select a preferred game date. A processing fee based on the seat levels will be applied to the order at the end of the checkout process. Tickets must be redeemed at least 72 hours prior to the game.

Tickets range from complimentary to \$60, depending on preferred seating. Complimentary tickets will get Monarchs the level 300 end of the row seats, \$10 for level 300 in the center row, \$40 for level 200 and \$60 for level 100.

According to Foundation Development Officer Ronya Waters, the Kings reached out to the campus and the Associated Student Union with the ticket offer.

"We are fortunate that Los Angeles has so many wonderful opportunities and events," said Waters. "Being able to offer free or discounted tickets allows anyone who might be on a tight budget to be able to take advantage of events they may not otherwise have access to."

Students and faculty are permitted two tickets per person, with additional tickets available for purchase at a discounted rate. Add-on tickets are priced from \$37 to \$88 per ticket.

Hundreds of tickets are still available and are not on a first-come, first-served basis.

By Ava Rosate, Staff Writer

Monarchs plan a trip to Spain

Valley College is sponsoring a study abroad program in Spain for up to 19 students next summer.

Monarchs will get a chance to travel to Spanish cities in a faculty-led program with tour guides. The two-week program is based on the enrollment of 14 to 19 students with a fee of \$2,695 per person. Airfare, passport or visa fees and personal expenses are included in the trip. The study abroad program is open to all students who are interested in learning Spanish.

Airfare is approximately \$1,500. Students will need money for meals not covered by the program. A workshop on funding this program was held recently. There are several scholarships available, including some through the Valley College Foundation. Students helped professor Zamudio raise money to help students who want to learn Spanish and study abroad.

Students will have an opportunity in four Spanish cities - Madrid, Granada, Toledo and Cyrdoba - to gain knowledge of Spain's culture and history while improving their Spanish language skills at the same time.

Students will have the opportunity to quickly improve their Spanish language skills. Monarch travelers will have 60 hours devoted to language skills at Valley over a four-week period. They will then immediately follow up on this in-class training with two fast-paced weeks in Spain, where they will have 30 hours focused on Spanish culture in a two-week period, as well as excursions and cultural immersion.

The program aims for students to come away from the experience with a deep appreciation of the region's role in Spanish history and civilization while simultaneously improving their understanding of the Spanish language.

By Erika Zuniga, Staff Writer

Monarchs arrow in on archery to relieve stress

With an eclectic sports professor, students at Valley College receive safety and mental wellness in the arts of archery.

KEVIN ZUNIGA
STAFF WRITER

Archery students on the range Tuesday and Thursday mornings draw back their bowstrings, hearing the sound of the professor's whistle to finally free tension and untether the arrow on their target, experiencing a sigh of relief.

Valley College is the only campus in the LACCD that offers archery classes, KIN 364-1 and KIN 364-2, instructed by Professor Louis Jones. 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.

"Ultimately, everyone's constantly working on their shooting, hitting the target, their technique and how to perform," said archery instructor Jones. "So you try to meet the conditions and help them to get better -- to improve themselves on the archery course."

Jones has a long history on campus. He coached football



AIM- (L-R) Alexander de Barros and Alex Hernandez assemble on the line and draw their bows in front of targets during archery class at Valley College. Monarchs taking the class were scored and evaluated.

GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

then became a Monarch himself, transferring from Valley to CSUN in the year 2000. The archery professor finished his degree in kinesiology in 2004. The professor has contributed to numer-

ous positions at Valley, going from coaching football, managing the fitness center, teaching fitness for adaptive students and being a facility coordinator. "It's pretty fun loading up

a bow, shooting it, and trying to hit the target," said music major Matthew Del Valle. "Sometimes the teacher does fun activities to get extra points, two weeks ago we blew a bal-

loon and we put it on the target and we got extra points."

According to Jones and his students, safety is a top priority at the archery range. For the first couple weeks of class they watched videos on basic safety. Monarchs enrolled in the course learn how to hold their equipment and how to safely position themselves on the range.

"We practice safety all the time. It doesn't matter if you're experienced or new, you always put safety first."

- Patrick Darby, science major

arms and upper back muscles.

