

VALLEY LIFE: STUDENT ART SHOW
TEN MONARCHS EXHIBITED THEIR ART-
WORK IN MONARCH HALL.

the VALLEY STAR

The Independent Student Newspaper of Los Angeles Valley College



OPINION: OPEN THE CURTAIN
A PEEK BEHIND VACC LEGAL DRAMA TO
HIGHLIGHT THE NEW FACILITY'S AMENITIES.

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Writers strike in second week



SAVANNAH GREENLY | VALLEY STAR

STRIKE- Television writer Heather Bellson, most recently known for co-executive producing the Netflix drama Sandman, says that the current conditions "are an existential threat" to the industry at the Writers Guild of America's first strike in 15 years at the Sunset Bronson Studios.

MILAN RAFAELOV
STAFF WRITER

On May 2, roughly 11,500 writers put down their pens in protest and picketed across Hollywood. The strike, which is going into its 9th day, is the first in 15 years.

The Writers Guild of America conducted a public work stoppage to protest the studio conglomerates that employ writers for the entertainment industry. The Alliance of Motion Pictures and Television Producers, which consists of studios like Netflix, Disney, and Universal, reached a three-year agreement with the WGA in 2020. Both parties readied to negotiate new terms once the old contract expired on May 1.

After the WGA and AMPTP failed to reach an agreement during the weeks-long negotiation phase, the WGA acted quickly, immediately coordinating strikes throughout Hollywood.

The WGA unified on issues such as better wages for writers, residuals for streaming shows, better benefits, and regulating AI use which threatens to replace writers.

In 2007, the guild organized a strike that lasted 100 days, which was related to writer's compensation in the digital age. However, during that time, the issues of compensation only pertained to DVD sales and residuals as media streaming was still in its early stages. The WGA argued that writers deserved a larger portion of the revenue generated from digital distribution but AMPTP rebutted, stating that the existing model of compensation was fair.

Adam Conover, Hollywood comedian and creator of the series "Adam Ruins Everything," is a WGA board member and has been in the negotiation room fighting on behalf of his fellow union members.

"For 50 years, late-night writers have been paid 13 weeks at a time," said Conover. "They want to pay us by the day instead. If they do that, this ceases to be a career — it becomes like driving for Uber."

The WGA worries that the lack of laws surrounding AI could lead to the AMPTP outsourcing scripts to an artificially intelligent language model. The producer's union responds to some claims about AI but sidesteps other concerns presented by the writers.

"It's important to note that the current WGA Agreement already defines a "writer" to exclude any "corporate or impersonal purveyor" of literary material, meaning that only a "person" can be considered a writer and enjoy the terms and conditions of the Basic Agreement. For example, AI-generated material would not be eligible for writing credit," says the AMPTP.

Conover also explained that writers do not believe AI can replace them. Though a language model can output text, it requires skill to communicate with specific audiences.

"The actual concern is that the companies are going to frame that text generation system in a way where it's used as a loophole to undermine parts of our contract," he said.

Conover fears that companies will convert writers to editors — of AI-generated words.



SAVANNAH GREENLY | VALLEY STAR

PROTEST- Comedian and writer Adam Conover, most known for the television series Adam Ruins Everything, joins television writer Brenden Gallagher on the picket line.

According to Deadline, the AMPTP offered double the annual pay raises but said the guild's other requests would lead to a hiring quota incompatible with the industry's creative nature. They rejected most of the WGA's proposals and refused to counter more, leading to increased protester outrage.

The entertainment business has seen a significant increase in earnings since streaming services revolutionized the industry.

In the early 2000s, Disney, Fox, Paramount, NBC, Universal and Time Warner's collective profits were approximately \$5 billion. After Netflix and other streaming services joined the market, the networks reported \$30 billion in profits in 2019, while the earnings of writers were reported to be 4 percent or 24 percent less (when adjusted to inflation) than what they were being paid a decade ago.

The science fiction screenwriter Dante W Harper stopped his protesting to join Conover in the interview. "What's so frustrating to me is that they could solve this problem with such a minuscule amount of money," said Dante W. Harper. "This really isn't about money for them, this is a moral stance for them. They hate the idea of organized labor and they like the idea of turning everything into a gig economy. That is what's going on here."

