



VALLEY LIFE: WELCOME DAY
THE ASSOCIATED STUDENT UNION GREETED MONARCHS BACK FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER.



SPORTS: BASEBALL
VALLEY COLLEGE DEFEATED MOORPARK COLLEGE 4-3 ON TUESDAY AFTERNOON.

Valley students turn to online classes

Valley's online courses doubled within two years while some face-to-face classes are being canceled.

ISAAC DEKTOR
MANAGING EDITOR

In-person classes dwindle due to low enrollment as the spring semester kicks off with a cyber-heavy curriculum.

Valley College offered roughly 20 percent of its curriculum as online classes at the start of the 2020 spring semester according to President Barry Gribbons. Enter COVID-19, the term ends abruptly, schools pivot to remote learning and a new normal manifests. Two years later, Valley has more classes meeting online than in the classroom. According to Gribbons, 60 percent of the college's classes have moved online, triple the amount in spring 2020.

"We have significantly higher [enrollment] than the district average," said Gribbons. "I think that is reflective of us really managing the schedule to make sure we have classes that students want to enroll in."

As previously reported by the Star, enrollment numbers have been on the decline for a number of years. At the start of last fall, Valley had 2,663 fewer students than the previous spring semester. While enrollment this spring is still lower than spring 2021, the headcount of 13,355 students is up from last fall.

With a dramatic increase in virtual learning, it is clear that many students have chosen to study remotely. Valley is adjusting its curriculum to meet that demand.

The transition to an online majority class load is part of a larger strategy to meet student needs and drive up enrollment.



STUDENTS- Zachary Kozin, Michelle Melgar and Franco Urquiza walk across an empty campus on Feb. 9 as most students take classes online. According to Valley College President Barry Gribbons, 40 percent of students are enrolled online, while 60 percent attend in-person.

For students who prefer learning in a physical classroom, their choices may be slim. Any classes that begin with less than 10 students enrolled are automatically canceled. For example, students enrolled in English 206: American Literature, which failed to hit the enrollment minimum, will have to find a new class while the semester is already underway.

English 206 and English 105 are among the classes that

were canceled at the onset of the semester, the latter being an IGETC requirement for many.

Eugene Scott, professor of anthropology at Valley, believes many students may have become acclimated to online learning over the past two years, making a full return to campus unlikely.

"I think Valley would like to do in-person primarily, but the enrollment numbers don't reflect that," said Scott. "The longer the remote teaching con-

tinues, the more students may get used to the convenience of it. I think it's more likely there will be a hybrid approach."

Jennifer Fong Borucki, manager of public relations, said the school is expanding its outreach through marketing with its budget increasing by roughly \$400,000 from 2021 to 2022, reaching \$1.2 million for this year. The college is casting a wide net by investing in a variety of ads, from billboards

and direct mail to commercials and social media marketing.

Valley is not branding itself an online dominant school through its marketing.

"We say that we offer online, in-person and hybrid because our students might have different needs," said Borucki. "For some students, online works for them. But you also have some other students who want in-person classes."

Cleared4 scanners face challenges districtwide

In the first week of Valley's spring semester, the implementation of scanning stations was off to a rocky start.

NATALIE METCALF
STAFF WRITER

All scanning stations across the district malfunctioned on Feb. 10, while individual Cleared4 QR code scanners have been glitching since the beginning of the semester.

On Feb. 10 at 9:56 am, students received an email saying that QR code scanning stations were down. Then at 10:38 am, scanning stations were back up and running, according to the district. During that time students were asked to fill out their symptom self-check on their Cleared4 account. Individual scanners at Valley malfunctioned since Feb. 7.

"In my opinion, the choice to partner with a company that on [the] surface level seems illegitimate causes the Los Angeles Community College Board more harm than good," said first year student Sarah Ruttan, who works with emails in her daily job as a Lead Records Clerk at a medical insurance company.

Students and faculty are required to complete a self-check screening before entering any of the nine LACCD campuses. Once completed, students receive a QR code which then needs to be scanned before accessing any facilities. Emails and text messages from Cleared4 are sent to students Monday through Sunday, regardless of when any of the nine college campuses are open.

"The emails look like spam. [Cleared4 wasn't] made clear by the school board... that I [did not know] they were [a] legit site."

