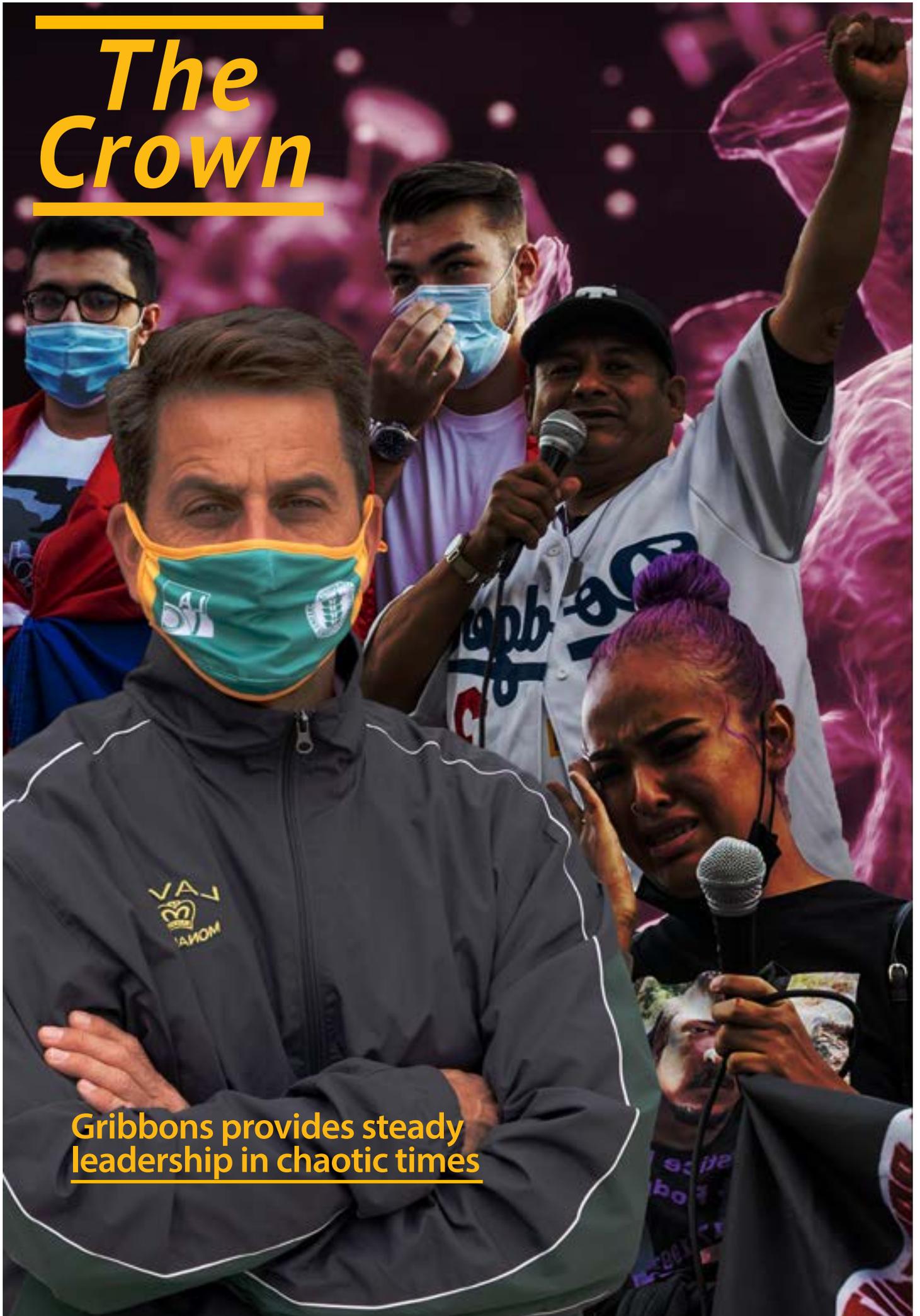
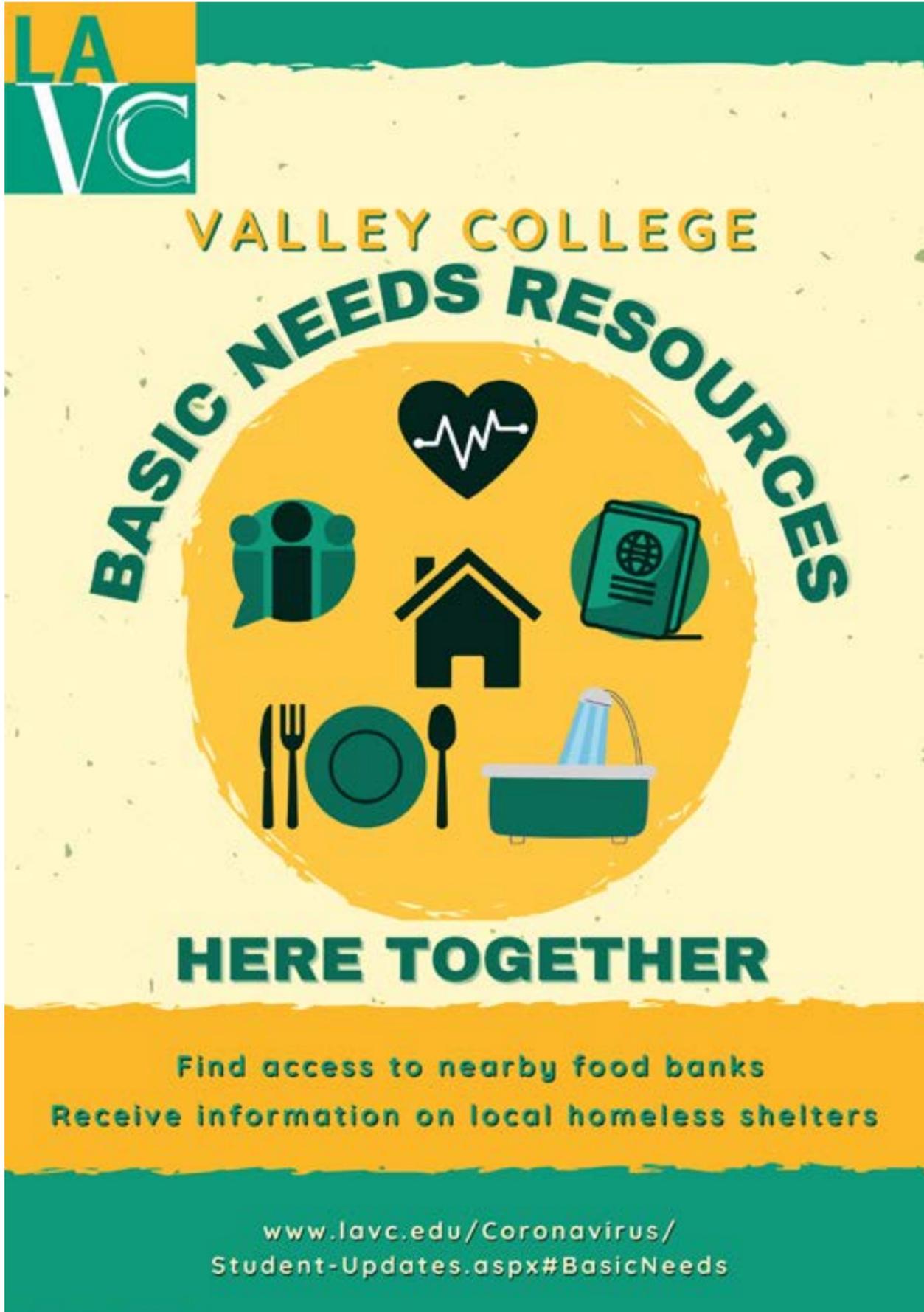


# *The Crown*



Gribbons provides steady leadership in chaotic times



**LA VC**

**VALLEY COLLEGE**

**BASIC NEEDS RESOURCES**

**HERE TOGETHER**

Find access to nearby food banks  
Receive information on local homeless shelters

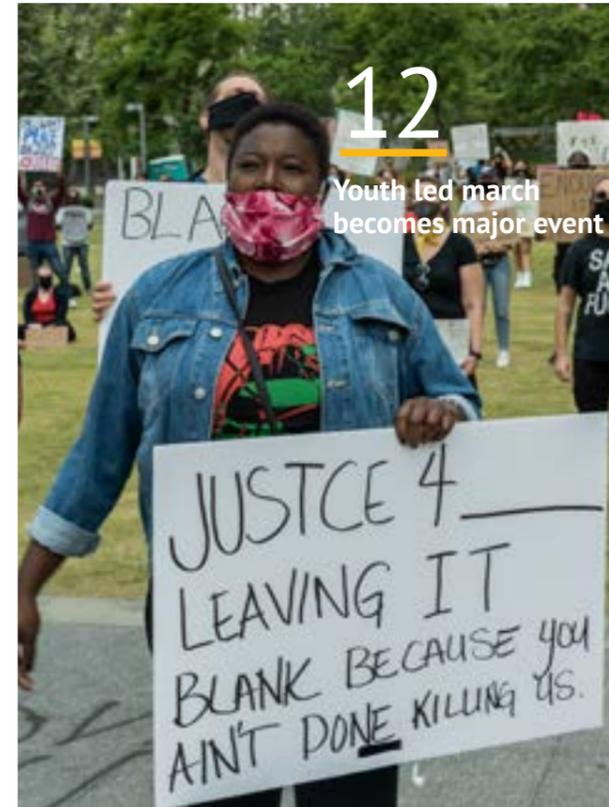
[www.lavc.edu/Coronavirus/Student-Updates.aspx#BasicNeeds](http://www.lavc.edu/Coronavirus/Student-Updates.aspx#BasicNeeds)

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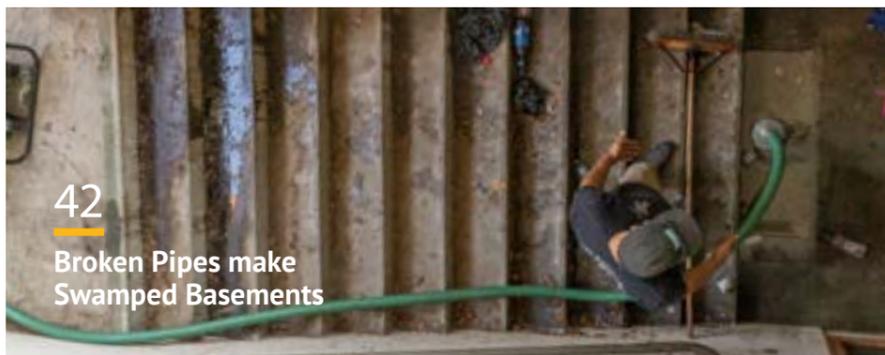


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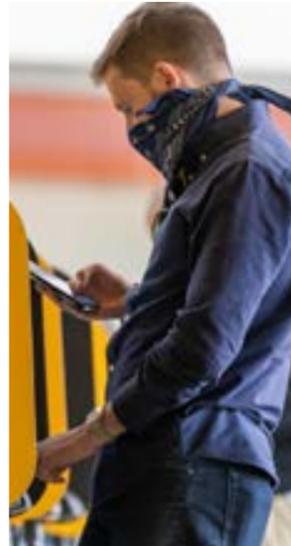
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# Message from the Editor-in-Chief



## Summer of conflict

With the first new magazine at Valley in over a decade, there was a lot of pressure to get it right. Many false starts and near misses became discouraging over the nearly two-year odyssey to get it done, but here it is -- the final product, painstakingly assembled, warts and all.

The last year has been, for many, a fundamental change in reality. What was once reliable and steadfast quickly became tenuous and frightening. Plans were canceled, remade and canceled again. The usual markers of daily living, graduations, weddings, the start of a new career, became something other than usual. In media, a new deal with government was needed (and is still being worked out) in which the truth and trustworthiness was lost. Journalism has had to look at life through eyes of a more varied group of story tellers and add those groups, often unheard, to the news for a more complete reality. It is slow going, but it goes.

