



VALLEY LIFE: IMPOSTER
ARTIST SHARES HIS STRUGGLE
WITH IMPOSTER SYNDROME.



GALLERY: FLOYD VIGIL
GEORGE FLOYD REMEMBERED AND
HONORED BY FAMILY IN SAN DIEGO.

March on anniversary of George Floyd's death

On the one-year anniversary of the murder of George Floyd, family members and activists nationwide continue to push for police reform.

MARCOS FRANCO
GABRIEL ARIZON,
CASSANDRA NAVA
STAFF WRITERS

May 25, 2021 marked one year since the killing of George Floyd, which sparked protests and civil unrest across the country last summer when video of the arrest surfaced on social media.

The recording shows former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin pinning Floyd down with a knee to the back of his neck. Despite pleading for his life and repeating "I can't breathe" more than 20 times, Chauvin remained in place, kneeling on Floyd's neck for nine minutes and 29 seconds. Chauvin was convicted of two counts of murder and manslaughter on April 20. The three other officers involved currently await trial.

Floyd's death resulted in national and global protests. Protesters chanted "I can't breathe" and "Black lives matter" to show their support. Latora Greene, co-founder of local organization The Valley of Change, started protesting on the corner of Sepulveda and Ventura Boulevard in honor of Floyd. She stands in front of the Sherman Oaks Galleria every day from 12 to 8 p.m. Yesterday marked 360 days since Green first started protesting.

On the anniversary of his death, thousands of people gathered throughout the nation advocating for legislation and commemorating Floyd's life. Protesters took to the streets of Minneapolis, New York and Los Angeles, bearing artwork, flags and posters in honor of Floyd.

President Joe Biden addressed the nation in an official statement "To deliver real change, we must have accountability when law enforcement officers violate their oaths, and we need to build lasting trust between the vast majority of the men and women who wear the badge honorably and the com-

munities they are sworn to serve and protect."

Floyd's family met with Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris at the White House on Tuesday to honor their loss and continue pushing for criminal justice reform.

"It's a pleasure just to be able to have the chance to meet with [Biden and Harris] when we had that opportunity to," Philonise Floyd, George's brother, told reporters outside the Oval Office. "We're just thankful for what's going on and we just want this George Floyd Policing Act to be passed in the future."

The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020 increases accountability for law enforcement misconduct and is currently awaiting a vote in Congress, which is the last step needed before Biden can sign it into law. If passed, the act would "remedy racial profiling" by law enforcement by restricting no-knock warrants and banning chokeholds.

For Los Angeles, Floyd's killing drew flashbacks of the 1992 beating of Rodney King, where all four officers involved were acquitted on assault charges and three of four for the use of excessive force.

According to an analysis by the LA Times, the LAPD killed 34 people in Los Angeles in 2020. As of May 25, 2021, 11 people have been killed at the hands of the police. Organizations such as Black Lives Matter have called for defunding the police and overall reform.

Last November, voters of LA County allocated 10 percent of the county's locally-generated revenue by investing into alternatives to incarceration including job training, youth development and housing aid through Measure J.

"One of the big takeaways around the uprisings and attention to the Movement for Black Lives is there is more attention on public budgets," said local organizer of Dignity and Power Now Ivette Ale to the NYTimes. "People know how much com-



KNEEL- Protesters take part in The Valley of Change organization that closed the Ventura and Sepulveda crossroad during the march for the anniversary of George Floyd's murder. Tuesday, May 25, Sherman Oaks Galleria, Calif.

munities are spending on police and incarceration. You can't unknow that."

According to ABC, three investigations into the LAPD's actions during last summer's protests — including one conducted by the department itself — found fault in the police's handling of them, claiming that police made matters worse by disrupting peaceful gatherings.

The LAPD acknowledges its mistakes and is updating their crowd-control management protocols. The shift focuses on de-escalating and minimizing confrontations as well as the use of force.