- Valley student Sarah Ruttan

"The emails look like spam," said Ruttan. "[Cleared4 wasn't] made clear by the school board in general that I [did not know] they were [a] legit site."

According to Valley's website, Cleared4 check-in stations are placed in every working building on campus. However, there are only scanning stations in 10 out of the 24 buildings. As of right now there are no scanning stations in the Cafeteria, Math, Science and Engineering buildings.

Acting Associate Dean Cecilia Cruz said the administration does not have access to any aggregated data or historical information about past check-ins. Reports generated by Cleared4 only include a snapshot of a particular date and time.

"I get checked in for my classes," said Valley baseball freshman catcher Ryan Monreal. "So I don't have to worry about



SCANNER- A QR code scanner in the Humanities building at Valley College is one of 10 on campus. Students and faculty are required to present their individual QR code after filling out their daily symptom questionnaire, which indicates that they are free of any COVID-19 symptoms and thus cleared for entry.

getting checked in for baseball."

"Our focus will be bringing students into compliance, so we'll be doing our best to work with [them]."

- Valley College President Barry Gribbons

Valley is hiring office assistants to help make sure that students fill out their symptom self-check and scan their QR code before entering the campus. The hiring process for Valley's new office assistants started on Feb. 11.

"Our focus will be bringing students into compliance, so we'll be doing our best to work with the students," said President Barry Gribbons.

Other institutions are finding other methods to make sure

students and faculty are testing negative and have received a full vaccination. UCLA has their students fill out a symptom questionnaire, which is generated by UCLA rather than an outside company like Cleared4.

"In many ways it's much simpler for us given that we don't have dorms on campus, we are operating in person classes at a limited capacity in addition to requiring vaccination and masking," said Gribbons.

Retirement up since pandemic

ISABELLA VODOS
STAFF WRITER

Sixty-four Valley College staff members have resigned since the pandemic began in 2020 for reasons including the move to online learning and to receive retirement benefits.

Over the last two years, 34 Valley faculty members and 30 classified staff have resigned after being provided with a monetary incentive made available through the Separation Incentive Program. The program provides a cash incentive for eligible employees to retire. Each payout is determined by the faculty member's years in service multiplied by two percent of their annual salary plus a supplement of \$7,500. The total payment cannot exceed \$80,000.

"I believe that all of the people who left in 2021 took advantage of the supplement retirement program incentive," said Gribbons. "Some of the folks who retired are planning to still work here part-time."

'The Great Resignation' is a term that refers to roughly 3.3 million employees who have resigned from their jobs after the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. According to NPR, the main factors as to why Americans are resigning are wage stagnation and safety concerns in the workplace. Communications services manager Michael Atkin retired in July 2021.

"I am of retirement age and the college district was offering a monetary incentive for staff to retire," said Atkin. "I have since come back to work but only through the end of this fiscal year to help out."

Susan Singer, an accounting instructor who taught at Valley for over 35 years, resigned due to frustration with teaching online.

"If the pandemic had not happened, I am sure I would still be teaching," said Singer. "Converting to online instruction changed all of that for me. It became very impersonal, and I no longer enjoyed teaching."

The National Education Association displays a survey showing that 55 percent of teachers are more likely to retire because of the pandemic.

For the full story, read our online version.

IMPORTANT DATES

Feb. 21

Campus will be closed on Monday, Feb. 21 for the Presidents Day holiday.

Feb. 23

Valley is offering a free COVID-19 vaccination and testing clinic on Wednesday, Feb. 23 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. in parking lot A.

These features and more can be found in full @ www.thevalleystarnews.com
Follow up-to-date campus news and events on Twitter @ValleyStarNews

Valley’s Welcome Day expected four times as many students

ASU Student Life promotes heart health while welcoming an empty campus.

NATALIE METCALF
STAFF WRITER

A mere 50 students roamed a desolate Monarch Square and Student Services Plaza on Feb. 9 amid a heat advisory and Santa Ana winds.

ASU Student Life expected 200 students for the new semester’s Welcome Day, but only a quarter of those students attended, heading to class or leaving campus for the day. In past years, Welcome Day has seen busier times with more energy, booths, students and faculty.

“Usually on Welcome Days we go for larger amounts, at least 500 students participating,” said Student Engagement Coordinator Raquel Sanchez.