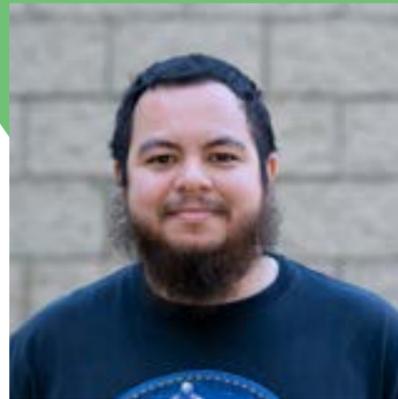
The theme is chaos, the kind that makes its survivors stronger. With the contentious election, a renewed faith in the power of the voting booth, and the ongoing struggle of the disempowered against failed leadership, the onslaught of the coronavirus added a frame to the chaos; before the pandemic and after. Here are a few of the stories that document that chaos, but more than that, these stories are proof that journalism is not dead and an honest telling of the stories that we live can help the best of our natures can shine through.

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## A SUMMER OF UNREST SERIES

# BREONNA TAYLOR VERDICT ADDS HEAT TO PROTEST

Photos by Solomon Smith

**A surge in frustration and anger added momentum to a long running protest of police violence and poor accountability in Los Angeles, leading to the ousting district attorney, Jackie Lacey.**

**Contributor  
Solomon Smith**

Black Lives Matter's weekly protest in Downtown Los Angeles swelled to hundreds Wednesday by an influx of outraged protesters responding to the charges in the Breonna Taylor decision.

The organization has been protesting District Attorney Jackie Lacey every Wednesday at 3 p.m. since 2018 in front of the Los Angeles Hall of Justice, but the Taylor announcement motivated a larger turnout. Taylor, a 26-year old emergency medical technician, was killed in March during a no-knock warrant raid of her home in Louisville, Kentucky. One officer was shot in the leg by Taylor's boyfriend who thought the apartment was being invaded.

The shooting was deemed justified by the Louisville Metro Police Department, according to the Washington Post. Police fired 20 rounds, hitting Taylor six times. Only officer Brett Hankinson was charged with three counts of wanton endangerment and fired. The charges were for rounds that went into the homes of Taylor's neighbors, not Taylor's death.

"According to Kentucky law, the use of force by [Sgt. Jonathan] Mattingly and [Detective Myles] Cosgrove was justified to protect themselves," said Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron. "This justification bars us from pursuing criminal charges in Ms. Breonna Taylor's death."

Taylor's name, along with other

victims across the country, has been on the lips of Black Lives Matter protesters before the verdict. Sheila Hines-Brim is the aunt of Waikesha Wilson, whose alleged suicide in the LAPD jail she and others disputed. "I feel like we did not do enough for Breonna," said Hines-Brim. "This is personal to me."

Both Taylor and Wilson's deaths were among a litany of others commemorated on a scroll stretching across North Spring Street. It displayed handwritten names of those killed by police officers who remain uncharged by Lacey's office.

Derrick Nixon's brother, Gemell Moore, was drugged by Ed Buck and died in his home, according to the Guardian. Buck was later arrested for drugging and raping several young gay men. Lacey's initial refusal to charge the wealthy Democratic donor is listed as one of her "seven deadly sins" on the Black Lives Matter website.

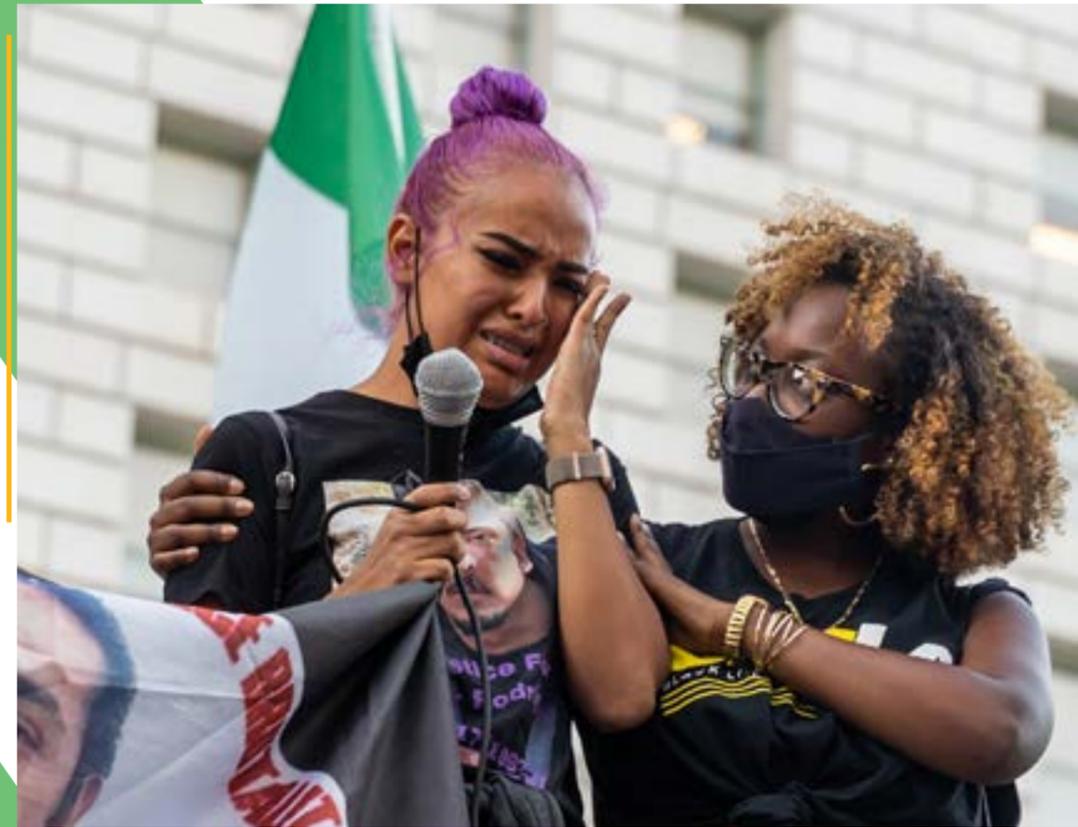
"The sheriffs refused to give him [Buck] a thorough investigation or even put him in handcuffs," said Nixon. "Jackie Lacey has played a role in upholding white supremacy."

Helen Jones, mother of John Horton who was shot on March 30, 2009, by sheriffs, and others pointed out the lack of answers as evidence that police have "a secret platform that fights for them." For many of these families, the wait has been unbearable.

"I [have] been trying to get justice for 11 years now," said Jones, "and



LEFT- A young protester raises her fist in the black power move while chanting. RIGHT- Rosa Moreno, mother, and Evelia Granados, sister of Cesar Rodriguez, stood with other families at the celebration of the ousting former Los Angeles County Attorney General Jackie Lacey. Rodriguez's family filed a wrongful death suit against the Long Beach Police in 2017. BELOW- Jesus Romero Garcia, father of Jesse J. Romero, raises a poster of his son.



Cal State L.A. professor and co-founder of Black Lives Matter, Los Angeles Chapter, Melina Abdullah, meditates in a moment of respect for those who died from police violence at the Black Lives Matter rally in celebration of former District Attorney Jackie Lacey's loss to George Gascon at the Los Angeles City hall of Justice, Nov. 4, 2020.

we got to shut it down."

Frustration has not dampened the resolve of those who spoke on stage or the protesters. Their anger brings many of them to the steps of the Los Angeles Halls of Justice every week. Cammy Hicks had been attending the Lacey protest almost every week. She says that she focuses on adding her voice so that the victims, and their families, are heard.

"The mainstream media

don't listen to the families we talk about," said Hicks, "but we do, we have to."

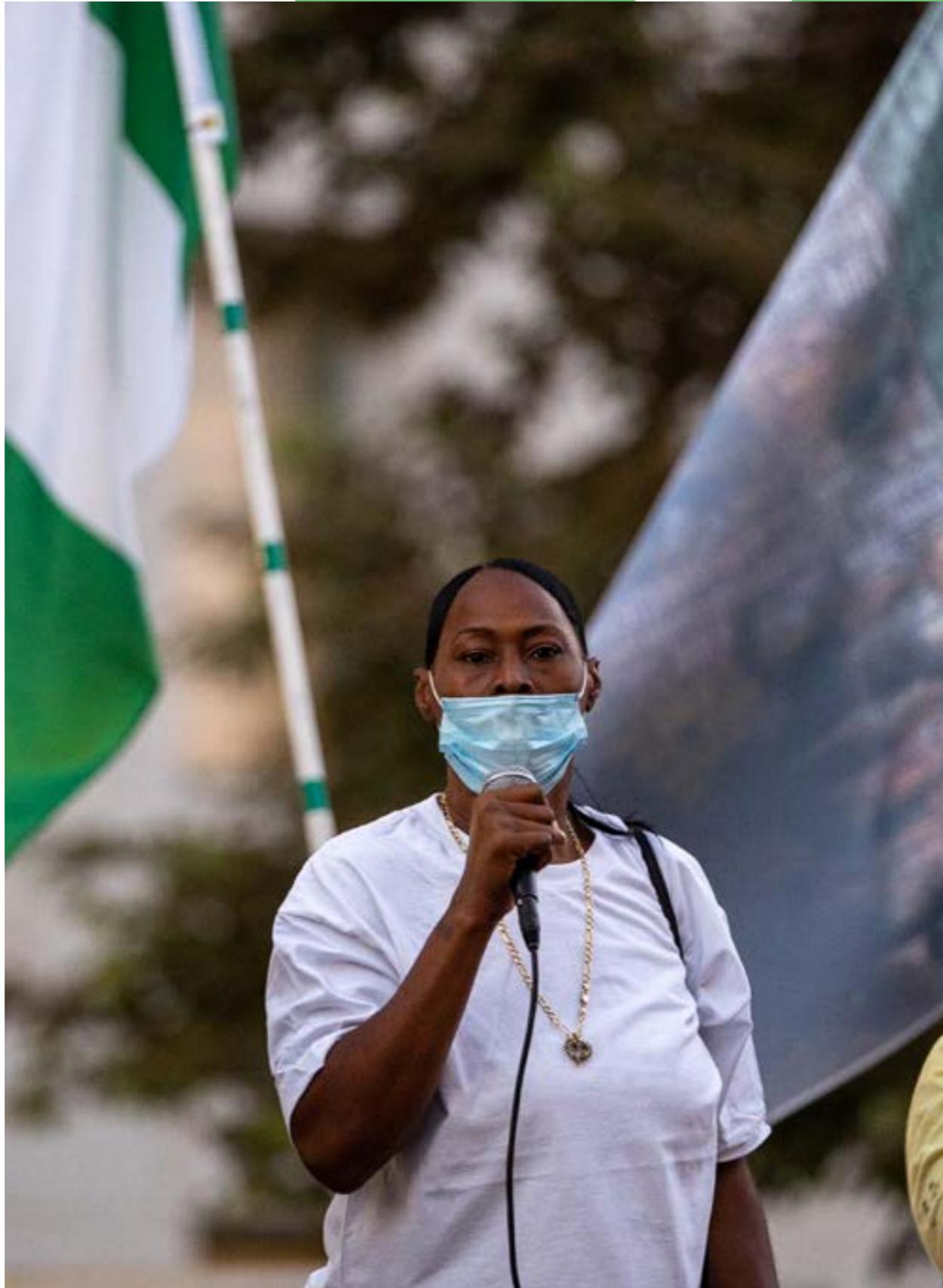
### Protests lead to Change

In the aftermath of the three-year campaign against Lacey, some BLM members saw a light at the end of the tunnel. In the 2020 election, Lacey lost her seat to George Gascón who had a more liberal and, progressive platform.