Archery also helps improve mental health as it demands concentration and breath management. These techniques can be carried through to every other area of a student's life, from pressing work deadlines to exam pressures.

Students are only allowed to fire when Professor Jones blows his whistle, indicating when to stop or start shooting and when there is no one in the line of fire. Archery is a sport where serious injuries could happen, so practicing safety and constantly implementing it during class is a necessity.

"We practice safety all the time," said computer science major Patrick Darby. "It doesn't matter if you're experienced or new, you always put safety first."

THE FACTS

The sport that originated in the Stone Age was developed as a technique for hunting.

Practicing and repeating these movements as Monarchs shoot their arrows throughout the semester can help students build and strengthen areas in the chest, hands,

Theater Department diminishes Laramie Project

An ambitious and thought-provoking contemporary classic comes to the Valley Theater Department.

ASHER MILES
STAFF WRITER

Audience members at "The Laramie Project," directed by Matthew McCray, experienced a befuddlement of comedy within a tragedy. Bizarre transitions, incongruous acting choices and a lack of a theater untethered the audience from the documentary-theater masterpiece.

Through the thought-provoking three-act play enveloping the premeditated 1998 murder of 21-year-old Matthew Shepard and the mixed response of his conservative Wyoming community, an ambitious attempt was made by the 14-person ensemble. "The Laramie Project" details a complex compilation of interviews conducted by Moisés Kaufman that investigates American attitudes about violence towards the LGBTQIA+ community and the difference between

tolerance and acceptance.

"We need to move away from tolerance and towards acceptance, because you don't tolerate people, you accept them. You tolerate a bad hair day," Matthew's mother, Judy, famously said on her tours raising awareness of her son's murder.

Due to construction delays, director McCray was forced to produce the show on the second floor of the 51-year-old building. While many can find faults in some of the green actors' bold mistakes, shame on McCray for allowing the gaffes of the production to befuddle the weight of the histrionic masterpiece.]

The immersive theatrical experience started in the courtyard and traveled through hallways and classrooms of the second floor. Actors missed their footing on stage boxes, patrons sat in the 54-degree makeshift theater and the playbill was only available digitally but electronic devices

were banned during the play.

Valley's underpowered, yet immersive, rendition of Kaufman's documentary-play fell flat on a myriad of theatrical beats. Most notably, when the audience members were told details of Shepard's torture, the Backstreet Boy's 97' hit "Everybody" blared on the speakers as actors danced and escorted the audience to the new location.

Bizarre and incongruous theater transitions aside, gut-wrenching performances from Sarah Grant, Sophie Haaland and Chevy Knight carried the three-hour show hosted in the transformed Campus Center.

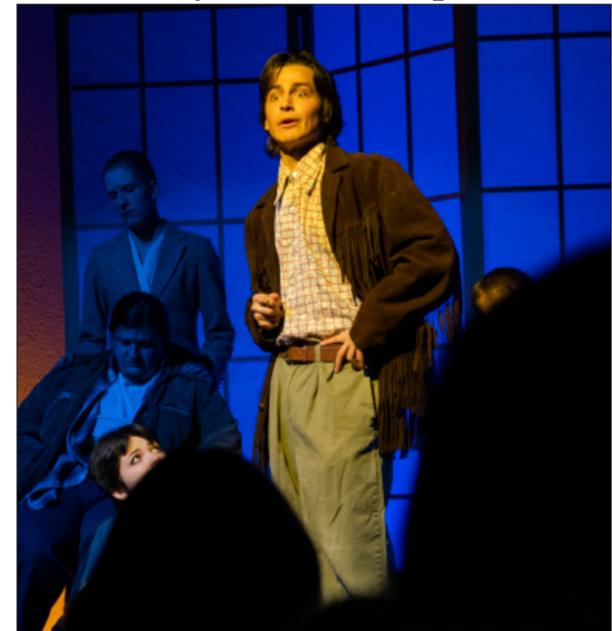
Another outstanding moment took place in the northwest hallway as the audience members crowded together. A riveting scene of a hiker discovering Matthew's beaten body culminated with impressive sound design, acting, and bold

choices. The narration was palpable, tugging on all the heartstrings of the audience members.