Campus crime

GRIFFIN O'ROURKE
PHOTO EDITOR

Jennifer Read arrived at Campus Center early in the morning on Saturday, April 29, to find the offices on the second floor broken into and an intruder on the outdoor patio.

"I came out front in the main hallway and I heard a door shut," Read said. "Then I walked back around, and when I got into the hallway, I glanced out to the patio and I saw a person walking. So I opened the door and yelled 'Hey!' and they took off."

At 8:30 a.m. on April 29, Read, chairperson of the theater department, arrived at Campus Center before any coworkers or student performers to help set up equipment for Valley College's upcoming performance, "Middletown." But she discovered busted-open doors and a mysterious intruder on the building's second floor.

Read first called the campus sheriffs after noticing the broken doors, but called them again after the suspect took off.

"Deputies arrived there within a minute or two of the call, but the suspect was already gone," said Deputy Anthony Coleman of the campus sheriff's department. "Officers and national service officers searched the campus but couldn't find him."

The intruder, as described by Read, is a 5-foot-7 inch tall Latino male who donned a black coat, dark jeans, black cap and a large backpack. He wielded a pair of hammers to break off the doorknobs of the office doors. One hammer was left shattered on the floor alongside an intact one. A few items were reported missing from the office spaces but most of what he grabbed was left behind.

"He broke into the hallway door and the office suite which has two entry doors that he annihilated a doorknob to get in," Read said. "And then he broke into four offices. [He was] really being angry at one where he just hammered the doorknob completely off."

Of the four offices broken into, one had a heavy scent of body odor suggesting the intruder might have been staying there for some time, according to sheriffs.

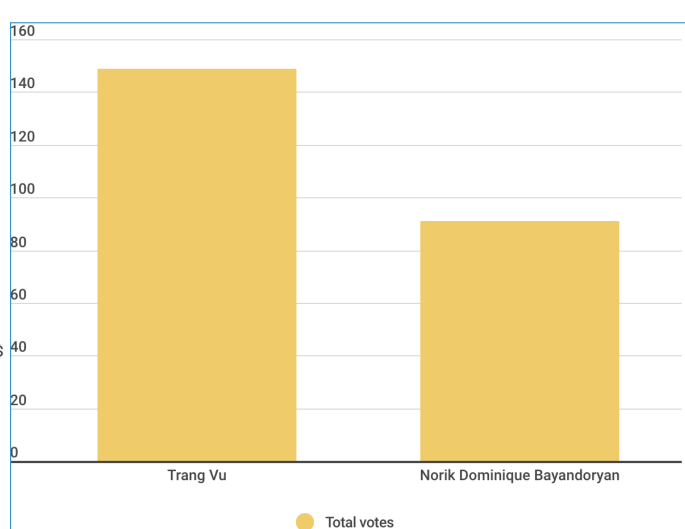
Campus Center has been riddled with issues in the past, but burglaries and other criminal acts have been a big part of its history, including another break-in by a vandal in December 2021. Another burglary occurred in February 2022 when a burglar stole copper piping from the Campus Center's Media Arts department.

"Late January, February, somebody came in and ripped off all the clocks in the hallways upstairs and downstairs. Frequently, we've come upstairs into the office suite and found homeless [people] sleeping," the chairperson said.

Concerns about campus safety have been growing alongside reports of criminal activity. At the beginning of this semester, there was graffiti vandalism in the campus' parking structure followed by two suspects who flashed gang signs and a gun at a student.

"We've got to do something on campus because, especially with this building, our buildings just get bigger, it's going to be more difficult to secure them and keep our students safe — keep our faculty and staff safe," Read said.

ASU spring election results



ISAAC DEKTOR | VALLEY STAR

NEW VP- Trang Vu was elected Vice President in the only contested race this election.

New ASU board elected

NATALIE METCALF
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

Trang Vu wins Associated Student Union Vice President in the recent student election.

Sixty-nine percent of Monarchs voted for Vu and 38 percent voted for Norik Dominique Bayandoryan. A total of 240 Monarchs, or 0.8 percent of Valley College's student body, voted for student union vice president, the only contested race in the election. Valley College's enrollment in the spring semester is 29,802 students.