Students and administrators were also celebrating American Heart Month—which takes place in the month of February. This week Valley is celebrating heart disease awareness month by handing out Valley swag bags. The bags distributed by Student Life contained ASU flyers and pamphlets, as well as a beer cozy, a bottle opener, a bag of popcorn and a bag of cookies.

“We are promoting ‘Valley Wears Red,’” said Student Health Education Coordinator

Evelyn Pichado. “We want students to participate by going into Instagram, wearing something red, taking a picture and using the hashtag #lavcwearsred.”

The hashtag was only used twice on Instagram, with both posts coming from the Valley Student Life account.

“We split up [the goodie bags],” said Sanchez. “We have 100 [in Monarch Square] and 100 in Student Services so we can get to locations [and] capture more students.”

The swag bags were distributed in return for students’ signatures in support of ‘Valley Wears Red.’

“The number of students who participate influences our future planning”

- Student Engagement Coordinator Raquel Sanchez

“As a department, we are required to submit a Program Review at the end of the academic year,” said Sanchez in regards

to students signing their name. “The signatures are a way for Student Life to show proof that our activities are attended.”

Signatures are also recommended during campus events, as keeping track of attendance determines future activities at Valley. The lack of student life during Welcome Day is largely due to low in-person enrollment.

“There is about 60 percent [of students] online and 40 percent in person,” said President Barry Gribbons.

With growing concerns about the pandemic and the rise of omicron, an abundance of students being on campus is not possible.

“The number of students who participate influences our future planning,” Sanchez said.



VALLEY STAR | AVA ROSATE
WELCOME (ABOVE) - The turnout expected at the Welcome Day goodie booth was about 200 students. One hour into the two hour event, 50 students were counted in attendance.

VALLEY STAR | LUIS FLORES
BAGS (LEFT) - (L-R) Dean of Student Life Dr. Elizabeth Negrete welcomes Student Aaliyah Ortega back for the Spring semester with a tote bag at the ASU Welcome Day booth hosted in Monarch Square.



Valley’s football field featured in “Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” reboot

Among the hallmarks that led to the success of Will Smith’s version of “Bel-Air” and the nostalgia brought about by its reboot lies Valley’s Monarch

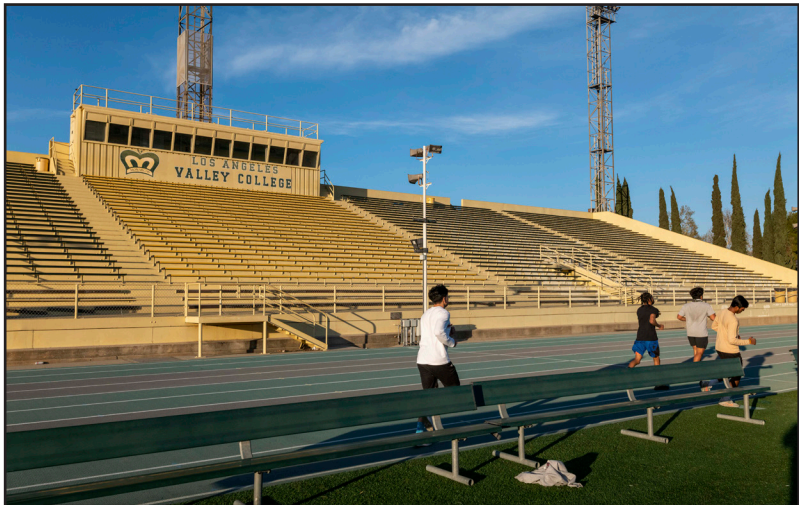
EDWARD SEGAL
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

The Fresh Prince found his new throne at Valley College as the reboot of the fan-favorite show of the ‘90s made its debut Sunday, showcasing the football field where the Monarchs play their home games.

“Filming rentals is the area that we hope to grow to help the campus budget.”

- Manager of Public Relations Jennifer Borucki

The field appeared for two brief moments in the trailer, showing Carlton (Olly Sholotan) and Will (Jabari Banks) about to play Lacrosse, with Carlton telling the Fresh Prince that as the



VALLEY STAR | JOSE CALLEJAS
FOOTBALL - Monarch Stadium is featured in 2022’s dramatization of “Fresh Prince of Bel-Air.”

new kid on the block, Will should follow his lead. Valley was paid about \$115,000 for the use of its football field and hopes to continue letting productions film on campus. According to Jennifer Fong Borucki, manager of public relations, the college has nothing scheduled at the moment.