Yet, much of the actor's hard work to cultivate heartfelt emotions about a tragedy comes crashing down, during the intermission.

Certain actors were directed to fill the break with off-color ramble and out-of-character jokes that failed to reflect the somber tone of the piece, effectively removing the suspension of disbelief commonly found in the theater. Instead of the audience taking a moment to ruminate with the somber play, actors took the intermission and made caricatures of real people to try and make the audience laugh.

Better luck next time Valley Theatre Department.



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

O'CONNOR - Sophomore theater major Edward Malcom plays character Doc O'Conner in the final moments of the Laramie Project.

VALLEY'S STARS



Ani Ramazyan is two steps ahead of the game

The student body president is the queen of ASU's chess board, as she increases student engagement.

NATALIE METCALF
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

With every executive decision, Associated Student Union President Ani Ramazyan moves another pawn on her chess board to create student engagement for Valley College.

"When you play chess, you don't just play chess — you use it in your everyday life."

- Ani Ramazyan, ASU president



JEREMY RUIZ | VALLEY STAR

BOARD - Associated Student Union President Ani Ramazyan also devotes her time to the Armenian student Association. The club meets Fridays at 4 p.m on Zoom. Ramazyan major speaks three languages.

The checkered game is a big part of Ramazyan's life, as her father is a chess grandmaster. Lately, her busy schedule has forced the ASU officer to pause her favorite pastime. In the past, Ramazyan competed in chess tournaments. Because of ASU, the president brought her knowledge and skills to Valley's campus.

"When you play chess, you don't just play chess

-- you use it in your everyday life," said Ramazyan. "Chess really helps you in the decision-making process."

In a game of chess, players have to think multiple steps ahead to conquer their oppo-

nents. When playing chess and holding the top seat on the executive council, Ramazyan plans inside and outside the board.

In the fall semester, Ramazyan organized Chess Game Night, an event series

where Monarchs could learn and play chess. Previously, Chess Game Night was met with around 25 students. The first two have taken place this semester, with the second one bringing in less attendance than the

last. Next semester, Ramazyan has an idea to create an official chess tournament at Valley.

A part of her role as president is making executive decisions in bi-weekly executive council meetings. Every other Tuesday, Ramazyan discusses financial decisions previously talked about in the finance council meeting. Monarchs can attend executive council meetings to receive ASU's approval, guidance and support for events and workshops on campus.

Valley President Barry Gribbons and Ramazyan meet monthly. The ASU president is inspired by his work style.

"I think she has established a nice vision for what she wants to do during her presidency and has assembled a strong team around her that shares her vision and is developing nice plans to drive forward," said Gribbons. "I can see in the dynamics between her and the other ASU leaders that she really welcomes folks' ideas and empowers them. All of those I think are important leadership traits."

Ramazyan described the ASU's events as both informative and helpful. While student-led workshops are entertain-

ing for Monarchs, the board's focus is student networking. The student body president wants everyone on campus to feel supported and included.

Student success and engagement are a top priority for ASU's president. Events for the spring semester are not concrete ideas at the moment, but Ramazyan is inspired by this semester's student engagement. Her spring goal is to double the student interaction on campus from this fall.

In her future academic career, the first-year student wants to transfer to UCLA or UC Berkeley. Ramazyan is currently double majoring in political science and political affairs. With her combined experience in chess and politics, the president is always planning her every move.

"Always think before moving your pieces, so don't act before thinking about your actions," recalled Ramazyan. "A chess player's thinking can help to be a good leader."

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Recycling not viable for LACCD students

The nine colleges should be better informed on how and what can be recycled.

CASSANDRA NAVA
MANAGING EDITOR

With few outlets for recycling on campus, Monarchs are forced to dispose of recyclable materials into trash cans. Valley College offers little to no means for one of the easiest acts an individual can do to make an environmentally conscious decision.

Valley is not to blame for the problem; it is up to the district to fund an adequate amount of receptacles, as well as a reliable plan for collecting and sorting materials.