Vu is a first-year chemistry major who is currently the treasurer for the Psychology club and the Women's Empowerment

club. The new vice president is also the founder and president of the Asian club on campus. Along with those leadership roles, the chemistry major manages the Tau Alpha Epsilon Honors Club's social media. In an interview with the Star, Vu shared that her goals are to organize the concerns and needs of Monarchs. She aims to create events organized around student interests.

Christopher Robles-Garay, who ran unopposed for ASU president, won with 89 percent of students in his favor and 11 percent against. The new president is currently on the student union board as commissioner of health and wellness. He is also the vice president of the Economics for Soccer club on campus. The kinesiology major's goal is to connect

ASU and the Athletics Department in future student events.

All commissioners ran unopposed and won in their respective roles, with an overwhelming majority of votes in their favor.

The incoming student executive board will begin their positions on July 1 and will serve in their respective positions throughout the academic year of 2023-24.

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“Middletown” relocates production to Monarch Hall

A relocation of set and stage will not stop the theatre department from delivering their performance.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SAMANTHA JAFFARY

MAKE UP- The cast of “Middletown,” do their make-up in Campus Center for a dress rehearsal Tuesday night, before opening night on May 11 at 8 p.m. The production had to move its set to Monarch Hall amid rainy weather speculations for the weekend.

ASHER MILES
STAFF WRITER

With no stage to present their production, and weather concerns looming, the theater department has resourcefully relocated their production of “Middletown” from the courtyard of the Campus Center to the Monarch Hall.

The second yearly production staged in the Monarch Hall is a contemporary piece from the Massachusetts playwright Will Eno. Matthew Mcray will be leading the 12 person ensemble of Valley College students in the piece showcasing the lives of the “Middletown” citizens as they converge in bizarre and curious ways, culminating in a journey that takes them far from their local libraries and into outer space and points in between.

“To me the show is very existential in the sense of dealing with loneliness,” said first year theater major Sami Keil, who is playing Mary Swanson, the newest arrival to the commu-

nity. “The playwright said that the play is about the little ways that we show up for people that can make a huge difference.”

The production planned to host the show in the open air courtyard of the second floor of the Campus Center, but were forced to relocate due to weather conditions. Although the cast and crew have been working to restage the show, they are looking forward to having the show go on.

“I’m sad that we have to move the set, but I’m happy the actors will still be able to perform the show,” said stage manager Marcus Nash. “I don’t believe it will have a huge effect on the show.”

“Middletown” is consciously modeled off one of the first “classics” in the American theatrical repertoire—Thornton Wilder’s play “Our Town.”

Having source material from two critical American pieces of literature, Eno’s “Middletown” distinguishes itself from its inspirations. The first source material is “Our Town” by Thornton

Wilder which themes dramatized the life cycle of everyday Americans. Robert and Helen Lynd’s “Middletown” studies were Eno’s second source of inspiration. The American sociologist couple came into prominence after releasing their studies on measuring the impact of the American Industrial Revolution in Muncie, Indiana from 1890 to 1924.

The spring play will be performed from May 11 to May 13 starting at 8 p.m. Tickets for “Middletown” can be purchased online on Valley’s website and at the box office check-in during performance days, however seating is limited.

This in-person event is open to all current and prospective students, faculty, staff and the general public. For more information, please contact Jennifer Read at readjl@lavc.edu.

THE FACTS

“Middletown” will run from May 11 - 13 at 8 p.m.

Art’s festival painted light on Monarch’s creativity

The annual Fine Arts Festival took place on Monday, which was hosted by the student union.

JASMINE ALEJANDRE
STAFF WRITER

Monarchs came together on May 8 to celebrate each other’s art made during a stressful semester at Valley College’s annual Fine Arts Festival, hosted in Monarch Hall.

The ASU Fine Arts Commissioner, Mia Sanchez, planned this event and took inspiration from past Art Festivals. Last year, Valley held the festival online due to Covid-19 restrictions.