“Filming rentals is the area that we hope to grow to

help the campus budget,” said Borucki. “[In order to do this], we will continue to cultivate our working relationships with filming location scouts.”

According to Borucki, the money will be reinvested into efforts to increase enrollment in future semesters, as well as cover unexpected expenditures such as those related to COVID-19.



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL TELEVISION
BEL-AIR - (L-R) Jabari Banks and Olly Sholotan star as Will Smith and Carlton Banks in 2022’s “Bel-Air” on Peacock.

“Bel-Air” will come out as a weekly release every Sunday on Peacock, a partly-free streaming service owned by NBC Universal, continuing on Feb. 20 with the fourth episode. Kickstarted by director Morgan Cooper’s 2019 short film of the same title, the series aims to be a dramatic modern-day retelling of the ‘90s sitcom. The reboot will

star Jabari Banks as Will Smith, a kid moving from Philadelphia to his uncle’s house in search of a new life, and Olly Sholotan as his nerd cousin Carlton Banks. The original Fresh Prince, Will Smith himself, is one of the executive producers of the show. Peacock already approved the series for two seasons. Valley’s various facilities

have been utilized by many productions, including “Goliath,” “The Assassination of Gianni Versace,” “Monster” and “Homecoming,” as well as commercials for TJ Maxx and “I Can Afford College,” a campaign to raise money for students of California Community Colleges.

In addition to the football stadium, Valley’s gym, swimming pool, Monarch Square and student union have been featured in various productions. Premiering Sunday, Feb. 13, the show was overshadowed by the Super Bowl, but with the fourth episode not dropping until Feb. 20, fans will have ample time to catch up to the remake of the hit-series.

THE FACTS

“Bel-Air” is streaming on Peacock as a weekly release.

“The Worst Person in the World” is the best movie of the year

Joachim Trier’s romantic dramedy feature explores the coming of age genre for those who, by society’s standards, should have already found themselves.

CASSANDRA NAVA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Julie (Renate Reinsve), an indecisive thirtysomething, is the ‘worst person in the world’ in Joachim Trier’s amazingly relatable 2021 film, which explores the feeling of being lost in life. The titular character stumbles in and out of relationships, hoping to find a piece of herself in each decision.

Told in 14 chapters, including a prologue and epilogue, the Norwegian film follows Julie as she grapples with her identity. She struggles with deciding a major, a passion, a partner — each problem as impactful to the trajectory of her life as the next. Through her relationships, Julie forms her identity or at least comes to terms with it. The context of her love life provides a realistic portrayal of just how much another person can impact individual life choices. Whether the audience views her relationship with her older boyfriend Aksel (Anders Danielsen Lie), her love interest Elvind (Herbert Nordrum) or her father (Vidar Sandem), each chapter



PHOTO COURTESY OF OSLO PICTURES
WORST- Renate Reinsve stars in 2021’s Academy Award nominated “The Worst Person in the World.”

acts as a peephole into the life of an off-course young adult.

First released in January 2021 in Norway (and released nationwide on Feb. 4, 2022), “The Worst Person in the World,” received worldwide acclaim. Reinsve’s organic delivery and natural charisma led her to win best actress at last year’s Cannes Film Festival, an awards ceremony held in France that honors worldwide cinema. Nationwide, the film has been nominated for “Best Original Screenplay”

and “Best International Feature Film” by the Academy Awards (which take place on March 27).

The awards and nominations come as no surprise, as the dialogue and delivery of the actors propel the film past cheesy romantic comedy tropes. Through the use of a narrator and unique editing placed carefully in certain chapters, audiences are never stuck in a moment for too long.

Julie’s first serious partner introduced is Aksel (Anders

Danielsen Lie), a graphic novelist whose crude drawings are comparable to R. Crumb. However, his immature art style does not reflect his personality but rather contrasts it. Twice her age and ready to settle down, Aksel forces Julie to think about the future of their life together. At this point, tension is palpable and her fear of placing all of her time in one person is thrown in her face.

Her alternate admirer is Elvind, who differs from Aksel by not applying pressure, partly

because he too is figuring himself out. Although just as special, their love story reveals how fleeting love at first sight can be.