The LACCD took a step in the right direction earlier this year and signed a three-year, \$1.7 million contract with waste collection company Republic Services. The board's decision was approved unanimously for waste and recycling services on all nine campuses.

Although any advancement helps with recycling efforts, the decision seems to come last on the list of needs following hefty construction projects throughout the district's campuses.

Construction affects the environment negatively — with

pollution, energy consumption and potential waste in runoff waterways. The Valley Academic and Cultural Center has been under construction for six years. While certifying new buildings as "green," the environmental impact of their creation should be considered first and foremost.

A way for students to minimize their carbon footprint should be first on the list of district expenditures.

Recycling at Valley has been a years-long struggle; so much so that a student had to take matters into his own hands in 2018, as he formed a committee to investigate the college's actions and educate peers on the subject.

Valley produces significant food waste from the cafeteria and child development center, and it is currently not being sorted out, according to the district's initial request for a contract. Due to the college's various shrubbery, there is also a large amount of green waste. Both food scraps and leaves can easily be composted, a process that allows organic materials to be repurposed into fertilizer.

The worldwide issue of mass consumption and waste should not fall on the shoulders



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALAN LEVINE | FLICKR

of the individual. But in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, individuals should take the extra, easy steps to keep the planet livable for future generations. Keeping waste out of landfills directly

impacts how much methane is released, which is a harmful gas that forms when trash decays.

The LACCD's recent deal is not enough for the largest community college district in the country. It is a start. Next, col-

leges should educate students on the importance of sorting materials to ensure that they are doing their part to reduce unnecessary waste from littering our already overflowing landfills.

One Way or Another:

Democracy's holiday wish: Trump should not run

NATALIE METCALF
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

There is one political move democrats and republicans can agree on — Donald Trump's third campaign should be nonexistent.

Former President Trump is running once again. As much as this presidential campaign is not a surprise, it is concerning. With the former president in the running, democracy will be threatened. Democrats have been against Trump since 2016, but when prominent faces of the republican party chose not to help Trump in his campaign — citizens of the United States should be wary. The former president has been rejected by his daughter, Ivanka Trump and Robert Mercer, a major benefactor in Trump's 2016 election campaign.

Trump's record shows the American people he is unfit to earn the title of president for a second term. The former president has been under the impeachment process twice; once in December 2019, and the second time a week before his four-year term ended. Trump is the first president to be impeached twice, meaning he is clearly unfit to lead the United States.

In 2019, Trump was placed under impeachment after the house of representatives found unlawful solicitation from Ukraine in his re-election campaign.

The second impeachment was brought upon Trump on Jan.

13 2021. The house of representatives impeached the former president for inciting the attack on the capitol in Washington DC. Jan. 6 is a shocking and historical moment in United States history. The impeachable president is currently under investigation for inciting the insurrection at the US capitol building.

On Jan. 6, a mob of Trump

Former President Trump is a danger to democracy. His lies have led to deadly actions, but worse, attacks and bigger threats will be made if Trump does not stop his presidential campaign.

supporters stormed the capitol building, resulting in five deaths. Trump's campaigning in the 2024 election is dangerous to American democracy, as his supporters have shown their strengths can harm the country.

The only way Trump's supporters can be fed false information is through the former president himself. Even though the former president admitted losing in the 2020 election — a year late — Trump still spread false election results to his supporters; sparking a fire that led to Jan. 6.

Former President Trump is a danger to democracy. His lies have led to deadly actions, but worse, attacks and bigger threats will be made if Trump does not stop his presidential campaign.

After the political shift of 2016, in which republicans named Trump the face of their political party, democracy is at stake more than ever.

But progress was made in this year's midterm election, proving that voting is the best course of action in the flux of power among political leaders. In Los Angeles, voter turnout increased by 44 percent in the midterm election.

Trump needs to quit his campaign, as he is unfit to govern the American people. With his involvement in false election results, the Jan. 6 insurrection and impeachable offenses, the former president is harmful to democracy.

For this holiday season, American citizens should wish for Trump's resignation.

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.