Within days of his swear-

ing in ceremony on Dec. 7, he virtually abolished cash bail for all but the most violent offenses. At his swearing in ceremony he made it clear that he was looking to address many of the complaints lobbied against police and the District attorney's office.

"Those in the profession of holding people accountable cannot themselves escape accountability," said



Wakiesha Taylor's mother, Lisa Hines, stands in front of the Los Angeles Hall of Justice to demand justice for her daughter and Breonna Taylor from the newly elected Los Angeles District Attorney George Gascon.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Guillen watches traffic at the corner of Broadway and Temple Street. Officers were stationed at key intersections in anticipation of disruption at the peaceful "Jackie Lacey Must Go" rally,



Black Lives Matter supporters take photos as the families of police violence speak at a rally celebrating Jackie Lacey's loss to George Gascon at the Los Angeles Hall of Justice.

## Athletic Director ends his season



Contributor  
Gene Wickham

Football coach and Valley College Athletic Director Jim Fenwick is retiring after 46 years of coaching football at various colleges and universities around the country.

He has expressed a diverse love of sports which he exhibits through his involvement with tennis.

"I was always an instructor first, meaning that I taught classes and coached football until I became the athletic director," he said. "Even then and now, I really enjoy teaching tennis classes for the college, as I have grown up playing the game and enjoy teaching others to play the lifetime sport."

Originally a native of Idaho, Fenwick grew up in the San Fernando Valley where he attended Grover Cleveland High School in Reseda. Later, he went on to Pierce College in Woodland Hills.

After playing football in high school, Fenwick played one year at Pierce (1970-71) and four years at Wichita State University (1971-1974) where he was team captain. He later earned a Master's of Arts in education at Cal Lutheran University in 1976.

Photos by Ava Rosate

His coaching career began at Pierce College in 1974 and continued at Valley and CSUN through 1988. In 1988, he joined the University of Miami, Ohio and the University of the Pacific as special teams coach/running backs. In 1991, he returned to Valley for six years where he was voted coach of the year in 1994. His five-year record at Valley was 50-15.

In 1997, Fenwick returned to CSUN during turbulent times for athletics at the university. In 2001, CSUN eliminated their football program and other sports for budgetary reasons. Fenwick tried to intercede and reflected on his participation.

"It has been a decision that I have questioned ever since, thinking that maybe I could have helped prevent them from making the decision to cancel their program, as it was an opportunity for many young people locally to play and represent the SF Valley," he said.

With the cancellation of football at CSUN, he eventually accepted a position as the offensive coordinator for the University of New Mexico in 1998.

He met his wife, Galye, at Wichita State. He has two sons: Casey and Tyler. Tyler and his wife Angela have three children — Kyleigha, Kayden and Kiptyn — and Casey and his

“**He’s had a tremendous impact. I’m going to miss Coach Fenwick tremendously,” Valley President Barry Gribbons.**”

wife Ashley have two children: London, and Kai. Fenwick was stricken with Leukemia in 2004. According to a recent Los Angeles Times profile, the prognosis was not looking good until a bone marrow transplant from his son Casey saved his life.

By 2001, Fenwick became the offensive coordinator at Occidental College in LA before returning to Valley as head football coach in 2009. He was promoted to athletic director in 2012. Through the years, Fenwick has been head coach for Pierce, Valley and CSUN.

"He's had a tremendous impact. I'm going to miss Coach Fenwick tremendously. I know that I can rely on his council," Valley President Barry Gribbons remarked. "The interests of the student athletes were always of Jim's highest priority. He is incredibly dedicated, has worked tirelessly for all the athletic programs. He's got a huge heart and passion for athletics and supporting student athletes and we're just gonna miss him tremendously."

Reflecting on his 46 years coaching sports, Fenwick recalls his work with players and students.

"Playing the game and coaching have been challenging and fun," he reflected. "The game has taught me several attributes of trust, competition, fundamentals, work habits, collaboration, accountability, research and preparation that have been part of the challenge in teaching. I am most proud of being a teacher first, to help individuals develop such attributes in their prep for life beyond the game."

Valley plans to have someone fill Fenwick's position on an interim basis and then recruit for a permanent replacement later. Gribbons said there are several candidates for the interim position, but did not list any names.



Jim Fenwick is set to retire on Dec. 31 after having the role of athletic director of Valley College. Fenwick was involuntary transferred after Prop. 13 had teachers moving around schools. He was placed at Valley in 1986 after being the head coach for Pierce College - the rival team, since 1981. Los Angeles, Calif.

## A SUMMER OF UNREST SERIES

# YOUTH ORGANIZERS TURN SMALL PROTEST INTO MAJOR MARCH FOR JUSTICE



Photos by Solomon Smith

After over a week of protests for the murder of George Floyd, the African American community in Los Angeles continues to make its voice heard.

Contributor  
Solomon Smith

Slowly growing, like the movement itself, the crowd in the mall just across the street from City Hall quickly grew from a few organizers and reporters to a powerful rally of hundreds of protesters by 9:30 a.m.

The "For Us By Us" march started by a few friends, most just out of high school, ended up a bigger success than any of them expected. Led by a class of 2019 Compton High School graduate, Spencer Lewis, many of the events organizers attribute its success to her hard work.

"Spencer is to thank for a lot of it, and she is the one who pretty much got everything organized and brought it to life," said Daniel Childress, one of the 10 core organizers. "And you know, to be on the front line, actually be here rather than just be on social media talking about it."

Most of the organizers met as

many millennials do — through social media. They also lived in the same area of South Central Los Angeles and had "seen each other around." Lewis felt that people from where she lived needed to get more directly involved and was not willing to wait on someone else to get started.

"I always wanted to do something but, you know, I was too young and my mom thinks my life is at risk if I do it," said Lewis. "So now that I'm grown, I can just go ahead and do it on my own."

Using the Cash App to collect donations, Lewis and the group managed to raise \$800 to pay for snacks and water to pass out and keep marchers going for hours. Lewis also designed a flyer that was posted by @inthistogether\_la as part of their agenda for upcoming marches. The Instagram page is a catch all for the daily protests, marches and

ABOVE- Spencer Lewis leads her "For Us By Us" march. She and several other recent highschool graduates organized the protest via social media.

BELOW- A protester faces down police officers stationed at the entrance of Los Angeles City Hall.



California National Guardsman gives the peace sign as protesters pass by. Troops were stationed throughout the city to protect property, according to one soldier, but many protesters saw them as a tool for intimidation.



One protester passes a message pointing out one of the many locations of National Guardsmen in the downtown area. National Guard troops were stationed in response to riots throughout the Southland in response to police violence.

vigils held in Los Angeles. Although not directly affiliated with them, Lewis was surprised by her inclusion on the Instagram page.

“That is dope, I didn’t even know they did that,” said Lewis.

Many of the protesters were young, frustrated and ready for change. Cameron Evans had been helping organize the march since 8 a.m. on his day off. He is the only one in his family working since the coronavirus shelter-in-place orders, but he was eager to participate in his first march.

“For one, I’m a black man at the end of the day, and we always have to continue to fight for what we believe in,” said Evans. “They say that we were heard but we have been fighting the same fight since 1992, 1964, the 70’s the 80’s the 50’s ... we wouldn’t be fighting if they heard us.”

One white family of supporters drove from Ojai after seeing the announcement on Instagram. A family of four, the Simmons felt the need to add their support. They had been to other marches in Northern California but wanted to come to this one.

“It’s not easy to get the entire family excited about something but everyone was on board for this,” said father, Leon Simmons.

Beginning at 10 a.m., the march wound its way from City Hall to the Staples Center and back to City Hall, almost 6 miles round trip. The National Guard was present along most of the route and LAPD officers on motorcycles stopped traffic for the protesters at intersections. Sweaty and exhausted, Lewis and her cohort took a brief rest and prepared to make the trip again as they intended to make the march four more times that day, a total of 24 miles, 2 miles short of a marathon.

Many participating in the march were hopeful but cautious. After over a week of protests, authorities are still using SWAT tactics and National Guardsmen across the country. Debbie Dorcelus, a young black supporter who arrived with a few friends, expressed doubt but also hope about what will happen next.

“I’m gonna be honest with you. I don’t think that anything is different,” said Dorcelus. “But I think that being vocal and participating and making our voices heard over time is worth it.”

Lewis and her team are thinking about what their next march will be like but have no concrete plans as of yet. If those who would like to stay updated on different protests happening during the week, @inthistogether\_la posts daily.



An armed soldier watches casually next to a photo of George Floyd who was killed by an officer kneeling on his neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds.



Youth members gather before the march. Many were meeting in person for the first time due to the coronavirus, and had learned of the march primarily through social media.

California National Guard watch from an armored Humvee, as protesters pass by. Many military and specialized police units were stationed in downtown Los Angeles.



Turning onto First Street, protesters moved to the Staples Center in response to the killing of African Americans by police.



A protester speaks to members of the march. Chants of encouragement and anger were common among protesters, including the names of victims of police violence.



# THANK YOU, BLACK WOMEN FOR SAVING US FROM OURSELVES

A “thank you” is not enough for saving the vote, American democracy and the country again.

**Contributor**  
**Savannah Simmons**

Black women constantly show up and demand change by exercising their right to vote and saying “thank you” is not enough.

For the last three elections, voter turnout among Black women has been higher than any other group of women and has been a steady Democrat anchor. Democrats and liberals have praised Black women for their support which led to the defeat of President Donald J Trump.

“I want to speak directly to the Black women in our country. Thank you,” tweeted Kamala Harris after the election. “You are too often overlooked, and yet are asked time and again to step up and be the backbone of our democracy. We could not have done this without you.”

It is estimated that 91 percent of Black women voted for Joe Biden and Harris last November and without their votes in battleground states like Georgia, the Biden Harris ticket could have been lost. Key findings in a Black Women’s Roundtable/ESSENCE survey showed that the most important issues for Black women were racism, the

rise in hate crimes, affordable health-care and criminal justice and police reforms. National concerns that benefit everyone, not just Black women or people of color.

A 2016 study revealed that many white medical students believed that Black patients had a higher pain tolerance than white people, which is not only racist but completely false. Things like stronger immune systems, thicker skin and less sensitivity of Black patients were among the false ideas that 73 percent of the participating students believed.

Maternal mortality is also high on the list of dangers for Black women and in the United States the gap in death rates for different ethnicities are massive. In a 2020 report published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the highest is non-Hispanic Black with 37.1 deaths per 100,000 live births, non-Hispanic white at 14.7 and Hispanic at 11.8. Black women to be two times more at risk is unacceptable.

“Maternal mortality is an important indicator of the health of a nation,” said Bob Anderson, chief of the mortality statistics branch at the National Center

for Health Statistics. “These are deaths that are almost entirely preventable.”

Black women are in danger because of racism in healthcare and something more must be done. Knowing that Black women are at higher risk right off the bat, healthcare workers should take extreme precautions when caring for these patients.

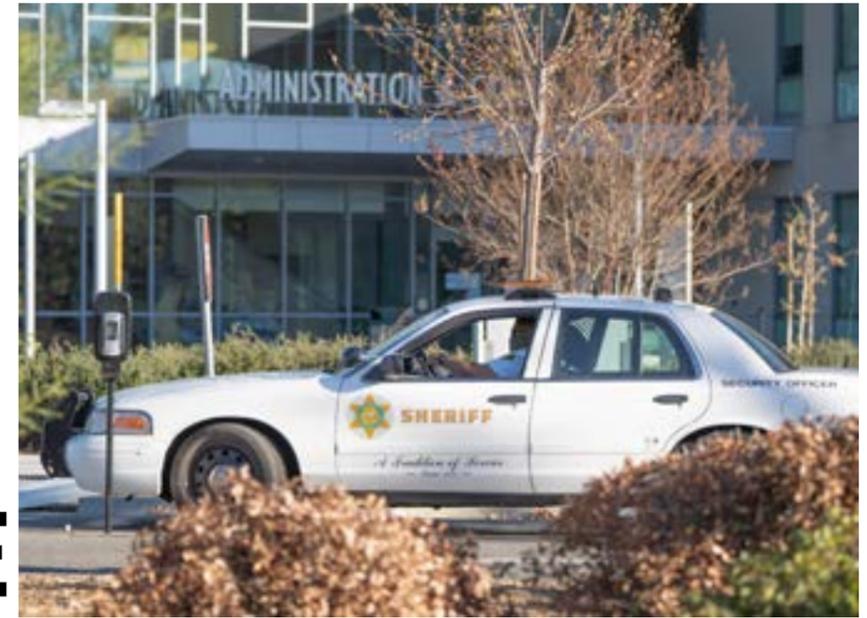
Black women are also 2.5 times more likely to be killed by a man than white women and 40 percent of Black women will experience domestic violence according to blackburncenter.org.