The significance of time is a crucial element in moving the story forward. It is either not the right time, too much, too little or time simply ceases to exist. In a gorgeous scene that viewers

The dialogue and delivery of the actors propel the film past cheesy romantic comedy tropes.

can only appreciate through the medium of film, Julie stops the clock with the flick of a light switch to spend a day with someone she can not take her mind off of, even if she knows it is wrong. The dreamlike sequence featured real people of Oslo, Norway, frozen in the streets (done without using any kind of special effects), while Julie and her current romantic interest

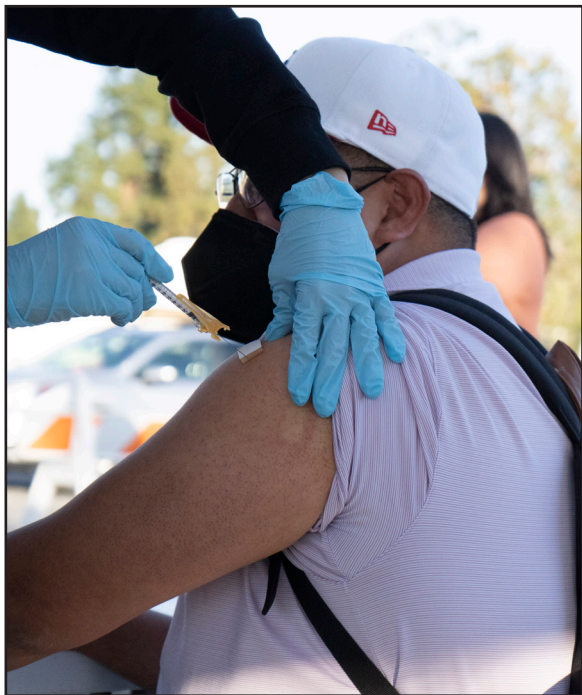
are the only ones in motion, exploring the age-old theme of wishing to be with the one you love without any distractions.

By the end of the four-year glimpse into Julie’s life, viewers are left with the same melancholy feeling that the protagonist endures. The film’s bittersweet conclusion shows the struggles of choosing a path and the dreadful feeling of not knowing what lies at the end. But that is the comedy of it all, reassuring oneself into thinking the right choice was made — when there is never a way to know for sure.

VALLEY’S STARS

★★★★☆

Worth the watch. Limited release in theaters.



Valley Star | Ava Rosate
Robert Zea, second year nursing student, receives his booster shot at the mobile vaccine clinic in Parking Lot A.



Valley Star | Jose Callejas
The Random Acts of Kindness bulletin in the Student Union building is an effort to spread kindness in the community.



Valley Star | Jose Callejas
Sharon Khan, a biology student, was able to beat the 86 degree heat on Wednesday by sitting in a shaded area in the quad before her class began.



Valley Star | Luis Flores
Head Coach for Valley's baseball team and Athletic Director Dave Mallas educates his athletes during one of their first training sessions of the season on the Monarch baseball field Wednesday.

Monarchs spring into a new semester

Ava Rosate
Photo Editor

After an almost two month winter break, the Valley campus welcomed the return of students during a weeklong heatwave. The Office of Student Life hosted a Welcome Day on Wednesday resulting in a lackluster turnout with a sparse number of students in attendance and an abundance of goodie bags. Fulgent mobile clinic in Parking Lot A offered a \$150 bookstore giftcard for students who recieved a vaccine

or booster shot. Campus activities ended off on a relaxed note with a Mindful Yoga session offered in the North Mall on Friday by Student Health Education. Valley sports contributed to keeping the Monarch morale high throughtout the week with men and womens basketball along with two softball games and four baseball games.



Valley Star | Griffin O'Rourke
A Valentine's Day party held outside the cafeteria could have been mistaken for an official campus event due to the music and party decorations, but was organized by students that came together to celebrate their friendship.

Valley does not have the mask mandate covered

Despite guidelines for face coverings on campus, Valley has not distributed masks efficiently or policed its set boundaries.

MATTHEW ROYER
NEWS EDITOR

A new semester starts at Valley College during a surge of the Omicron variant of COVID-19. In response, Valley provided students with new guidelines for masks on campus, shifting their policy from previous semesters, mandating N95 masks as its preferred face covering for students and faculty. However, if N95 masks are the designated preference and what students and faculty feel most comfortable with, Valley should actively distribute masks and police the mandate.