"We're going to do a better job this next time. I pray that there's not a next time, but our command and control, our training of our personnel, the tools and resources they have will be up to the task," said LAPD Chief Michel Moore to ABC.



PROTEST- The nonprofit organization, The Valley of Change, held a march for the anniversary of George Floyd's murder. Tuesday, May 25, Sherman Oaks Galleria, Calif.

California launches a \$116.5 million incentive program for COVID-19 vaccinations

Last Thursday, California Gov. Gavin Newsom announced the largest inoculation incentive in the nation in the hopes of boosting COVID-19 vaccination rates.



GOVERNOR- Gavin Newsom revealed a program in the hopes of motivating more California citizens to get vaccinated.

MEGAN REYES
STAFF WRITER

Gov. Gavin Newsom unveiled a \$116.5 million plan incentivizing vaccinations for Californians who have not received the COVID-19 vaccine and rewarding those who have.

The \$116.5 million vaccine incentive program is called "Vax for the Win" and has three different types of cash prizes. The biggest is a chance to win a \$15 million cash prize, which will be split between 10 vaccinated Californians. The second reward is called "\$50,000 Fridays," which are cash drawings on June 4 and June 11 for 30 vaccinated Californians, totaling \$1.5 million in prizes. The \$50 gift cards are prepaid debit cards for the next 2 million new fully vaccinated residents. All residents who have had at least one COVID-19 dose will automatically be entered.

"These are real incen-

tives," said Newsom during his announcement on Thursday. "These are an opportunity to say thank you to those not only seeking to get vaccinated as we move forward, but also those that have been vaccinated since we first availed those opportunities a number of months ago."

"If there's a way to help nudge people who are still just waiting to get vaccinated ... we're hoping that these thank you gifts remind them how important it is to come in."

- Barbara Ferrer, LA County Department of Public Health director

The winners of the \$15 million reward will be announced on June 15, and the \$50 cards — which started on May 27 — are only while supplies last. The card can be used in grocery stores or it can be a virtual card that can be spent online, in-store or added to a mobile wallet to be used to shop in-stores that accept mobile wallets.

According to the website, in order to qualify residents must be 12 years or older and have received at least the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Prize money will be given to winners after they have been fully vaccinated.

"Prospective winners can decline the award, or they can accept and remain anonymous, though they are permitted to make their award public" Newsom said in an LA Times article.

All California residents can participate, regardless of immigration status, with exceptions for people who are incarcerated

and certain government employees.

"If there's a way to help nudge people who are still just waiting to get vaccinated because it hasn't been the most convenient time or they haven't had time to schedule it, we're hoping that these thank you gifts remind them how important it is to come in," said LA County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer in an LA Times article.

VACCINATIONS

According to the [state government website](#), as of May 31, over 37 million COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered and over 51 percent of the population is fully vaccinated.

Film department recognizes student work in year-end showcase

Valley College's Media Arts Department Student Showcase showed off the creativity of the college's students in the face of difficult conditions.



COURTESY OF VINCENT J. WALKER

STILL- Walker's "Dear God: A Story of Black Boy Joy" took home both audience and faculty awards.



COURTESY OF JAMES MITCHELL

STILL- Mitchell's film "1 in 1000," looks at how traumatic police violence is for the Black community.

SOREN BLOMQUIST
EGGERLING
STAFF WRITER

"Art always reflects society, holding a mirror up to the world," said Valley College film chair Eric Swelstad. When looking at the reflection of the films of the Media Arts Department Student Showcase, he liked what he saw.

The quality of films shown at the recently returned Student Showcase pleased Swelstad quite a bit. The 39 shorts recognized on May 22 were made in the fall of 2020 in Cinema 101, a comprehensive introductory course to filmmaking.

"I was happily surprised by the quality of films that came out despite the fact that we were under COVID restrictions," Swelstad said. "That shows the mettle of the artist."

Students were forced to do their filmmaking from home, relying on their own cameras and friends and family as their crew. The final cuts they were tasked with producing had a time limit of one minute, with an additional 20 seconds allowed for titles.