Last summer, popular rapper Megan Thee Stallion was shot twice by rapper Tory Lanez and received not only backlash but skepticism about the shooting.

“The issue is even more intense for Black women, who struggle against stereotypes and are seen as angry or threatening when we try to stand up for ourselves and our sisters,” wrote Thee Stallion in an essay for the New York Times. “There’s not much room for passionate advocacy if you are a Black woman.”

It has long been time to listen to Black women, respect Black women and protect them when they have done so much to protect us.

# LACCD EXTENDS SHERIFF CONTRACT UNTIL JUNE



A sheriff security officer sits in his car at the check-in station of the Los Angeles Valley College front entrance on Fulton Ave. Los Angeles, Calif. Photo By Solomon O. Smith

After initially announcing that their contract with the sheriff’s department would expire at the end of the year, LACCD extended it for another six months.

**Contributor**  
**Gabriel Arizon**

The LACCD Board of Trustees voted on Saturday to extend their contract with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department for another six months rather than let it expire.

“There will be no change to the sheriff’s department providing security services at Valley College or any of the other LACCD locations,” said Valley President Barry Gribbons.

On Dec. 12, the Board of Trustees

apprehension of unarmed security in place of sheriffs and concerns that this new change would lead to more problems.

“Myself and our cadets will not feel safe there with an 18-year-old unarmed security officer ‘protecting’ us,” said Francoise Rosero, a senior office assistant in the sheriff’s complex at Southwest College. “With all the things that happen on campuses with armed security, imagine what’s going to happen when it’s some 18-year-old kid there.”

whereas the new approved proposal costs an estimated 24 percent less.

According to LACCD data as reported by LASD, there were 644 incidents in 2019 across all nine campuses; of those incidents, 465 were crimes and 60 arrests were made. As stated by Interim Deputy Chancellor Melinda Nish, the estimate of damages caused by criminal activity to the district was \$562,000. Overall, the district saw a 15 percent decrease in crime from 2018 to 2019.

While the private security proposal did not pass, there were some public comments that voiced their support for it, citing problems with the sheriffs.

“What I have noticed ... [is] that most of the complaints that have come forward to me regarding the sheriffs are from women or from minorities,” said Ruby Christian-Brougham, the AFT Local 1521 chapter president at Valley, “and I have tried my best to resolve those complaints and the majority of those complaints have never been resolved.”

According to Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez, the district will begin a thorough assessment of campus safety at all nine colleges beginning Jan. 1, and the process will include voices from students, faculty and administrators. The assessment will be the basis for Request for Proposals for long-term security in the district. Rodriguez expects the process to take between six to 12 months.

“What I have noticed ... [is] that most of the complaints that have come forward to me regarding the sheriffs are from women or from minorities,” said president of AFT Local 1521 Ruby Christian-Brougham

convened for a special meeting to discuss short-term security proposals for 2021. The board presented two options: a six-month extension with the LASD (with the option for further extensions) for an annual budget of \$19.6 million, or hire unarmed private security from Allied Universal Security Services for a 12-month term with a \$15 million annual budget. After much discussion, the board voted on the former.

Before the vote, the board took comments from the public to hear their thoughts, many of whom expressed

“If this contract is allowed to expire, I am concerned about ... how we will be able to reach out to students in crisis without the support of the sheriff’s department,” said Sonia Lopez, a dean of student services at East Los Angeles College. “Now is not the time to bring in a security company that is not familiar with our campus, our students or our community.”

The LACCD has had a partnership with LASD since 2001, one that was originally set to expire at the end of the year. The district’s budget for the LASD contract was \$25.8 million annually,

Three Middletown local women volunteer, giving out food to voters waiting in long lines outside Mulberry House in Middletown, NY on Oct. 26, 2020. Black women from all walks of life have showed up and supported democracy, Photo by Leah Thompson.





Former Vice President of the United States Joe Biden walking with supporters at a pre-Wing Ding march from Molly McGowan Park in Clear Lake, Iowa. Photo by Gage Skidmore

## Biden wins 2020 presidential election

Joe Biden wins a highly contested race to become the 46th president of the United States.

**Contributor**  
Solomon Smith and  
Gabriel Arizon

After four intense days of ballot counting in battleground states, former Vice President Joe Biden was elected the nation's next president.

Biden defeated President Donald J. Trump with a total of 279 electoral votes to the incumbent's 214. He and his running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris, each made their own significant mark on history with the victory.

This election witnessed Biden winning more votes than any other president in U.S. history and will be the oldest to hold the office, turning 78 later this month. He is the first candidate to beat a presidential incumbent in 28 years, when Bill Clinton defeated George H. W. Bush. This was Biden's third attempt for the presidency, having tried twice in 1988 and 2008. Biden's win comes exactly 48 years to the day when he was first elected to the Senate.

"America, I'm honored that you have chosen me to lead our great country," Biden tweeted. "The work ahead of us will be hard, but I promise you this: I will be a President for all Americans — whether you voted for me or not."

Harris will be the first woman, first Black person and first South Asian American woman to hold

the second highest position in the country. Previously, she was the first Black woman to hold the position of district attorney in California, the first Black woman to be the state Attorney General and the second Black woman to ever be elected senator.

"This election is about so much more than @JoeBiden or me," tweeted Harris after the win. "It's about the soul of America and our willingness to fight for it. We have a lot of work ahead of us. Let's get started."

For days, Biden and Trump had been fighting it out in key states. The initial numbers on Nov. 3 were better for Biden, but it was still too close to call until mail-in ballots and drop box numbers began to trickle in. Some states, like Florida, went the way pollsters expected — voting in favor of Trump. Other key states were a surprise, however, such as Wisconsin and Michigan going to Biden after the mail-in ballots were counted.

Pennsylvania was a necessary state for any hope of a Trump reelection. The state appeared to initially go in favor of Trump by a large margin, but the ballots continued to come in and the lead was narrowed. For the last few days, the state has been a near tie with Biden holding the slimmest of leads by a few thousand votes. Last night, that changed with Biden widening the gap and Trump falling further behind.

Other states that proved competitive as well, but the 20 electoral votes of Pennsylvania were do or die for Trump. Without those votes, Trump was left with no path forward. Every other state that matters, such as Arizona and Georgia, Biden is either currently in the lead or within a fraction of a point behind Trump and slowly climbing.

The Trump campaign has yet to concede, and is currently suing in almost every battleground state. According to SCOTUS blog, a website that tracks cases in the Supreme Court, 22 cases are in litigation from both parties, with five naming the Trump campaign. The majority of cases are attempts by Trump and his allies to block certain votes from being counted. After a slowdown of the United States Postal Service, which resulted in about 300,000 ballots not being delivered to election offices, Trump has falsely claimed these ballots and any others received after Election Day are invalid.

"If you count the legal votes, I easily win," Trump said in a Thursday press conference. "If you count the illegal votes, they can try to steal the election from us."

Biden and his team have been cautious in their response to the election results and the false claims of the president, but last night he addressed the country.

"We have to remember: the purpose of our politics isn't total, unrelenting, unending warfare," Biden said. "No. The purpose of our politics, the work of the nation, isn't to fan the flames of conflict, but to solve problems, to guarantee justice. To give everybody a fair shot. To improve the lives of our people."



Cristina Miller stands in front of the Valley College entrance. After self-quarantining due to possible COVID-19 exposure, she is preparing to graduate and transfer, Dec. 16, 2020.

## Valley students make it through turbulent year

Valley students look back at a turbulent year to express how it has impacted them.

**Contributor**  
Aimee Martinez

On Jan. 21, the CDC confirmed the first coronavirus case in the United States. Today, more than 300,000 Americans have died from COVID-19. March 25 marks the day George Floyd died under the knee of police officer Derek Chauvin. Floyd's last words, "I can't breathe," became the chant for protesters in Minneapolis a day later, sparking conversations about police brutality and systematic racism. The year also increased the rift in an already increasingly polarized nation. In an October Pew Research poll, 80 percent of Joe Biden supporters and 77 percent of Donald Trump supporters said that when it comes to "core American values," they "fundamentally disagree." Four Valley College students share their own experiences and opinions as they reflect on the events of the past year.

### Longing for the theatre

Actress Cristina Miller would describe 2020 in a word: "wild."

For Miller, there was always something that occupied her time during quarantine — meditation, self-care, painting — in addition to working from home and taking six classes. Online classes helped her focus and provided new goals for the year. She said instructors were "kind, supportive and understanding," especially to those who miss class due to illness. Miller lives with her aunt, who caught the coronavirus, and had to quarantine with her. Her aunt recovered. Miller was unscathed, but the time indoors left a void.

"I miss the theater," said the 28 year old. "I miss hugs and intimacy, just all of what most people miss, having face to face conversations, you know, the little things. My family has unfortunately been hit, like many, with it. It's been a struggle."

The production of "Urinetown," was canceled in March. But after two months of rehearsal for that production, she refused to let that deter her and decided to perform in "Love and Information," this semester's virtual play. Miller has been acting since she was 14. She became involved in theater two years ago at Valley and found it to be her passion.

She said she was thrilled with the outcome of the election and disagrees with the way Trump has handled the results. She believes the Black Lives Matter protests this year were necessary.

"People need to know that something historically important is still happening," said Miller. "I'm a big supporter of speaking

your mind, freedom of expression and spreading awareness.”

### An incompetent government

For Ross Bauer, this is the second time he suffered through an economic recession. The first happened in 2007 after he graduated high school. He decided to join the Air Force so he could earn a decent paycheck.

This year has been revealing for Bauer, serving as an expose on the inherent flaws in America’s society and economy. Bauer said the government’s response to the pandemic is “insulting at best,” as efforts to deal with unemployment are “insufficient,” and it is “extremely one-sided” when it comes to businesses.

“We don’t have a functioning federal government,” said the 31-year-old actor. “The utter lack of regard for people who aren’t huge money donors from the highest levels of our federal government is disgusting. I think it’s treasonous and seditious.”

Bauer cut contact with some of his extended family members after their open approval of Trump, and their advocacy for a “return to racial segregation.” He said, “They use the n-word like a proper noun.”

Bauer grew up near Louisville, Kentucky. In 2016, he moved to Los Angeles to pursue acting and in 2019, participated in his first production — a series of one-act plays. Bauer and other Valley students created a production group called Less Than Strangers earlier this year. They have produced two short films with the second accepted in several film festivals.

After working as an Uber driver on New Year’s, Bauer caught the coronavirus. He began to feel symptoms after a few days, gradually worsening and was confined to his bed for two weeks where he “felt like death.” Though he recovered, his great aunt also contracted the virus and died in October.

Bauer quit smoking during quarantine, started eating better and exercising and lost about 25 pounds. He works from home as a voice actor and continues to take online classes. They are not his preferred method of learning and as a kinesthetic learner, staring at a computer screen is not ideal. On Instagram, Bauer sees friends from Australia and New Zealand going to bars, concerts, restaurants, sports games — living normal lives. The only time they wear a mask is at the hospital or on planes. He said it makes him cry.

This year has made Bauer more cyn-

ical and changed his political affiliation from liberal to socialist. He thinks the way social issues were addressed were not substantial enough.