In addition to the new face-covering guidelines, Valley mandated booster shots for the student body. Unfortunately, while students and faculty could have expected Valley to uphold its curated safety measures, that assumption has been proven dead wrong after just the first week of Spring.

When walking around campus during Welcome Week, some students could be seen wearing N95 masks or even surgical masks. However, far too many students roaming the campus were wearing the previously distributed cloth masks, gaiters and even bandanas as their face covering of choice. This is not at the fault of the student body – to even get a hold of an N95 mask on campus, a student could not just ask their

professor for one; in fact, faculty must request N95 masks to their lecturing space in advance to even have them available.

To get an N95 mask at Valley, students have to go to the campus library to acquire a to-go bag with said masks inside. While this is helpful, there is zero promotion of the mask distribution on campus.

“It is good for everyone to have them. Obviously, they are required... It is important to know where to get these resources.”

- Valley student
Dylan Clingo

Valley’s welcome email for the Spring semester did not address the changes in their safety guidelines regarding face coverings. While the administration sent the message with information on Cleared4, COVID testing and the new scanning stations, the latter of which have had their own problems during Welcome Week, N95 masks were nowhere to be mentioned, let alone where to get a hold of one.

The email even mentions the library’s services on campus



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | JEREMY RUIZ

MASKS- Valley College must do more to distribute face-coverings to student and faculty.

but fails to tell the student body of the N95 mask bags just inside.

“It is good for everyone to have them,” said screenwriting major Dylan Clingo. “Obviously, they are required. I do not know

the difference between the surgical and the N95 [masks], but it is important to know where to get these resources.”

What should have been a simple handing out of gov-

ernment-supplied safety products in the middle of a deadly pandemic is instead a collection of hoops for students and faculty to jump through just to feel safe on campus.

Scanning stations provide little to no safety

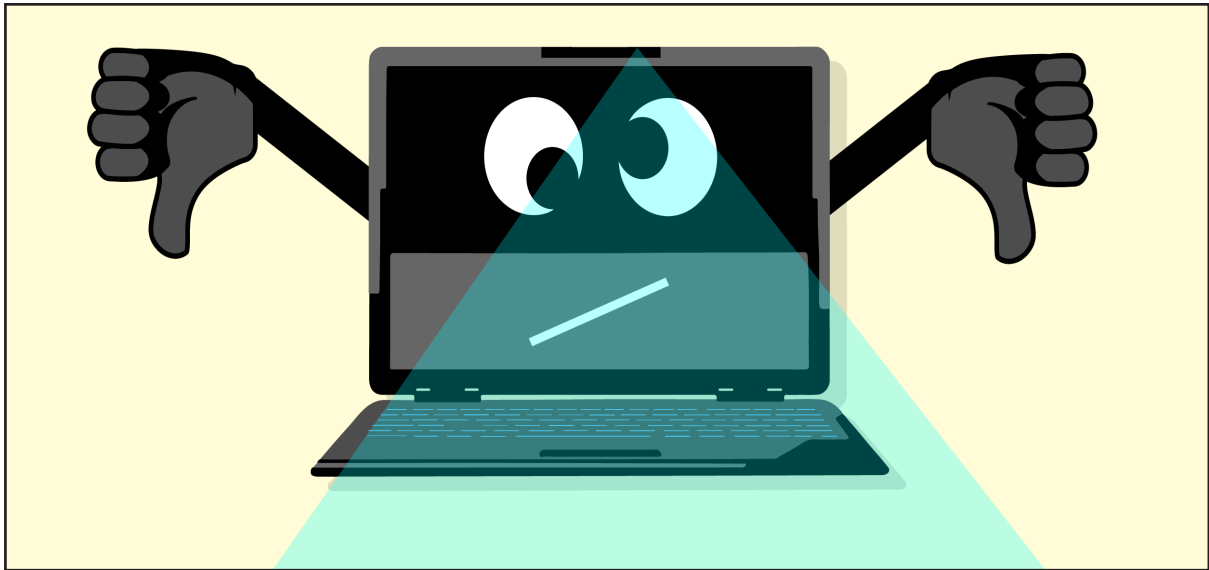
The college’s self-check survey and newly implemented scanning stations offer a false sense of security amid recent malfunctions.