One question, two opposing viewpoints

Christmas gift: Trump decides to run

SAYEH SAADAT
STAFF WRITER

Donald J. Trump, the 45th president of the United States, announced his candidacy on Nov. 16 for the 2024 presidential election. He is determined to win the presidency, and this time around, he will not let it slip through his fingers like the much contested 2020 elections.

Despite the less than desired result of the midterms, republicans took control of the house. This means they will have their day in court; something they were denied in 2020 after they objected to the election results. But their objections fell on deaf ears and created unprecedented chaos in the days following the November election. Little did Americans know, the country and the world was about to fall into such misery that made the election chaos look like a day in Disneyland. Joe Biden's presidency has been an abject failure. Trump vowed to fix it.

His best weapon against the current president in the 2024 rematch will be the great economy he created versus Biden's miserable economy. The moment Biden entered the oval office, inflation began to head north. Trump has a great track record when it comes to harnessing inflation. His brilliant record of creating jobs, and the lowest unemployment numbers in the history of America, especially among women, African Americans and Hispanics speaks volume of his ability to stimulate America's economy once again.

Trump's opponents should

not forget the fact that during his presidency, America became energy independent for the first time in seventy years. Not only that, but America became an oil exporting country thanks to his energy policies. Compare that to the current administration's hostility towards oil production. Americans can see why the fuel prices are so high, and as a result everything costs more, even though the country is still heavily dependent on Chinese manufacturing forces.

When it comes to foreign policy, there is absolutely no one in either party who could emulate Trump's unwavering firmness. Under his leadership, America was respected by friends and feared by enemies. It was Trump who brokered the Abraham Accord, a historical peace between Israel and Arab nations of UAE and Bahrain. It was Trump who destroyed ISIS, and took out two of America's fiercest enemies, Ghasem Soleymani and Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. There were no attacks from America's enemies on American soil, American embassies abroad or American citizens. America was safe. Americans were safe. Because we had a strong and brave president who was willing to defend us regardless.

Donald Trump has made the right decision to run again. He is the biggest star of the republican party next to Ronald Reagan. He loves America. He has millions of devoted followers who have never abandoned him. He has the right vision for America. He has a proven track record of four years in the office to show for. He is what America needs.



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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.

VALLEY VIEW | HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S NEW CAMPAIGN?

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY JOSEPH ACUNA



"Not happy at all. He is by definition a fascist. Trump says he fights for the common people, but his rhetoric is for the rich."

-JUAN SANCHEZ, ECONOMICS AND ENGINEERING DOUBLE MAJOR



"It's upsetting, it's silly and premature."

-RAEGAN GONZALEZ, MUSIC MAJOR



"I stopped focusing on politics around 2020 with COVID-19 and all, but like everything, [Donald Trump] will need moderation. When he was in power he wasn't a politician, and with the dollar going down in value, we may need a business man to strengthen it and foreign relations."

-JOSEPH PEREZ, COMPUTER SCIENCE MAJOR



"I feel mixed, as a President he wasn't that great, but as a business man he could be beneficial."

-OMAR TORRES, NURSING MAJOR

McMillan changed the tide for Valley water polo

After taking over the program in 2004, Monarch men's water polo has become a force to be reckoned with.

NICHOLAS OROZCO
SPORTS EDITOR

Taking on a program that had consistent losing seasons, it would be transformed into a powerhouse that is known for its players, with the key focus on developing the young men.

The head coach came to Valley College in 2004, prior to his interview he was completely unaware of the campus and program. Jim McMillan was then brought on as head coach with all his vast amounts of experience.

"I had never been to the valley in my whole life," said Jim McMillan. "Until I came here to interview. I didn't even know where it was. I grew up in Southern California, I always drove to go up north I take PCH and can stay by the water."

"One of the best coaches I've ever had. [He teaches] Being a better person, being kind to everybody and sportsmanship."

- Sophomore
Sargis Kaputikyan

Only discovering the sport as a teen, he would take on water polo as a passion, which would then lead him to great opportunities. He would go on to play at Santa Ana Community College and receive a scholarship to play at Pepperdine University. With his eligibility running out, it led him to play in a semi pro league in Australia.