Swelstad put together this year's screening with the help

of fellow Valley Professors Chad Sustin and Joel Trudgeon. The three teachers were among a group of instructors that voted on five categories: best cinematography, best editing, best sound, best story and best visual effects.

When asked what his favorite film of the bunch was, Swelstad coyly responded that he could not pick a best picture because "it's like picking your favorite child."

"Those films are a reflection of student filmmakers reacting to the world around them."

- Film chair Eric Swelstad

The audience, or anybody with the survey link (which was posted in the description of the Vimeo upload of the reel of films), also picked four films as audience choice winners. Vincent J. Walker's "Dear God: A Story of Black Boy Joy" was the only film to receive an audience choice award as well as a faculty

pick for best cinematography.

A common theme among this year's crop of films were references to current social issues, specifically focusing on race and the effects of the pandemic.

"Those films are a reflection of student filmmakers reacting to the world around them," said Swelstad.

Other faculty award winners included: Paula June Cantu's "Her" for best editing, Miguel A. Carrillo's "A Sleepless Acquiescence" for best sound, Rachid Frihi's "Ink" for best visual effects and Marlee Forsyth's "Ground Control" for best story.

The other three audience choice awards were given to Tanika Nicole's "Sweet Tooth", Jeanie Quirus's "Love in the Time of COVID-19" and Xavier Alexandre's "Beyond the Eye."

This is only the showcase's second consecutive year, after taking an approximately 20-year hiatus. Swelstad hopes it will become a long tradition that serves to recognize the hard work of Valley's film students. Even if it is a small event, Swelstad sees a deeper meaning.

"Don't knock the fact that you get an award at your college," he said. "You can still call yourself an award-winning filmmaker."

Behind the intentions of Joel Crowder's "Naming It Makes It a Thing"

The student artist featured in the art department's latest exhibit, LAUNCH21, opens up about how his internal struggles affect his ability to create art.



VALLEY STAR | JEREMY RUIZ

ARTIST- Joel Crowder is a comic strip artist and student, who was featured in Valley's LAUNCH21, a virtual art gallery hosted by the art department. The virtual gallery serves as an online continuation of the college's annual in-person art exhibitions.

WENDY ROSALES
STAFF WRITER

Joel Crowder uses art to confront his imposter syndrome in his comic, "Naming It Makes It a Thing," published in Valley College's online art gallery.

Crowder is a former U.S. Air Force airman who is currently studying studio art. Crowder shared his struggles with imposter syndrome and gave insight on the battles he faces because of the syndrome in his new comic. Crowder's imposter syndrome extends throughout his life, even outside of his creative field.

"Throughout the years, whether it was being an artist, creative or sometimes with work, I felt as if my contributions weren't really worth any recognition or mention," said Crowder.

Imposter syndrome disproportionately affects high-achieving people who find it difficult to accept their accomplishments. Crowder does not let this define him. Instead, he used his weakness as inspiration for his latest comic "Naming It Makes It a Thing."

"Dealing with imposter syndrome is, you are your worst critic," said the Valley student. "You can either let imposter syndrome

"I wanted to make a comic that resonates with all creative people. Let them know that they are not alone in sometimes feeling like a fraud... Why not spark up a conversation that can help other creatives?"

- Joel Crowder

stop you from becoming the best creative you can be or you can use it to fuel you to be better."

Crowder portrays what goes on in his head when he starts to experience symptoms of imposter syndrome and uses those emotions to characterize the vil-

lain in the comic. The intention of Crowder's comic is to make people resonate since it is a topic that most creatives do not show.

"I wanted to make a comic that resonates with all creative people," said Crowder. "Let them know that they are not alone in sometimes feeling like a fraud. Why not be open about this? Why not spark up a conversation that can help other creatives?"

The best advice that Crowder can give to other creatives going through a similar experience is to remember that the work of every artist is different and people should not compare their work to others. His story reminds those who are struggling to remember they are just as worthy as everyone else and can overcome their internal battles.