“When it comes to the neoliberal outlook on it,” said Bauer. “In terms of addressing racism, calling out Karens and people who use the n-word in public, on that surface level, sure it has definitely been a better and more effective response because now that people know who Karens are, they’re afraid to come out of their holes.”

### Let’s talk about unity

For Sharlot Colmemary, 2020 was a year to learn about her family and herself. Before the country shut down, every day consisted of going to class and going to work. Quarantine forced her to stay home more and learn about her parents and their relationship. Online classes turned out to be easier for Colmemary as many were pre-recorded and she could work at her own pace.

The 19 year old thanked God that she did not lose her job. In-N-Out even gave her two weeks off, with pay before employees returned to work. Though she has not experienced financial

hardship, the lock-down has taken an emotional toll.

“You appreciate your everyday life, like going to the park and going out to eat with friends,” said the Venezuelan native.

The business management major believes masks should be enforced, but shutting down the country and California is too extreme. Colmemary believes the government did the best they could because “no one is ever ready for a pandemic.” She believes the media could have handled it better.

Colmemary considers protests to be a beneficial catalyst for change if done the right way. There are problems in this country she said, but looting is the wrong way to fight for minorities rights and just causes. She thinks it is “hateful and unfair to business owners and the community.”

On social media, Colmemary saw many ignorantly posting or reposting comments on issues because they were made by celebrities. She saw these lead to conversations about defunding the police, a concept she disagrees with.

“Let’s fight for George



Ross Bauer, an Air Force Veteran and Valley College theater major, stands in front of a flyer for “Urinetown,” a play that he and several classmates rehearsed for, but was canceled due to the pandemic, Dec. 15, 2020.



Joshua Esquivel, pictured in front of the Valley College Theater building’s ticket office. Esquivel has started his own acting group, called Virthe Productions, to deal with the pandemic, Dec. 16, 2020.

Floyd,” said Colmemary. “Let’s fight for them but not in the sense where let’s just defund the police altogether.”

Colmemary fears the nation may not get back to a sense of normalcy, but hopes the country can find some peace.

“My hopes are that we can find a place to be united as a country,” she said. “Right now the country is still very divided.”

### A hope for a better future

Joshua Esquivel is doing everything he can to keep himself sane and positive, but there is still the constant anxiety and fear of his family getting infected.

Esquivel said many have underestimated the virus, with some in

more affluent communities walking maskless and behaving like “the stakes are not high for them.” However, he understands the plight of those who need to work.

“It’s been annoying how so many of us have had to shoulder the burden of others who don’t want to follow fairly simple instructions as far as staying inside and wearing a mask outside,” said Esquivel. “We have a great schism in the country about what matters.”

Esquivel said it is “criminal” how Trump’s administration has handled the virus and in the end, the nation will be “shell shocked” by how much damage was caused. With Trump’s refusal to step down and election fraud allegations, he hopes all of it is a wakeup call

for Americans. Esquivel supposes the nation was due for a “bona fide tyrant.”

Esquivel warned that with an abundance of information and an influential media, people must be vigilant. Without proper research, people can be deceived, he added.

“We have a responsibility to ourselves and to each other to make sure we are getting the right information in our minds and then spreading the right information, not just taking in anything we hear,” said Esquivel.

He wanted to attend more protests. However, his partner suffers from a lung condition and he lives with his grandmother and nephew and did not want to risk their health. This concern over the coronavirus prevents him from looking for a job. Friends who are essential workers have recounted to him horror stories about the lack of safety protocols in their industries.

In terms of the Black Lives Matter protests, Esquivel says he is not a “blue or red person,” but just wants to see politicians follow through with their promises.

“We have to hold these people accountable, the powers that be,” he said. “I’m tired of being told, ‘we hear you, we see you.’ Do you really though? Or are you just trying to get me off your back. I’ve heard a lot of nice pretty sentiments, but I want to see real action.”

The 26 year old has been keeping active during quarantine, meditating, practicing Spanish, completing chores and helping his family. He also started a theater company with students from Valley called Virthe Productions. The Latinx actor was helping out with the opera “Sweet Land,” but like many other productions, it was canceled.

Esquivel remembers students as “passing faces,” not really connecting with each other on campus. Online, despite a screen of blacked-out cameras, he felt more camaraderie. He could hear the affection in his fellow students’ voices.

Looking back at the past nine months, Esquivel said people have been through a lot, but he is still optimistic.

“[I am] just trying to stay above water, holding my breath, crossing my fingers, being positive,” he said. “Really in my heart, truly believing that things will get better. I really believe that. As much as I have been hurt by my government and fellow citizens, I feel like things can and will get better.”

# ARMENIAN SUPPORTERS RAISE THE FLAG



The Panosyan family come to express their family support to the Armenian people. (L-R) Leah, 7, sister Manet, 10, and brother Narek, 10 in the protest against Azeri (Azerbaijan) and Turkish military aggression in the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh in front of Azerbaijan Los Angeles Consulate, in Los Angeles, Calif. on Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2020.

Photos by Margarita Garushyan

## Contributor Gene Wickham

Hundreds of Armenian supporters met in front of the Azeri consulate in West Los Angeles on Sept. 30, to denounce Azerbaijan and its ally Turkey's aggression following an altercation between two fighter jets.

Armenia has claimed an Azeri F-16 shot down one of their jets on Sept. 27 over Nagorno-Karabakh, unleashing a conflict which has killed hundreds. Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Artsakh, is an enclave which lies within Azerbaijan's borders and has a population of over 140,000; 95 percent of which are ethnic Armenian and Muslim.

The protesters were responding to the renewed conflict, which they say is being backed by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey. They were trying to call attention to the recent surge of violence in the region and the lack of news coverage in the states.

"In Los Angeles County and around the world, I am committed to standing up for our Armenian communities," said LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger. "It is my hope that the United States will hold Azerbaijan and Turkey accountable for their attack on Artsakh, which killed innocent people."

The police held traffic from both ends of Wilshire Boulevard and Barrington Avenue, allowing protesters to march down the street. Protesters chanted slogans in English and Armenian such as, "Get your hands off our land," "We are Karabakh" and "No more aggression, stop the oppression."

Drones were noticed hugging the nearby high rises and following the action below. Besides one helicopter, a plane was spotted dragging a sign saying "Azerbaijan & Turkey promote terrorism."

The rally was scheduled for 6 p.m. but many came before and others arrived well into the night. Both the Armenian flag and the Artsakh flag were visible everywhere. Many young people and families showed up and a multitude of older people came to support the cause as well.

On Saturday, the protests moved to Hollywood, another Armenian locale and home of Little Armenia. Protesters and locals became more heated as the procession blocked intersections and the 101 Freeway.

MMA athlete Edgar Soghomonyan, 37 stands with Armenia against Azeri (Azerbaijan) and Turkish military aggression in the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh in front of the Republic of Azerbaijan Los Angeles Consulate, in Los Angeles, Calif. on Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2020.



Twenty-five-year-old Haig Kossakian is one of the speakers. Wed., Sept. 30, 2020, Wilshire Blvd., LA,



The marchers made their voices heard on Glenoaks Boulevard in Glendale a few days later. It was noted, unlike in West LA, there were very few masks worn in Glendale.

Since the aggression started, the bombing has moved into the Artsakh cities with hundreds dead, both military and civilian. Military incursions have increased with no signs of a cease fire.

Armenia became more enraged after Turkey backed Azerbaijan in this incident. The two former Soviet republics have had numerous altercations since gaining their independence in the early 1990s.

Turkey has been a longtime opponent of Armenia, most noticeably in 1915 with the Armenian Genocide and forcible removal of ethnic Armenians from Turkey, which reportedly killed 1.5 million during the purge.

According to KTLA5 news, local governments have begun showing their support for Armenians in Los Angeles, which has the largest number of Armenians outside of their home country.

In a recent message from the LACCD Chancellor's office, the district has confirmed their support for Armenian staff and students.

"We are writing to stand in solidarity with our Armenian colleagues and students during this time of great uncertainty and loss," the message stated. "Dialogue, humanity and civility, not violence, must prevail and is the only way to bring comprehensive and enduring peace to the region."



Protesters wear the colors of the Armenian flag while holding images of soldiers in the war and signs in protest of Turkey.



(L-R) Artem Martirosyan, 19 and friend Vahan Harutyunyan, 18, attend a protest draped in Armenian flags at an Armenian protest against Azeri (Azerbaijan) and Turkish military aggression in the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh in front of the Republic of Azerbaijan Los Angeles Consulate, in Los Angeles, Calif. on Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2020.



"Opal's Timekeeper" by Aziza Gafurjanova

## A DIFFERENT KIND OF LAUNCH

The art students at Valley have a new way of showing their art in the annual LAUNCH20.

**Contributor**  
Savannah Simmons

The annual student art exhibition looks a little different this year, but has given more students the chance to have their works of art included in the gallery.

The annual LAUNCH program, this year called LAUNCH20, is currently being held completely online, including works from 40 artists with a selected 72 pieces on display.

"This year, instead of having [the exhibition] juried, we are exhibiting every single art piece that was submitted to us," explained Professor Jenene Nagy, who curated the show. "And that is

doable because it's virtual, so there's no physical restraints for the artworks."

In a pre-pandemic world, LAUNCH would be set up and run like a real exhibition at an art gallery where students would have to submit work, get rejected or accepted and have the opportunity to meet notable Los Angeles gallery owners or curators during the show. This creates a professional setting for students to learn from, add to their resume and get the full experience of the art world and all of its parts — even if that means rejection. Though that process was not a possibility this year, a new opportunity presented itself in the online version — creating space for every

art work to be put on display.

"Watching mine and other students' art online felt that art is still alive, even though all exhibitions and museums are closed," said Shiva Nosrati, a student artist who has two pieces in the show. "It was a really good experience for me to attend the student art show — especially during a pandemic."

Nosrati's works, "Mother" and "Parallel Universes," are both works from Spring 2020 in Professor Tom Mossman's Photographics I course. She explained she was able to turn to art during the pandemic to keep her going, spending most of her time painting and shooting photography. Art "helps me feel alive," she said.

Art classes have also changed in 2020 moving to the online platform. Aziza Gafurjanova, whose works "Untitled" and "Opal's Timekeeper" are also in the show, shared that the online platform has been an immense change. In-person classes come with time in the studio and the ability to observe classmates' work and progress, which she says is incredibly important when students are stuck themselves. Studio time for an artist is sacred, especially when not everyone has the luxury of space to work in peace.

"I think whatever we create should always be seen," expressed Gafurjanova when referring to her participation in the online gallery. "You never know when something you have made could spark an idea, bring comfort, touch feelings or bring back a memory to the viewer. It doesn't matter where it's seen."

Although the LAUNCH20 is not physically in the gallery, something else has been left standing. MMXX is the art faculty biennial show that opened the day of the initial coronavirus shut down back in March. It was left up under the impression that the opening would be rescheduled in two weeks after the shelter-in-place orders were lifted, but that was not the case. Now, it is only viewable virtually, though the photos of the gallery walls do create a feeling of being there.

"This [exhibit] shows that research and practice is integral to teaching," said Nagy. "There's also responsibility involved in exhibiting artwork, that's kind of 50 percent of the equation of being an artist, it's that opportunity for dialogue and exchange. It's important for the students to be viewers."

Both the student art exhibit, LAUNCH20, and the faculty show, MMXX, are available on lavcartgallery.com and will be up for viewing until Dec. 30.



Photo Illustration by Solomon Smith

# Trump will burn it down on the way out--and Republicans will let him

**Opinion by  
Solomon Smith**

A peaceful transfer of power has been one of the central pillars of a stable American democracy, but President Donald J. Trump seeks to uproot this long-standing tradition.

“I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of the President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States,” reads the oath of office for the President.