CASSANDRA NAVA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Only 10 buildings on campus are outfitted with scanning stations for students to verify their Cleared4Class pass this semester, but with no enforcement, data monitoring and malfunctioning scanners, Valley College’s efforts bring more confusion than clarity.

Valley’s website states that in order to access campus facilities, a student or faculty member must follow the two-step process of filling out the self-check questionnaire and scan the QR code’s “clear pass.” In the first week of the spring semester, check-in scanning stations in the business journalism and humanities building were out of order. On Feb. 10, students were sent an email from Valley with the subject; “Cleared4 Check-In Stations are Temporarily Down; If Visiting the Campus, Still Do Your Self-Check Screening.” About an hour later a follow-up email was sent stating that the check-in stations were operational again.

These scanning stations, which were installed as early as last fall — and are hardly more than a chromebook placed on a desk — have proven themselves an ineffective way to keep track of a student’s clear pass. Despite the malfunction of the scanners districtwide, classes and buildings remained open, proving the uselessness of the scanners.



GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION | MATTHEW ROYER

SCAN- Valley College’s recently installed scanning stations have done little to offer safety to students.

The enforcement of using the check-in system is nonexistent, which begs the question of how many students are attending classes with symptoms of COVID-19. Students can choose to ignore the option to scan (or even skip the symptom check entirely) because there is no accountability.

According to President Barry Gribbons, the college is hiring office assistants to configure the data on a “regular basis” and follow up with students who do not self-check and scan in for the day. The hiring process started on Feb. 11. “Any student who is not

in compliance with any of the requirements should expect to be contacted by those staff members,” said Gribbons. “Our focus

Although the college may be acting quickly out of concern for student safety, the new systems are sloppily implemented and offer a false sense of security.

will be bringing students into compliance, so we’ll be doing our best to work with the students.”

In their current state of perpetual malfunction, the scanners do not offer any protection to students or faculty. But the issue of accountability does not boil down to the scanner; schools do not have the ability to review a history of Cleared4 symptom self-checks, meaning there is no way to prove that students actually use the system that is supposed to keep them safe.

The two-step system is flawed, but with indoor masking enforced there is at least one constant. Although the college may be acting quickly out of

concern for student safety, the new systems are sloppily implemented and offer a false sense of security. The college should focus on creating guidelines for these systems that students will actually follow, otherwise the whole process will continue to be fundamentally useless.

The abundance of rules and emails forced down students’ throats can cause more harm than good, confusing them or possibly deterring them from taking in-person courses.

Unclear guidelines only further a student’s confidence in what is designed to create a safe return to campus, resulting in a lack of trying to comply with a system that has not proven to be successful.

EDITORS’ NOTE

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

VALLEY VIEW | HOW HAVE THE SCANNERS AFFECTED YOUR IN-PERSON EXPERIENCE?

TEXT BY ISAAC DEKTOR

PHOTOS BY JEREMY RUIZ



“It’s very inconvenient because I don’t like the fact that you can’t use the same QR code over and over again, you have to have a different one each time. If they could link to the amount of times that you’ve been tested and your symptoms, that would be much easier. I do believe that it’s very essential.”

- ISAAC BISHOFF, GEOGRAPHY



“The only times I’ve used them is in the library because nobody enforces them. You can just walk in anyway, and people could just literally say ‘no, no, no, no, no’ and they’ll let you in.”

- NICOLAS VILLANUEVA, FRESHMAN ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING



“It hasn’t really affected me much. I think it’s nice because it’s more of a safer way for everyone to be on campus. It didn’t affect me negatively. I know some people hate it, but I like it.”

-MICHELLE MELGAR, FIRE TECHNOLOGY



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GOT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR?

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

Valley tight end Dupree Fuller Jr. receives Division I HBCU offer

After starring for the Monarchs, Fuller Jr. has grabbed attention from multiple, four-year universities across the nation.