"The best thing I can tell anyone is if you feel like your work isn't as good as someone else's that you admire, they're not you," said Crowder. "They don't think like you, they don't create like you. Take a minute and meditate without any outside creative influences and then go create something that will make you happy. It doesn't have to make sense to anyone but you."

The student illustrator wants people to know that it is okay to have these negative feelings against their work. He plans to continue this conversation about imposter syndrome to help others feel less alone.

"True art is mostly a one-person job, but I feel like talking about our weaknesses will make us all stronger artists and creatives."

-Joel Crowder

"I want people to feel like they are not alone in feeling like an imposter when they shouldn't," said Crowder. "True art is mostly a one-person job, but I feel like talking about our weaknesses will make us all stronger artists and creatives. You don't know who you're helping by talking about such controversial things."

Independent filmmaker Cynthia Kao cries foul

Cynthia Kao claims that the Oscar-winning short film "Two Distant Strangers" resembles her video, "Groundhog Day for A Black Man" from 2016.

SOREN BLOMQUIST
EGGERLING
STAFF WRITER

"Two Distant Strangers" won the Oscar for best short film this year, garnering praise and criticism for an original look at police brutality. But for Cynthia Kao, the film's similarities to her short "Groundhog Day For A Black Man" are uncanny, at best.

Kao's viral TikTok compares the two films, and currently has over 4.1 million views. While the TikTok appears to imply something improper occurred, Kao stated that "I don't know what happened and I'm not making any assumptions."

However, Kao pointed out that both films are about Black men stuck in a Groundhog Day-style loop attempting to survive police interactions that inevitably end with them being shot and killed. She pointed out that NowThis — a social media news organization with a left-leaning bent and penchant for dominating Facebook and Instagram feeds — platformed her video after George Floyd's murder. This detail was notable because NowThis served as a co-producer on "Two Distant Strangers."

"This hit me when I saw in the opening credits [read] 'in association with NowThis,'" said Kao in the TikTok. She views herself as David, with NowThis — who had videos that hit 1.7 and 6.7 million views on Facebook in the past day alone — being Goliath.

The crux of Kao's observation rests on the involvement

of NowThis in both projects and the similarities of the films, both being centered on police violence in a continuous loop, a concept popularized in the 1993 Bill Murray film "Groundhog Day." However, some say that the concept is not original

"Kao is not even the only other person to have the idea of using [a time loop] to examine the repeated deaths of Black men at the hands of the police."

- Travon Free, writer and co-director of "Two Distant Strangers"

"Kao is not even the only other person to have the idea of using [a time loop] to examine the repeated deaths of Black men at the hands of the police. In fact, she is not even the first," said Travon Free, writer and co-director of "Two Distant Strangers," in an article from The Washington Post.

Free pointed to a 2015 essay by Luvvie Ajayi Jones as the earliest reference of a time loop that addresses police brutality that he knew. Jones, a speaker, author and podcaster, talked about the harm of the endless loop of videos depicting police

killing Black people in her piece.

Free claimed that he did not know of any prior similar work before creating his short "I did not need to see them. I lived them." The Oscar-winning director attributes the main source of inspiration for "Strangers" to a botched police raid that he was involved in 10 years ago, a claim bolstered by an identical death scenario in his film.

NowThis responded to Kao's video, claiming "Two Distant Strangers" was independently conceived and in the final phase of production months before they became involved in the film, adding that any connection was coincidental. Free also mentioned that NowThis "provided marketing services" and "had no creative influence on the project."

Kao's viral TikTok has gathered both sympathy and criticism. As an Asian-American, a number of people believe it is not her place to tell the story of an officer killing a Black man.

Comments on her TikTok included "you felt comfortable writing a story about black trauma in the first place?" and "You shouldn't be making black trauma art anyway babe." Kao responded to the latter comment, saying, "I hear you."