“Students who participated got the chance to celebrate art in a space where they feel comfortable to create work in different mediums,” said Sanchez. “Whether that be visually or through film, they could express themselves however they want creatively.”

Her goal was to celebrate the students’ creativity so there was no prize awarded to a certain student. Students participated to



ELLIE BAYATI | VALLEY STAR

PAINTING- Student Eliana Levi presents her artwork to Associated Student Union Commissioner of Fine Arts Mia Sanchez at the Fine Arts Festival in Monarch Hall.

share their work and connect with others who like art as well. Any student was able to par-

ticipate, it was limited to those in the art department and art majors. Any work made through-

out the semester was welcomed as long as it was appropriate. There were paintings made

from a variety of different things such as acrylic, to embroidery. One of the participants, Harper Fortsmith, made a sculpture of a spider-like figure, out of tree branches and other supplies. Sanchez displayed some of her art as well, which had pieces of glass she bought off Amazon for a few dollars.

In total 10 students submitted work. The students who submitted art pieces were Diana Vargas, Ani Batmazyan, Mia Sanchez, Harper Fortsmith, Melissa Besecker, Eliana Levi, Erick Portillo, Sarai Ortiz, Bella Mendias, and Lilia Hawtyunyan.

“I spent at least two hours on each one,” said Eliana Levin one of the artists. “I feel like it’s really refreshing because I finally have a place to put my work and my name out there.”

Another one of the participants, ASU Commissioner of Ethnic and Cultural Affairs Erick Portillo, displayed his art made during the Bob Ross Painting Day event held by the student board last year in September.

“Mine turned out more gloomy than the tutorial’s and I added different things as I went,” said Portillo. “My art is very elusive and has no boundaries or borders, everything is mixed together.”

At the event not only were there paintings and sculptures, but there also was a showing of student films made throughout the semester. There were four students who submitted independent films; they were Jonathan Clark, Tristin Mun, Luciana Serrano, and Marc Palomo.

The films were not about anything specific, just what the students wanted to create and felt passionate about. One of the films was made about mimes.

The event had a free photo booth and props for students to capture memories of the day. Lunch was provided by the cafeteria. Valley’s radio KVCM was broadcasting live from the event.

Resource fair brought foster youth awarness to Valley

Speaker and author David Ambroz discussed growing up in the foster system during “Spring Connect.”

KENYA HARRIS
STAFF WRITER

Students and staff joined together on the warm spring day of May 3 for a resource fair advocating for the foster youth system and LGBTQIA services.

Since the event took place during National Foster Care Month, the event was titled “A Place Called Home: Spring Connect” and contained a book signing and speech given by author and national poverty and child welfare advocate David Ambrose.

“Every foster kid is a miracle and will change the world,” said Ambroz last Wednesday at the May 3rd, Spring Resource Fair.

Ambrose gave a summary of his journey from a homeless youth living in New York City, to his experiences in and out of the foster care system. He spoke to the inherent value of all people, including those who have been in the foster and unhoused communities.

Ambroz spoke about the difficulties facing the large number of LGBTQIA+ people in foster care.

“All of us have the ability

to open our house and homes to these youth,” said the author.

The speaker’s presentation was especially aimed at the homeless and foster youth. In his presentation he made sure to say that his foster care experience made him the capable person he is today. Despite his difficult journey, Ambroz later became a graduate of Vassar College and UCLA.

“It’s the society and the systems that are the problem.”

- David Ambroz, author of “A Place Called Home”

Another point of pride for Ambroz was the success of his brother Alex Ambroz and sister Jessica Ambroz, who also went on to greater success in their careers and enjoy a good quality of life. Alex served in the military and Jessica works as a social worker.

Ambroz’s advocacy for fos-

ter students didn’t stop when he received his Juris Doctor from UCLA. He also served as the president of the city planning commission for Los Angeles and reminded the decision makers that those with his background have just as much right to a good life as anyone else.

“It’s the society and the systems that are the problem,” said Ambroz.

The solution as put by Ambroz was for more individuals to make foster youth and homeless youth their business.