This passage obliges the president to care for the institutions of democracy while living in the people’s house, the White House, and long after they have moved out. Conceding a loss is part of good sportsmanship, a sign of respect and part of the necessary decorum that shores up a healthy transference of power. On the Netflix series “The Queen’s Gambit,” 9-year-old Beth Harmon throws a fit instead of laying down her king. Trump’s behavior one ups her.

After the election was called with former Vice President Joe Biden at 306 estimated electoral vote to Trump’s 232, according to the Washington Post, instead of handing over the keys to the presidency, Trump sought to burn it

down. First, he and Republicans set the kindling by casting doubt on every aspect of the election (from mail-in votes to ballot counting), then added the heat with frivolous lawsuits in every battleground state and finally breathed life into it by fanning the flames of dissent among die-hard Trump voters looking

“**As the last gasp of the Trump presidential run for 2020 comes to an end, he and Republicans continue to threaten American democracy by refusing to concede the race.**”

for a reason to overturn the system.

After more than a week — as the president and the Republican party continue to denigrate the voting process — Trump made baseless claims about the race from the East Room of the White House on Monday, Nov. 5.

“This is a case where they’re trying to steal an election,” said Trump. “They’re trying to rig an election and we can’t let that happen.”

Trump is setting a precedent which weakens the roots of democracy (the vote), but worse has slowed the continuous workings of the government. With 22 court cases on the dockets of the Supreme Court, according to SCOTUSblog.com, and only one win, Trump has sought to overturn the election through legal trickery by disenfranchising Americans. In his world, only votes for him should count.

Trump’s attempts to overturn a fairly run election because he did not win has gotten as far as it has because Republican leaders have not vigorously defended the election process for fear of losing power in Congress. Dictatorships and illiberal democracies are not created only at gunpoint. They are also birthed by the methodical dismantling of democratic norms that seem innocuous, like a peaceful transfer of power. Trump has created a rot, a distrust in the founding principal of stability in America’s democracy. It is slow moving but no less destructive.

The law and the Constitution are clear: on Jan. 20, Biden will become president, but the unraveling of our constitutional norms has begun and America will need both parties to stop it.

## Valley buys masks for faculty and students



Valley College President Barry Gribbons wears one of the branded Valley masks the school is giving to students and faculty. Masks are one of the main ways healthcare professionals have recommended to reduce the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

**Reusable masks with school colors will be free to staff and students that come to campus.**

**Contributor  
Gabriel Arizon**

Valley College has purchased 10,000 reusable masks decorated with the school colors and logo with the intent to distribute them to faculty members and students.

Yellow and green cloth masks — adorned with the Valley and Los Angeles Community College District logos — were bought by Valley using CARES Act funding at \$2 apiece, receiving them in August. According to Valley President Barry Gribbons, a reusable mask will be given out to every employee and every student who attends in-person classes. The school also plans to distribute leftover masks to other students.

These reusable masks, according to Gribbons, will be cost effective (they are cheaper than buying disposable masks) and environmentally friendly. Though the president could not give a definitive figure on how much the

school has spent on disposable masks, he did say that the school has been buying them for about \$1 each since the lockdown in March.

“Looking throughout the year, we anticipate quite a few people being on campus once or twice, so we want to make sure we have the masks on hand and we’re not trying to procure them after we need them,” Gribbons said. “Given that the total cost is so low, we thought it would be prudent to have a stock on campus and distribute out the masks to folks who might need them.”

Valley was looking to purchase additional masks — alongside City College, Mission and Trade-Tech — but a rescission notice from the district issued on Oct. 8 delayed the process. Gribbons said the school will likely not receive more masks until at least January.

According to recommendations by the CDC, people should choose a mask that has two layers of washable,

breathable fabric, completely covers the nose and mouth, fits snugly against the side of their face and does not have gaps. It is not recommended that a person wear a mask made of a fabric that makes it hard to breathe, like vinyl, or one with an exhalation valve, as it allows virus particles to escape.

In a report by UC San Francisco, it was found that masks were able to significantly reduce the spread of the coronavirus by stopping water droplets, and it was suggested that the best mask is one that can be worn comfortably and consistently.

“I think the biggest thing with COVID now that shapes all of this guidance on masks is that we can’t tell who’s infected,” said Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, an infectious disease specialist at UCSF. “You can’t look at a crowd and say, oh, that person should wear a mask. There’s a lot of asymptomatic infection, so everyone has to wear a mask.”

# COVID-19 Valley Timeline



## First Reports

Dec. 31, 2019 - News began to surface about a virus outbreak in Wuhan, China. The virus spread throughout Asia, making its way onto cruise ships and airliners. Rapidly, it crossed the Pacific to Washington state and then into California. At first, President Donald J. Trump discounted the virus until thousands across the country began dying.

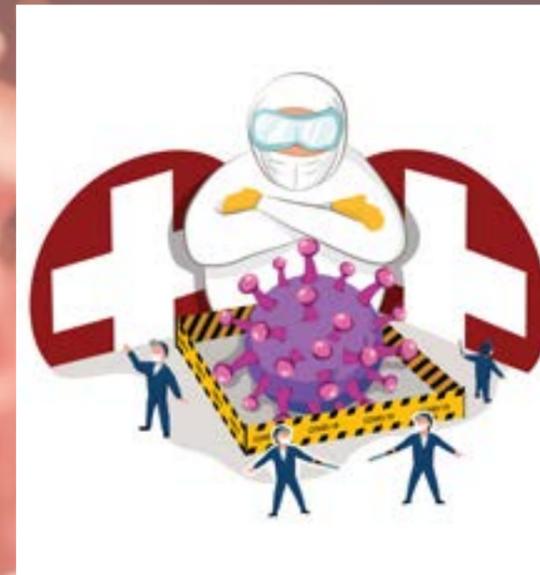
## Sports are Cancelled

March 9 - Sports at Valley College were in full swing when the pandemic shuttered everything in mid-March. The spring sports had just started when the word came to lock everything down. The governing body of California community college athletics, the CCCAA, eventually allowed the schools to decide for themselves in November about reopening in the spring 2021 semester. However, the LACCD board decided in December to not restart sports because of a high rise of COVID-19 at the end of 2020.



## Full Blown Pandemic

March 11 - The World Health Organization (WHO) finally declared a world-wide pandemic after numerous countries outside of Asia began reporting rapidly spreading infections in their nations. Airlines and especially cruise ships became the focus of attention as major cities became infection centers.



## Valley College Responds

March 16, 2020 - California, Gov. Newsom ordered the shutdown of the state, followed by Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti and the LACCD closing schools in mid-March. In early April classes were being moved online and teachers and staff met to receive training on the use of the online meeting app, Zoom. To help students without computers, the school gave away hundreds of Chromebooks to students in need.



## Classes At Home

March 18 - Almost all classes moved online with the exception of nursing and a few other classes. To keep students linked to their established routines, classes were scheduled at the same time and weekday as they were normally. Student services such as financial aid, counseling and library services were also moved on line. At the end of the semester, graduates were presented with a virtual graduation to help celebrate their educational milestone.



## Vaccine

Nov. 21 - A COVID-19 vaccine was announced in November by pharmaceutical giant Pfizer, who became the first of many to submit a new vaccine to the FDA for quick approval. Pfizer claimed their vaccine was 90 percent effective. Soon other companies were given rapid approval. The vaccines required two doses given two to three weeks apart. By the end of 2020, front line workers and at risk individuals began receiving the first injections.

Infographic design by Solomon Smith  
Text by Gene Wickham



A county worker checks on machines during the Nov. 4 Presidential Election. Many of the assistants were randomly assigned to the location based on where they live and were unaware that the theatre was a voting center before arriving.

# PANTAGES OFFERS WARM WELCOME TO 2020 VOTERS

THE YEAR 2020 WAS A ROUGH ONE BUT FOR MANY VOTING AT THE PANTAGES THEATRE WILL BE A CHERISHED MEMORY.

**Text and Photos**  
**Solomon Smith**

A world-wide pandemic sent American's into self-imposed isolation on the advice of the government as a way to defend against the dangers of COVID-19. This affected one of the basic tenets of American political life--the vote. Slowed mail-in ballots, recounts and contested results made for a dark experience, but there were also moments of unique opportunity, like voting in unique locations.

The Pantages Theatre a "Hollywood landmark" since its opening on June 4, 1903, has always been a symbol of glamour and the joy of theatre. In 2020, it also became a symbol of democracy as it opened its doors to voters. The open space allowed for social distancing, but more than that, it provided a beautiful place for many voters to participate in expressing the American franchise.



A voter poses in front of the 'I voted' poster specially designed for the Pantages voting location. Participants were also given buttons and stickers with the same image.



A voter peers at her phone as she casts her ballot in the Pantages Theatre lobby.



The marquee at the Pantages advertises the location as a voting center. The center was open to all registered voters like most centers in Los Angeles.

# The Laundry Truck LA provides free laundry services to the homeless



Andre Ribiero checks a bag at the Laundry Truck LA's mobile laundry service parked at the temporary shelter at the Bassett Park gymnasium in La Puente, Calif., Dec. 1, 2020.

RIGHT- Andre Ribiero tracks laundry ready for folding at the Laundry Truck LA's mobile laundry service parked at the temporary homeless shelter.



BELOW- Angela Bramlett has been a regular at the Laundry Truck LA's mobile laundry service for the last four months.



## Contributor Marcos Franco

In a time where personal hygiene is emphasized more than ever, The Laundry Truck LA (TLTLA) offers a life-changing public service by providing free mobile laundromats to unhoused individuals in Los Angeles.

In 2018, Jodie Dolan embarked on a journey to help those in need through hygienic services, and after a year of collecting donations, The Laundry Truck was born. At first glance, the big, baby blue four-wheeler appears to be nothing more than another Los Angeles-staple food truck, but there is more to it than just fresh linen. It began with five sets of washing and drying machines in one 16-foot trailer and TLTLA offering their services two times a week to the Los Angeles community. Their business has since expanded operations to seven days a week. This was made possible through the support of sponsors such as SoCalGas, Clorox and Maytag Appliances.

"The connection between clothing and laundry is about dignity and self worth," said Dolan, founder

of DOLAN clothing and TLTLA. "It's about trying to lift people up and helping them to not feel invisible."

Los Angeles County currently holds the second highest population of people experiencing homelessness in the country behind New York City. Of the 10.04 million residents, it is calculated that roughly 59,000 of individuals are homeless. This number has increased 12 percent since 2018 and is steadily rising. Although there is not a single set reason for the amount of homelessness in Los Angeles, the county ranks sixth on the list of top 10 highest rent averages in the nation. Combined with a 22 percent poverty level, the issue seems more understandable.

According to Homeless Link, unhoused individuals are at significantly higher risk of long-term physical and mental health issues as well as drug abuse. Not only can homelessness bring illness, but it is also detrimental to a person's self-esteem. Although TLTLA may not directly resolve homelessness, it does improve daily life for individuals. Proper hygiene can increase self-confidence and bring better life opportunities,

such as employment.

By the end of 2020, the TLTLA team expects to do between 8,000 to 9,000 loads of laundry, over twice the amount done in 2019. The Laundry Truck operates primarily in City Council District 1 with six different locations available, each with their own hours of operation. Not only are clean clothes a fundamental component of healthy hygiene, but they also serve as a token of hope during unprecedented times.

"The importance of having hygienic services available to people that are unhoused is extremely critical," said Gil Cedillo, the city councilmember of District 1. "Not only to increase their public welfare, but also to reduce the spread of the coronavirus."

Although this service is off to a successful start, the non-profit still requires just over \$4000 per month at each location to maintain. TLTLA has partnered with Amazon Smile in order to maximize donations to continue providing hygienic services. When shoppers select "The Laundry Truck LA" as their designated charity, Amazon will donate 0.5 percent of

their purchase total at no additional cost to the user.

Through clean clothing, TLTLA aims to restore dignity and hope to homeless communities and has successfully done so for almost two years. Readily accessible personal care services such as free laundry can positively impact the everyday lives of unhoused individuals during challenging times. The Laundry Truck team has not only brought awareness to the issue in our local communities, but has also worked to wash away the stigma surrounding the subject.