Kao has since held off on posting TikToks. She did a brief interview with Vice, where she revealed that she had demonetized her short on YouTube and acknowledged that the killing of an innocent Black man may not have been her story to tell.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NETFLIX

OSCAR- The award winning film, "Two Distant Strangers," uses a time loop to portray police brutality.

With the summer heat picking up, come a summer sports update

Valley teams look to practice to compete heading toward the fall sporting seasons, the first time since the pandemic hit.



FALL SPORTS- Valley College athletic teams prepare to return in the fall with sports competitions and proper protocols.

BENJAMIN ROYER
STAFF WRITER

Valley College sports have been up and running since April 19 however teams look towards the fall semester to face their first opponent.

Sports teams have practiced every other day while adhering to guidelines set by the college, in order to keep the athletes, coaches and others safe. Student athletes have their sights set

on the fall as to when they can play their first league-organized game since the campus closure.

“We are anticipating bringing everything back as is, coming fall. Football, water polo, and women’s soccer to operate as usual with proper protocols,” Co-Interim Athletic Director and Head Baseball Coach Dave Mallas said, “We’re moving in the right direction. We’re gathering schedules for fall, and have received the women’s soccer schedule. We anticipate August

9 will be our first practice for football.”

The football team expects a new signal caller as Ottawa raised quarterback Wesley Tshimanga announced he was joining the Monarch team through JZ Media, a sports blog which covers the Canadian Football League team, the Ottawa Redblacks. Transferring in from the University of Ottawa, the quarterback runs an educational and football related Instagram account called “QBI

Football.” Tshimanga has not played a game at the collegiate level yet due to last year’s closures but is confident that his skills have remained sharp.

Starting August 9, Head Football Coach Lester Towns and the rest of the Monarch coaching staff, can prepare for their JUCO football action. JUCO sports is the junior-college rank for student-athletes looking to transfer to a four-year university.

“I think the date is Monday Aug. 9, the first day of fall camp

for everybody at the JUCO level,” said Towns. “Right now our requirement is to test our guys [for COVID] once a week and so if on August 9 if that’s still protocol then that’s what it is.”

The last time the college saw a basketball team compete was when men’s basketball defeated San Diego College 83-81 on March 10, 2020, in an overtime win. If past scheduling repeats itself, the men’s season would begin late next semester while women’s basketball historically begins in early spring.

“We are anticipating bringing everything back as is, coming fall. football, water polo, and women’s soccer to operate as usual with proper protocols.”

- Dave Mallas, head Valley College baseball coach

Having the women’s soccer and football schedule available to view, helps create excitement towards the fall. The women’s soccer team will start at Santa Ana and the football team will begin their season versus Mt. San Antonio College at home.

Monarchs will be able to cheer on their sports teams next semester, for the first time since the campus closure in March of 2020. Although an organized game has not been played since March 13, the teams continue to condition on campus, preparing for the upcoming season.

A wounded champion sits out this season

Amidst two star players being injured, this year’s Lakers limp into the playoffs with major questions and daunting competition.

SOREN EGGERLING
STAFF WRITER

BLOMQUIST

With a thinning hairline and salt and pepper in his beard, LeBron James has started to look how the Los Angeles Lakers have felt all season.

The team has been beaten down by injuries, with James sitting for the longest stretch of his career (20 consecutive games) and fellow star Anthony Davis missing 30 games himself. This resulted in a mediocre regular season, forcing the Lakers to eke out a three-point win over the Golden State Warriors in the new play-in game to officially reach their current first round matchup: as a lowly 7 seed facing a surprising 2 seed, the upstart Phoenix Suns.

“Obviously, it’s been a rough year on me as far as physically... but every day is a step forward.”

- LeBron James

The Suns, who missed the playoffs last year despite an 8-0 record in the bubble, dominated in the regular season, finishing a game away from the best record in the NBA. They are led by longtime James pal Chris Paul and a pair of rising stars in Devin Booker and Deandre Ayton.