"It was another league," said the decorated coach. "When my eligibility ran out,



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

AMPHIBIOUS- Water polo coach Jim McMillan teaches a swimming class at the Valley College Aquatics Center on Nov. 28. As a Monarch coach for 18 years, McMillan has won the Western State Conference Coach of the Year eight times and was State Coach of the Year (2018).

I wanted to keep competing. They contacted me and said, 'you want to come down?'"

With a short Visa of six months, he played for three months and spent the remainder of his time exploring the country.

Returning to the states he began his coaching tenure. McMillan was invited to coach the club water polo team at Loyola Marymount University. Becoming a coach at 25 years old, the switch from player to coach was difficult, as he still wanted to compete in the water himself.

"I needed a job and took it," said the All-American. "After one year I convinced the school to turn it into a division one program"

After four years, and turning it into a division one program, he would then coach at his alma mater, Pepperdine University.

He spent 12 years at Pepperdine where he started as assistant coach and eventually became co-head coach. In his tenure, he would help his team to a national championship in 1997 defeating USC. He would eventually take

his high playing and coaching experience to Valley as the head coach position became available. Understanding what it takes to win at high levels, he had to adapt to only having his players for two years.

Being hired in 2004, under McMillan the program would see changes as training began in June to workout throughout the entire summer into season, as well as practicing twice a day.

"He's always done a really good job with his team," said athletic director Dave Mallas.

"His boys are very disciplined and they play very hard."

Experiencing different high levels and knowing what it takes to develop players, he chooses not to focus on winning. The impact he has on players is his drive and he looks to make a mark on their lives.

"One of the best coaches I've ever had," said sophomore Sargis Kaputikyan. "[He teaches] Being a better person, being kind to everybody and sportsmanship."

From 2014-18 he would lead his team to five consec-

utive conference titles. He would become Southern State coach in 2014 and became state coach of the year in 2018.

With the great success he has had, winning is not top priority, it is growth as a person.

"I try to teach them life lessons through athletics. Responsibility, dedication, hard work, effort, teamwork, great commitment, all those buzzwords that are wonderful," said McMillan. "My job is to help them move on."

Victorious Lady Monarchs look ahead

High scoring performances from two Lady Monarchs set expectations high for their next game against Butte College.



PHOTOS BY ASH SHAFIA | VALLEY STAR

DRIBBLE- Sophomore Guard Leena Vo shuffles on defense against Knights Kaniya Lloyd. The Lady Monarchs won 68-51 on Tuesday..

REBOUND- Sophomore guard Jordyn Jiron goes for a rebound against Knights player of San Diego City College. The Monarchs defeated the Knights 68-51.



KEVIN KHACHATRYAN
STAFF WRITER

As women's basketball wrapped up their first three games of the season, Valley currently sits with an overall record of 2-1. The Lady Monarchs look ahead to their first tournament game against Butte (8-1) at the College of the Sequoias, where they will face the No.1 team ranked in the Golden Valley conference. Valley will look to keep their momentum going after their triumph win against San Diego City 68-51. Three Monarchs lead the group on the current roster. Jacqueline Privado, Jordyn Jiron and Princess Byrd are averaging more than 10 points a game. Privado is ranked 8th with 12.0 points per game, while both Jiron and Byrd are tied at 15th with 10.3 points per game.

Although the Monarchs offensive net efficiency is negative with a total of 17.3 turnovers per game and 17 personal fouls committed (-0.002), the ladies always come out with energy and a positive attitude for each game. Every opponent this season has been a tough adversary for the Monarchs.

"We have a very tough preseason schedule," said head coach Monica Hang. Starting the season 2-1, Valley is shooting 37.5 percent

from the field and relatively poorly from the 3-point line at 24.4. Defense is the main struggle for the Monarchs with 58.7 points allowed from opponents and ranking 51st out of 92 for points scored per game against all colleges is damaging to the offense.

"We don't shy away from the competition. Our record is never a true testament of who we are as we do not shy away from competition."