Marco Sanchez uses the Laundry Truck LA's mobile service, which help many like himself save money for other essential needs. Parked at the shelter at the Bassett Park gymnasium in La Puente, Calif., Dec. 1, 2020.



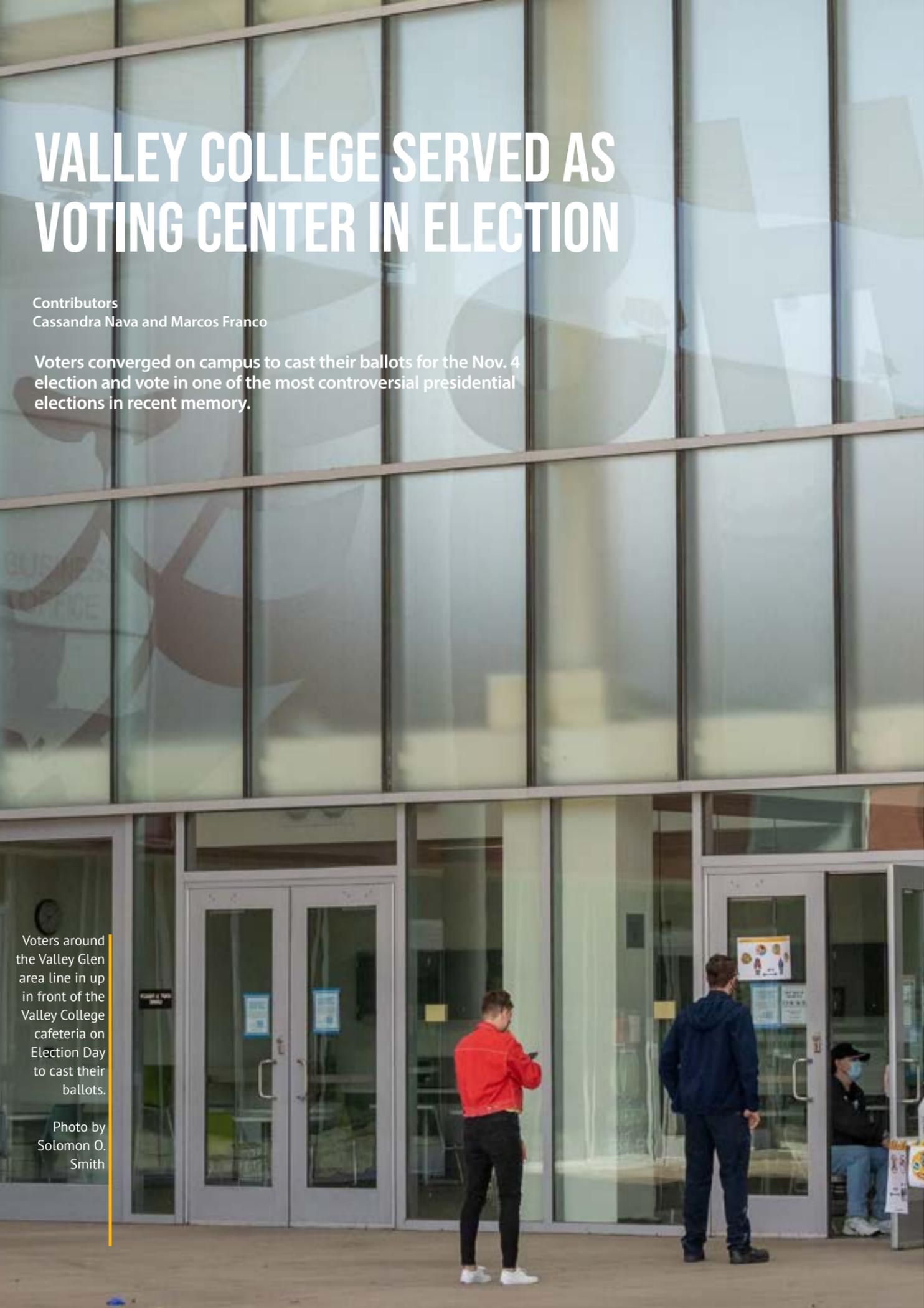
# VALLEY COLLEGE SERVED AS VOTING CENTER IN ELECTION

Contributors  
Cassandra Nava and Marcos Franco

Voters converged on campus to cast their ballots for the Nov. 4 election and vote in one of the most controversial presidential elections in recent memory.

Voters around the Valley Glen area line in up in front of the Valley College cafeteria on Election Day to cast their ballots.

Photo by  
Solomon O.  
Smith



On the last day of the 2020 presidential election, scores of voters trickled into Valley College's voting center to support Joe Biden and to cast their votes for highly contested state propositions.

Voters had the choice between incumbent President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden. Also listed on the ballot were 12 propositions ranging from issues such as the expansion of rent control to funding stem cell research as well as restoring affirmative action. Although California is widely regarded as a Democratic state, that was not always the case. According to the Los Angeles Times, the last Republican win was in 1988, and since then, the Democratic Party has claimed the state in every subsequent presidential election. This year proved to be no different with candidate Biden's win in California, making it the eighth consecutive presidential election that has gone to the Democrats.

This also rang true at Valley, which served as one of many voting centers in the state — including all of the LACCD campuses — as most voters identified themselves as Democrats.

"I voted for Biden because Trump is an asshole," said 53-year-old Donny Webb, a registered independent. "I would've voted for a dog rather than Trump. This guy is dangerous. He has been divisive to our nation, and he's done more damage than I've ever seen in my lifetime."

Britney Ferguson, a registered Democrat and chef at Sylmar's Guardian Angel Academy, stated that a vote for Biden was the logical choice.

"I voted for Biden because I definitely knew who I did not want to vote for," Ferguson said. "I trust that he will do a better job with his experience at filling this position for our country."

The lone Trump supporter on Tuesday afternoon was Eli Ziv, who thought it was important to vote in person.

"I voted for Trump," Ziv said. "It was either him or Biden, and they're both bad choices. It's about the policy, not the person."

Voters shared that Proposition 22 was an important measure on the state's ballot. Backed by Uber and Lyft, this

expensive measure has spent over \$200 million on advertising alone in the state. According to Business of Apps, 19 percent of Uber drivers are ages 18 to 29, while 7 percent of drivers are currently students.

With more than 500 thousand rideshare drivers in California between Uber and Lyft, the tech giants have warned users of a potential withdrawal of operations in the state if Proposition 22 does not pass.

"I felt like Proposition 22 was pretty important to me," said Webb. "I voted so that they will be employed, so they can have benefits."

One voter at Valley shared that Proposition 24 was important to him as a young adult who spends a lot of time online and on social media.

"The proposition that resonated with me the most was about consumer privacy protections, so data would be protected," said the voter, who did not disclose his name. "I have a very big online presence, and I think it's important that companies don't get my data and sell it to other people. Data concerns are a big issue today, and they're not being respected. We need to have consumer privacy protections for things like social media or video games."

An issue that concerned Karim and Christian McClure was Proposition 17, which would restore the right to vote for convicted felons.

"I feel like if they did their time, and they're back out as a citizen. They have every right to have a say in our future," Karim McClure said.

Voters at other polling places across the valley weighed in on the propositions and measures on the ballot. At a polling center in Glendale, voter Alexander Burrell explained why the presidential election was important to him and why he voted for the former vice president.

"I don't like the way that Trump stirs the country up," said Burrell. "We shouldn't have strife between each other and that's what's happening right now."



Election workers assisting voters before the voting process on Nov. 3 in the Valley College cafeteria.

Photo by  
Ava  
Rosate



Adrain (last name not given) discusses his vote on Election Day on his way back to work at Disney Studios.

Photo by Solomon O. Smith



Voter casting his vote in what are presumed to be pajamas on Election Day.

Photo by Ava Rosate

A line of electronic ballot machines, created to modernize and streamline the voting process, being used by voters on Election Day.

Photo by Solomon O. Smith





Goarik Akopyan, a Valley College student who's film "Dial A Spirit" won Audience Choice in the Valley Media Arts Student Showcase with a prop that was used in her film. Dec. 3, 2020. (Photo by Ava Rosate.)

# The show must go on ... line

The Valley College biannual Student Showcase was held online this semester amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Contributor  
Gabriel Arizon

The coronavirus has taken its toll on the movie industries with theaters still shuttered, but the media arts department was determined that the show go on and held its biannual student screening online.

"I love telling stories," said student director Wes Timmons. "My dad once told me, 'If you want to shape the story, you want to be the editor.'"

On Nov. 21, the department held its Student Showcase via Zoom. The biannual event is meant to show off the work of media arts students to an in-person audience, though this time around viewers were able to watch all the films online. The movies were produced from the Cinema 101 and Media Arts 101 classes from the fall 2019 semester and the Cinema 101 class from the spring 2020 semester.

Towards the end of the night, media arts faculty presented the awards — four categories for each semester that a film could win in:

cinematography, editing, sound or visual effects. The winner in each category was decided by approximately 10 cinema and media arts faculty.

For the spring 2020 semester, the winners were: "Barbara" by Marlon Rodriguez for cinematography; "The Cure" by Timmons for editing; Danil Kinziashvili with "Astray" for sound; and David Flores with "The Little Bee" for visual effects.

"The Cure" is a comedic film about a woman's numerous failed attempts to get rid of her hiccups. For Timmons, the idea behind it was simple as his wife (who stars in the film) often gets hiccups that he cures by scaring her. Timmons originally planned to rent an Airbnb and hire actors for his film, but decided to try it at home with the gear he had on hand. Thanks to the use of storyboards, he was able to film his project in one day and complete the editing in a few days.

"Working with the small

space and available lighting I had on hand was the most difficult part," said Timmons. "[However,] I really enjoyed conceptualizing the project as well as watching my ideas, the way I had envisioned them, find their way to the screen."

For the fall semester, the winners were: Yerin Oh for cinematography with "We'll meet again;" "Brief an Damian" by Miguel Jose Mercado for editing; Moises Yah for sound with "Savior;" and "Deception" by Kaitlyn Didi for visual effects.

According to Yah, the idea behind "Savior" — which follows a vigilante beating up thugs to save a child — originated from the Netflix show "Daredevil." The film took about a month and a half to complete, during which Yah researched real-life vigilantes to make his film more realistic and fight choreography to ensure his actors' safety. However, he also had to contend with unforeseen setbacks. On the day of the shoot, the original actor fractured his arm in a car accident while another was stranded on the freeway. Nonetheless, Yah managed to finish his film, which won in the sound category.

"That was one of the many things I focused on," Yah said. "I created lots of sounds by hand, and just to be recognized for that, makes me feel extremely humbled."

To close out the showcase, faculty members announced the Audience Choice Awards, the category in which viewers voted to decide the winner. For the fall 2019 semester, Katie Mae Peters won with her martial arts film "Fighters," and the spring 2020 semester winner was Goarik Akopyan for her silent horror film, "Dial A Spirit."

For Akopyan, shooting the film took an entire day, while editing took several weeks. Akopyan found the editing process particularly tedious for several reasons, such as painstakingly converting the video files from her camcorder to a format that was compatible with her editing software and adding silent film effects.

Due to the pandemic, several of Akopyan's plans for the film were curtailed — like the size of her cast — and she found that outdoor scenes were difficult to shoot due to various restrictions. However, Akopyan was able to manage her way around them due to the low budget and guerilla-style nature of her film.

"Winning the Audience Choice Award meant so much to me as an aspiring indie film director because it was my first real completed moving art piece for school," Akopyan said. "To receive such recognition for my work was very emotionally moving and motivating for me because I knew I was contending with many talented and creative artists in my class."

The event was the first Student Showcase since the pandemic, as the one planned for the last spring semester had to be canceled. Although unable to host the showcase to an in-person audience, those in charge were still pleased with the results.