The Suns held the edge in the regular season series, winning two out of three games played. Currently, that trend has been reversed, with the Lakers holding a 2-1 advantage in the



BASKETBALL- LeBron James sat out the most consecutive games in his career this season alongside Anthony Davis.

playoff series. After dropping the first game, the Lakers have taken the next two, looking revitalized in the process.

Credit is in large part due to Davis, who after being manhandled by Ayton in Game 1, has bounced back with two 34-point games topped off with 10 and 11 rebounds. James has been serviceable, but his turnovers were high in Game 3, and he has yet to dominate like he has proven he can throughout his career and even earlier this season.

“It feels good for me personally to make plays for my teammates,” James said in a news conference after Game

3. “Obviously, it’s been a rough year on me as far as physically ... but every day is a step forward.”

While the series with the Suns is far from over, Paul’s shoulder injury and Davis’s resurgence have put the Lakers squarely in the driver’s seat. The Western Conference is anyone’s game this year. The Lakers have a strong chance at returning to the Finals, but it is not a given.

James has to nudge up his scoring and cut down on his turnovers, but the key to a Lakers repeat is in the revamped supporting cast, which has been touted as superior to last

year’s championship squad. Andre Drummond and Dennis Schroder, two new additions, have added a scoring punch that is going to be necessary the further into the playoffs the Lakers go. Although Montrezl Harrell, last year’s NBA Sixth Man of the Year, has been benched recently he should see the court going forward as the Lakers will need all hands on deck.

This year’s road to the O’Brien Trophy is much more treacherous than the bubble last year, with the top of the East (Brooklyn in particular) awaiting whoever the deeper West splits out. Utah and Denver are

liable to beat Los Angeles, but do not rule out a comeback from the Clippers in their series with the Mavericks or even revenge by the Suns over the next few games. Still, with a seemingly healthy team (Davis did hyperextend his knee in the Game 3 win while Kentavious Caldwell-Pope suffered a left quad contusion) and one of the greatest players of all-time, the Lakers have just as good of a shot as anyone.

“Lakers are going to Repeat folks! BOOK IT,” tweeted one fan. That confidence may be extreme, but yet again, the Lakers are rounding into form.



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Letters to the editor can be submitted online at www.thevalleystarnews.com. Letters must be limited to 300 words and may be edited for content. Full name and contact information must be supplied in order for letters to be printed. Send by Thursday for the following week’s issue.



Supporters kneel in front of the San Diego Administration Building at a candlelight vigil hosted by the People's Association of Justice Advocates for nine minutes and 29 seconds, the amount of time Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on George Floyd's neck, resulting in his death.

A year after George Floyd's death, the country mourns

Gary Jones, George Floyd's first cousin, spoke at a vigil in San Diego by the People's Association of Justice Advocates in honor of Floyd.

AVA ROSATE
PHOTO EDITOR

A memorial vigil honoring the life of George Floyd was held in San Diego last Tuesday. The vigil was hosted by the People's Association

of Justice Advocates, an organization founded by Rev. Shane Harris.

Among the speakers were Gary Jones, first cousin to George Floyd.

During the vigil, Harris called out community leaders to support the George Floyd Act, a bill that would create major reforms in policing.



Gary Jones, in his speech about the death of George Floyd, said, "God makes no mistakes. His life was taken for all of us to all make a change."



Supporters came together in honor of George Floyd's life by taking a knee for nine minutes and 29 seconds, the amount of time Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin applied pressure to the neck of Floyd, resulting in his death.



Rev. Shane Harris (right), founder of the People's Association of Justice Advocates, leads the audience to take a knee next to Gary Jones (left), first cousin to George Floyd, on Tuesday, May 25, in La Jolla, California. (Photos by Ava Rosate/The Valley Star)



San Diego natives show solidarity with George Floyd's family and the Black Lives Matter movement during the vigil.



Gary Jones shared fond memories of growing up with Floyd. While serving in the Navy, he was stationed in Guam when his cousin was murdered last year.