The fair and speaker were the result of the Rainbow Pride Center, Guardian Scholars, and the Basic Needs Resource Center joining forces. Present at the fair was Alex Ojeda from the Guardian Scholars Program, who assists former foster youths with the difficult expenses that come with college. The San Fernando Valley LGBTQ+ Center, North Los Angeles County Regional Center, and LA Family Housing advised students on how to get support for unhoused families, individuals and youths.



SAVANNAH GREENLY | VALLEY STAR

FOSTER- Keynote speaker and author David Ambrose, speaks about the trauma of the foster care system during the event “A Place Called Home: Spring Connect” at Valley College.

Close the curtain on VACC drama

Pinner's prolonged soliloquy is hogging the stage from theater students.

STAFF EDITORIAL

The courtroom drama surrounding the building of the Valley and Academic Cultural Center predates the completion of the stage and in many ways, the spotlight has been stolen from the people this building is designed to serve.

The sounds of construction have permeated the Valley College campus for years now. The premiere arts facility stacked with state-of-the-art amenities slowly comes to fruition on campus. The over 400-seat theater, motion capture studio and other top-notch features of the building have been overshadowed by delay after delay — and a racketeering lawsuit.

The squabbles are unimportant to students. Whether or not the district will shell out money to construction companies is irrelevant to media arts students who scramble to find a home. Last year, media arts students performed their play in the Campus Center because the Horseshoe Theatre theater was demolished. The next slated play, "Middletown," will take place in the '70s era building as well. Rather than dwell on squabbles between the district and Pinner Construction, let's take a look at how this building is going to revamp Valley's campus and change the game for so many students.

The media art's building



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

BLUEPRINT- Two construction workers pour over construction plans in the Valley Academic and Cultural Center.

features a sophisticated main stage theater, complete with a state-of-the-art sound system, hydraulic stage lift and efficient air conditioning. This will be a massive step up from the theater department's current soapbox in Campus Center; the main stage theater could be Valley's own Broadway. Four more theaters will also be available to thespian students: a 225-seat screen-

ing room, a 150-seat horseshoe theater, an 80-seat lab theater and an outdoor amphitheater.

A radio station, newsroom, a motion-capture studio and a scene shop will be open to students and faculty of the Media Arts department. Several other rooms will feature smart classrooms, studio rooms, rehearsal rooms and audiovisual labs. These labs and classrooms

will be outfitted with advanced equipment that students can use to study and experiment. Smart classrooms house technology like smart projectors and whiteboards that improve student engagement with the teaching material. Audiovisual labs have a variety of uses and are utilized across many different fields for different purposes. In Media Arts, the labs are used to help

sync sound and video as well as simulate, encode and transmit it. With these new state-of-the-art facilities and Valley's proximity to Hollywood, the nucleus of television and film production worldwide, Media Arts students will have the opportunity to not only gain the necessary skill sets to find work in the industry but also build the relationships that will lead to jobs.

One Way or Another:

One question, two opposing viewpoints

Campus not secure for housing

KEVIN KHACHATRYAN
STAFF WRITER

While the LACCD has conversations about on-campus housing for students, Valley College should consider its current lack of safety protocols and policing. On-campus housing would bring more students on campus at all hours of the day and, as a result, more crime could occur on campus.

More than seven burglaries and arrests were committed on campus with a headcount of 1,000 in-person students. If students were provided shelter on campus, there would be even more opportunities for crime. Students living on campus could get their items looted. Their phones, laptops, wallet and keys could be at risk, because burglary and robbery has been the biggest crime for Valley College.

Even though Valley can provide resources on campus for homeless students that will support them, the district would be wrong to put students in that danger. The fact that there are not any police officers present on campus whenever a suspect burglarizes into buildings, one starts to question if they are safe in the building they are in. This proves the point that housing is not a real likelihood that Valley should go into.

According to crime statistics for Valley, nearly every year since 2018 multiple crimes have transpired. Seven burglaries occurred in 2020 including two motor vehicle thefts and two aggravated assaults. The data also shows an increase in burglary and vehicle theft for the past three years. "Too many of our students are housing insecure and have had their studies heavily impacted by the lack of a safe, quiet place to sleep and study," said Gabriel Buelna, LACCD Board of Trustees president, in an April news release.