"We are very proud of all our students and their work, especially during this challenging and difficult time," said Eric Swelstad, media arts chairperson. "It shows the grit and determination of Valley College students to create artwork from inception to performance in the midst of a national pandemic."



Moises Yah, a Cinema 101 student pictured with the tripod and mount used to record his film "The Savior" Dec. 2, 2020, (Photo by Solomon O. Smith).

# President Gribbons leads during the pandemic

Valley College President Barry Gribbons looks back on 2020 and how it has affected the college.



Photos by Solomon O. Smith

Valley College President Barry Gribbons, pictured on the balcony of his office in the fall 2019 semester, months before the pandemic closures.

## Contributor Gabriel Arizon

In fall 2019, Barry Gribbons was welcomed as the new president of Valley College. Half an academic year later, Gribbons was suddenly tasked with guiding the college through a viral pandemic as the campus closed and classes were moved online.

“The amount of change that had to happen in the time period that it had to happen was outstanding,” he said. “Not everything turned out as we had hoped. I think that the faculty and staff that worked hard and monitoring how things were going and being as innovative to implement changes were really important during those times.”

When the COVID-19 pandemic caused businesses and schools to shut down in mid-March, Valley’s incident response team (made up of administrators, faculty and staff) had to respond quickly to the crisis. As Gribbons described, the team met for weeks in order to address the needs of the campus.

One of the changes that came was the moving of almost all classes to a virtual platform. Gribbons has said he understands the impact this sudden

change has had on students and faculty, knowing that online instruction is not what they signed up for, but he appreciates them doing their best to respond to the alteration and for their resilience. He also thanked the college’s essential workers — such as campus sheriffs and payroll — for continuing to come to campus, stating that “they were critical to the ongoing operation of the college.”

Although the pandemic hampered many activities, Gribbons still holds a strong interest in addressing social justice issues, namely racism. The president has cited the school’s ethnic programs and how the sheriff’s department was given anti-racism training to further those efforts.

“With the murder of George Floyd and the attention brought to anti-racism, the response in the campus community was really extraordinary as well,” he said. “Not only were we in the midst of a worldwide pandemic ... everyone came together to see how to really take an authentic assessment of where we’re at and how we can advance and ensure Valley College is an anti-racist college.”

According to Gribbons, Valley was

able to mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic due in part to the school being fiscally prudent for the past five years. In addition, the \$3 million in CARES Act the school received helped to cover some areas, even though most of the funds went to helping students.

The president continued and said that the school would be able to offer classes to meet student demand and that they do not anticipate any significant cuts in sections. However, he elaborated and said there could be some adjustments based on student demand. Earlier in the year, Valley (along with the other LACCD colleges) took a dip in enrollment in the fall semester, cutting an estimated 75 classes.

Though Gribbons has a wait-and-see approach as to whether the campus will reopen in the spring whenever the COVID vaccine becomes more readily accessible to the public, he is looking forward to the day when Valley can resume with in-person instruction and activities.

“We’re gonna have lots of opportunities to celebrate with each other in person,” he said. “I’m really looking forward to those experiences.”

Valley College President Barry Gribbons standing outside the Administration and Career Advancement building wearing a face mask adorned with the college logo and colors.



President Barry Gribbons, a devout distance runner, hits the road before sunrise to log in 5 miles before going to work on the Valley College campus.

Valley College President Barry Gribbons takes a stroll through an empty campus after the coronavirus pandemic caused schools and businesses to shut down back in March.



# Broken pipes make torrential water flows and swamped basements

**Contributor**  
Solomon Smith and Gabriel Arizon

A pipe burst underground at Valley College yesterday, spilling thousands of gallons of water into the Campus Center basement and adjoining tunnels servicing the campus grounds.

A six-inch pipe between the Art Building and Student Union building, which carried chilled water to cool the buildings, broke at a 90 degree joint. The pipe was old, according to Valley College President Barry Gribbons, but was tied into the new chilled water tank along Burbank Boulevard.

An estimated 250,000 gallons were spilled into the east tunnel, flooding the basement of Campus Center and damaging several transformers. As a result, power was down for a third of the campus and the school could not cool a significant portion of their buildings.

"There's been some flooding in one of our utility tunnels and in the Campus Center, and that affected one of our transformers, and it could also affect some others," said Gribbons. "But right now, about a third of the campus is without power and the situation is fluid, forgive the pun."

According to Gribbons, power outages could affect nursing and respiratory classes as well as some of the Fire Tech classes. Gas-powered pumps were used to move the water out of the Campus Center basement, but damage had not been assessed due to unsafe conditions. Power was automatically turned off on the east side of the campus, leaving several buildings in the dark. Internet and communications were also affected.

"It is too early to tell right now," said Mike Lee. "Right now the goal is to remove all the water."

The interconnected tunnels under Valley are used to service various parts of the school's infrastructure including power systems, local water, communications and the newly installed cooling and air conditioning system.

The cooling system's tank, next to the Journalism and Business Building, is connected to the air conditioning system via a



Plant workers wait for water levels to drop in the Campus Center basement.

Photos by Solomon O. Smith

cool water loop, according to several plant and maintenance workers. The pipes carry thousands of gallons of water from the tank and "several swimming pools worth of water" leaked into the tunnels.

Mike Navarrete, an electrician for

Valley, received a message at 12:07 p.m. asking about power outages at the Campus Center. He was in the tunnels earlier at about 10 a.m. and guesses that the accident occurred between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. Other maintenance workers reported water

in parts of the tunnel at around the same time. Because of the way the tunnels are connected and the slope of the campus, the Campus Center and the access tunnel next to the South Gym were the most flooded.

The South Gym access tunnel had about five feet of water and two pumps were used to remove the water. Until all of the water is pumped out, electricity will remain off until the situation is further evaluated.

Currently, the school has been able to repair the pipe and restore the cooling system to most of the campus. However, repairs are still underway to restore power to Campus Center and the South Gym.

"The transformers aren't mass produced, so it's a little challenging to get them repaired," Gribbons said. "We don't have a time estimate for those repairs yet, so the two buildings will be without power likely for several weeks."

As of yet, there is no cost estimation for the repairs.



Leaf-filled gutters cause flood waters to pool near the west side of the South Gym.



A maintenance worker evaluates flow on a gas-powered water pump, checking for kinked or twisted hoses.

# Incomplete Valley College center still faces an uncertain timeline

The VACC project has been in under construction since 2016, but there remains questions on when the facility will be completed.

Contributor  
Gabriel Arizon

The construction of the Valley Academic and Cultural Center has been ongoing for the past four years with no definitive word on when the building may be completed.

The VACC has been in the works since 2010 when Ehrlich Architects did initial design work for the facility back when it was called by a different name. The Los Angeles Community College District approved the facility six years later with a \$78.5 million budget. Originally due to be finished in two years, the building's completion date was pushed back to 2020 due to a combination of poor planning and heavy rainfall. According to information provided by Maricela Gomez — the communications manager for BuildLACCD — the VACC is forecasted to be finished next

fall with academic activities to begin in early 2022. However, Valley College President Barry Gribbons was hesitant to say if the building would be finished by next year.

"The pace [of the construction] has picked up in the last few months," said Gribbons. "[The construction company] has increased their staffing levels. We will be receiving a revised timeline for the project in the next month or two."

According to Gribbons, progress on the VACC picked up a few months ago when the company building the project, Pinner Construction, had a change in leadership.

An anonymous source has told the Star that the money being spent on the building is close to \$100 million. When asked to confirm, Gribbons affirmed that it was the total budget, but also clarified what was being included.

"If one is looking at the construction

budget, that's one number, but the total budget is another number," he said. "The reason that I say is there has been ... some concern expressed that the budget's radically increased and I think the misunderstanding is they're looking at the total budget presented to them where previously they were only looking at the construction piece. So the large increase was just a different definition of the budget."

According to Gomez, the construction budget is valued at \$80 million and the design contract is \$5.5 million. The latter includes the development of the schematic design, development documents and construction drawings that were submitted to the Division of the State Architect for review and approval.

Gribbons also stated that there have been change orders to the facility — which result in increased costs — that run the range from \$5,000 to \$20,000,

Workers dig trenches along the east side of the Valley Academic & Cultural Center, a new building planned to house several of Valley College's academic departments, Nov. 2, 2020.

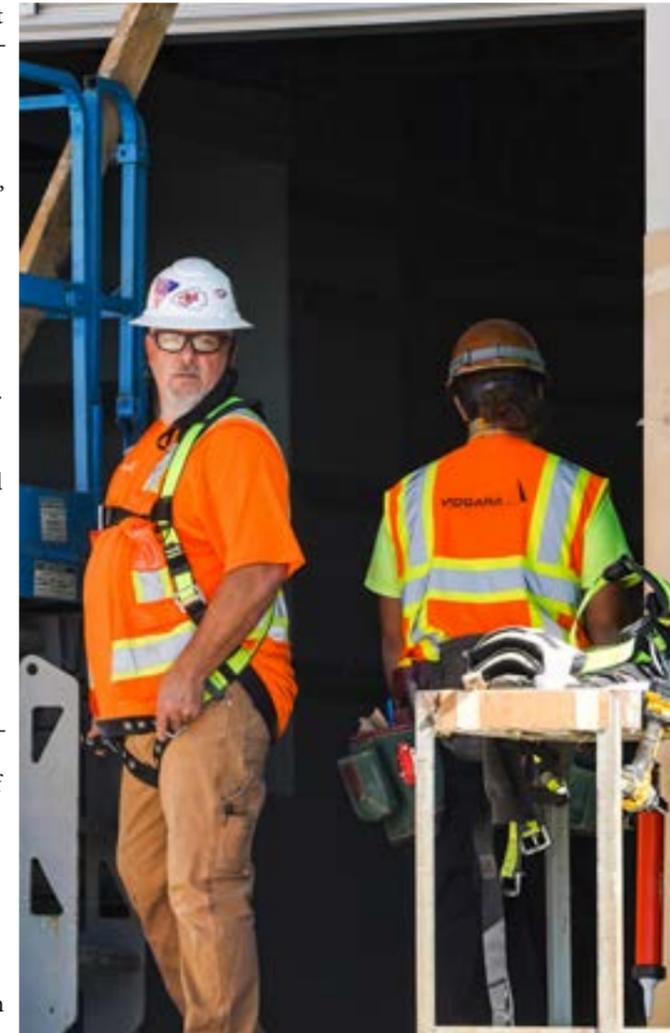
which he stated is to be expected in a project of this size. There have not been any substantial changes to the design of the building.

The president elaborated that there are contract penalties for Pinner not meeting timelines, but it will be a complex matter to determine what the sources of the delays are, since uncontrollable circumstances such as weather must be taken into account.

When completed, the two-story, 118,000-square-foot-facility will feature classrooms, study and rehearsal spaces, a newsroom, a radio station, faculty offices, and four separate theaters. It will also include an Outdoor Amphitheater for outdoor performances and concerts. The center will occupy a large space in the northwestern part of campus, near the Music Building and the Art Building.

While construction on the VACC is ongoing, Valley is already making designs for two other buildings. One such facility is called Academic Complex 1, which will be built along Burbank Boulevard. According to the construction projects page on the school website, the complex will consist of a 80,000-square-foot-building, a new car parking and drop off area, underground storm-water tanks and about 165,000 square feet of site development. It will contain spaces for curriculums such as classes such as mathematics, computer science, business, psychology, ethnic studies and emergency services.

The other facility is called Academic Building 2, which would replace the Theater Arts building. It will be the new home of the technology, speech, English, ESL and foreign language departments. While the website states both projects are slated to begin construction in 2023, Gribbons has said they cannot begin until the VACC is finished. As of now, neither project has a budget tied to them.



Builders work on the interior of the Valley Academic & Cultural Center, Nov. 2, 2020.

Mirrored windows on the northern side of the VACC in the same modern style of newer construction at Valley College, Nov. 2, 2020.





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