- Head coach Monica Hang

The Lady Monarchs will face Butte Community College (8-1) for their second road game on Thursday at 1 p.m., hunting for their second straight road win to stay undefeated (1-0). Butte is ranked No. 6 out of the 92 teams in the California Community College Athletic Association and are firing on all cylinders with an offensive efficiency of 0.928 and a net efficiency of 0.191. Butte is clearly one of the top ranked teams in

the CCCAA, as they're currently first place in the Golden Valley Conference with their only loss coming from a 59-58 nail biter.

"We don't shy away from the competition," said head coach Monica Hang, emphasizing that the Monarchs don't fold under the pressure. "Our record is never a true testament of who we are as we do not shy away from the competition."

The biggest struggle for Valley is their shooting from the 3-point line. Lady Monarchs best shooter Juliet Jaramilo shoots just 25 percent from the three and is ranked No. 10 out of 13 players in the Western State South Conference. While Butte's weakness is also the 3-point line with 27.6 percent shooting as a team and Sarah Tait shoots 32.7 from beyond the 3-point line.

Even though the opposing team possesses an 8-1 record, they also struggle to shoot the ball and their one stand out stat is the defense. Butte is ranked in the top 6 out of 92 overall with a 0.737 defensive efficiency, while Valley's defense struggles to stay in the top 35.

Following Valley's first win at home, the Women's basketball team shot 31.3 percent from downtown and 49.1 percent from the field, which was a season high for the team. The best performance of the season for the Lady Monarchs saw a 27 field goal make and five 3-pointers conquer through victory.



(L-R) Julie and Aaron Picot and their two daughters pick out a Nordmann Fir as their Christmas tree. The Nordmann fir is an evergreen native to Turkey and is popular for its strong branches and durable needles.



Workers carry a 14-foot-tall Noble fir to a customer's truck on Black Friday. Evergreens like this grow a foot a year. This Noble fir came from their Whitewater Ranch farm in Oregon, dedicated to growing the species.



Santa and Sons Christmas Tree Farm Manager Michael Miecik (far right) oversees the workers unpack and organize trees from Oregon at Valley College on Wednesday, November 23. The farm raises and sells three types of evergreens for the holidays: Noble Fir, Douglas Fir and Nordmann Fir. The tree lot opened the day after Thanksgiving, marking the 29th year since their first debut at Valley in 1993.

Evergreens come with a cost

By Griffin O'Rourke | Photo Editor

Tens of millions of deteriorating evergreens are sent to the landfill or recycler in the United States each year. While families display the festive flora for a few months before hauling them off to whatever their disposal method is, most are unaware of the journey a typical Christmas evergreen goes through.

The tree farm Santa and Sons, about 881 miles away from Los Angeles in Whitewater Ranch, Oregon, will raise a small sapling to a seven-foot tree over the course of seven years. The family-run operation will let some trees grow even taller, cultivating some as high as 14-feet, which takes 14 years of care and labor.

The dawn of spring brings preparations for the growing season which begins in May for the Santa and Sons Christmas tree farm. While various species of fir and spruce trees are used as Christmas plants, Santa and Sons cultivates and sells Douglas firs, Noble firs, Grands firs and Nordmann firs.

Seedlings are supplied from seed orchards and then planted into the wet, fertilized ground by farmers walking the fields. The ground must be moist to allow the liquid-based fertilizer to seep through the dirt to the roots. The tips of these short seedlings are called buds and are enticing to hungry elk. Bud caps have to be secured to each tree to ward off the animals.

In the two decades that Santa and Sons have set up shop at Valley College, droughts and wildfires have affected their trees back in Oregon. However, that has not stopped the family-owned farm from bringing their festive firs to the families of the San Fernando Valley.



A customer leaves with their 14-foot-tall Noble fir from the tree lot by the corner of Burbank Boulevard and Coldwater Canyon Avenue at Valley on Saturday, November 26. Noble firs are known for their classic shape and aromatic fragrance.



"I love the flexibility this job gives me. In Oregon, I'm part of the burlesque and drag scene, so being able to have flexibility in my work gives me the time to pursue my other interests," said business manager Mischa Brittin. "Last year we sold out all of our trees before Christmas and were able to go home early. We usually stay in Los Angeles after Christmas to sell the last trees."

Ava Rosate | Valley Star