Valley and the district must find a way to create a safe space for students who are on campus, before creating homes. In 2019, there were more than three incidents related to crime and safety.

The priority of the district should not be to invest in housing, but rather address the current issues Valley is facing. In order for students — whether they live on campus or not — to feel safe, crimes should be addressed.

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Let Monarchs call Valley College their home

MILAN RAFAELOV
STAFF WRITER

On-campus student housing may be the solution that kills two birds with one stone, though critics of the proposed housing plans may argue that because funds are tight and crime is high, housing cannot be our first priority.

A community college surveyed 40,000 California students in 2019, and 60 percent were found to be housing insecure while 19 percent experienced homelessness. Thirty five percent experienced food insecurity which is a 10 percent increase from pre-pandemic levels. Student homelessness has since increased by 9,000 students.

Students facing housing and nutritional insecurities are less likely to succeed in their educational goals, completing or passing courses and transferring to a university.

It would be fair to ask what this has to do with funding and high crime, but as of 2018, it has got everything to do with it.

In 2018, the Community College Chancellors' Office implemented a new formula for funding community colleges called the Student-Centered Funding Formula. This formula allocates funds based on student outcomes like course completion, degree attainment and univer-

sity transfers. The formula also includes additional funding for colleges that serve low-income and underrepresented students. Due to the economic recession, housing and food insecurity trends may be expected to worsen in the coming years and if not relieved, could be Valley's reason for losing funding in the future.

Studies have found that providing housing assistance to low-income communities can help reduce crime.

It is worth noting that this is a pivot from the old formula, which only provided funds based on the number of students enrolled in for-credit courses, and some special funding for specific and technical programs. This pivot incentivizes schools to invest in their student's success rather than in the institution's attainment of enrollments. Now that the school receives money on the outcome of student success, campus housing would not just assist

those who need it — it would be an investment in Valley's student success and ability to secure more funds in the future.

Studies have found that providing housing assistance to low-income communities can help reduce crime and improve safety in neighborhoods. Evidence suggests that when people have access to safe and affordable housing, they're more likely to feel secure and stable in their lives, which in turn reduces stress and anxiety — that can reduce criminal behavior.

Having affordable housing at Valley could also increase the sense of community and deter others from committing acts of crime. More bodies on campus also mean more eyes. And successful students means more funding.

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.



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VALLEY VIEW | How could on campus housing benefit students?

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY NICHOLAS OROZCO



"It wouldn't benefit me as much. I live kinda far away. It's a community college, there's not many events on campus. So it's better for me to just go home."

-TRANG VU, CHEMISTRY MAJOR



"I wouldn't benefit because I live really close. I feel like that's the big point of community [college], that it's close to you. A lot of people would benefit though, because of their commutes."

-EMILY SANDOVAL, MATH MAJOR



"Personally I wouldn't benefit. I live close by. I can totally see how other people would because there are a lot of international or low-income students. There are already programs that help out homeless [students] and single moms, so a housing program would help a lot."

-NICKOLAS ROQUE, PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR



"I wouldn't benefit from it. I don't think it's important for Valley, because there are many other options for schooling. On the rare occasion that someone is from far away, then housing would be helpful for them."

-LEE GERONGA, KINESIOLOGY MAJOR



Savannah Greenly | Valley Star

People spend a sunny day sitting outside at Monarch Square at Valley College amidst a springtime bloom of tree mallows while having conversations. Valley is designated as an urban forest for its multitude of trees.

Valley College's Blossoming Bouquet



Kai Nielsen-Snell | Valley Star



Violett de Jean | Valley Star

ABOVE: Honey bee on top of a jerusalem sage flower outside of the Administration and Career building on Valley campus.

ABOVE RIGHT: Bright orange coral aloe plant across the student union plaza.

FAR RIGHT: Sea lavender with its oval shape leaf as it holds its tiny white flower outside Valley's library.

RIGHT: Tree mallow blossomed outside next to the Valley's library.



Chris Dreadson | Valley Star



Chris Dreadson | Valley Star



Beatriz Garay | Valley Star

Visitors walk amid the super bloom of poppies that exploded following the record heavy rains resulting in a carpet of myriad colors covering the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve in Lancaster, California.