BENJAMIN ROYER
SPORTS EDITOR

Valley College tight end Dupree Fuller Jr., a physical and statistical leader for the Monarchs’ offense in 2021, now hopes to launch his career to the Division I level. Towering over defensive backs at 6-foot-4 and 265 lbs, spectators could perceive that Fuller Jr. plays a large role on the gridiron. From the first snap in every contest, the staunch tight end helped drive the Monarchs down the field with his high-intensity effort, leading Valley receivers with 744 yards and six touchdowns. His development on the field was rewarded with offensive first-team honors in the Pacific League and has now earned the spring graduate a Division I offer from North Carolina Central University, a historically black college and university.

“Dupree is a game-changer. I am excited for him, his family and the opportunities that have been created by his hard work and dedication. He deserves all of the attention he has received.

- Valley Offensive Coordinator Paul Holt

“It feels like all of my hard work is complete,” said Fuller Jr. “It is what I have worked for all my life. It is heartwarming and humbling. It makes me want to work even harder to get more [honors].” Celebrating his Jan. 23 offer from NC Central University tight ends coach Evan Harrington on Twitter, Fuller Jr. garnered support from across the Valley and the junior college football community. Pro Football Hall of Famer and Jackson State coach Deion “Prime Time” Sanders helped HBCU schools boost in stature across the college football landscape in 2021 when he recruited highly sought-after prospects to his roster in Mississippi. Previously, the majority of players with Division I potential would enroll at universities in Power 5 conferences - the programs with the most funding and popularity. This year, NC Central University has already received a transfer commitment from former South Carolina University wide receiver and highly ranked, four-star prospect OrTre Smith. Fuller Jr. recognizes the path that HBCU schools are building and how they could affect where he transfers. “As an African American kid, it is really amazing to see that finally, HBCUs are getting the attention that they deserve,” said Fuller Jr. “Having a Division I HBCU offer as my first [Division I offer] is really



VALLEY STAR | JEREMY RUIZ
FUTURE - Dupree Fuller Jr. is a tight end for Valley College football and has recently recieved a Division I offer from NC Central University.

great. They saw my talent and wanted to take a chance on me.” Through his time playing at Monarch Stadium, the talented wideout gives a lot of credit for his growth to Valley offensive coordinator Paul Holt. Nicknaming Holt “Unc,” an uncle figure, Fuller Jr. expressed gratitude for the mentorship he has received from the

Monarchs’ offensive play-caller. Holt reciprocated the sentiment from his receiving star. “Dupree is a game-changer,” said Holt. “I am excited for him, his family and the opportunities that have been created by his hard work and dedication. He deserves all of the attention he has received. [I am] going to enjoy watch-

ing him on Saturdays this fall.” Division II schools Adams State University and Black Hills State, in Colorado and South Dakota respectively, and Virginia University of Lynchburg, an HBCU which competes in the National Christian College Athletic Association and are pursuing the Monarch as well. Fuller Jr. has time to decide

where to commit and is still weighing his options before he chooses where to go for his next student-athlete experience. Whether it is in the Rocky Mountains, Virginia Beach, the Tar Heel state, South Dakota or another region of the United States, Valley’s breakout talent is set to continue his dream of playing college football.

Valley back in win column: Elvis Park walks-off Moorpark

Isaac Amador, Daniel Parra, Josh Eigenbrodt and Edric Rodriguez combined for 10 innings of scoreless pitching in Thursday’s 4-3 victory.

BENJAMIN ROYER
SPORTS EDITOR

Through the bitter cold, freshman first baseman Elvis Park embraced the warmth of his teammates, hitting a walk-off RBI single to prevent a three-game losing streak. “[My teammates] showed love and I love that,” said Park after celebrating, with the 4-3 score displayed behind him. “I’ll love that forever.” Up by two runs in the top of the ninth inning, Valley College baseball (6-3) seemed to have had the game wrapped up against Moorpark College (2-8), but a blown save from freshman reliever Xavier Dubon sent Tuesday afternoon’s contest to extra innings, where the Monarchs’ pitching staff recovered and Park sent the dugout into jubilation. “Under the conditions that we had today, we came back and fought,” said coach Dave Mallas. “It would have been nice to pull it out in the ninth inning. But being able to walk [Moorpark] off there at the end — that was a great at-bat at the end by Park to win it.” Despite Dubon’s blown save, Valley’s pitching staff set the Monarchs on a course for victory. Sophomore left-hander Isaac Amador started for the Monarchs on Tuesday afternoon. Coming off of 2.2 scoreless innings of relief in Thursday’s

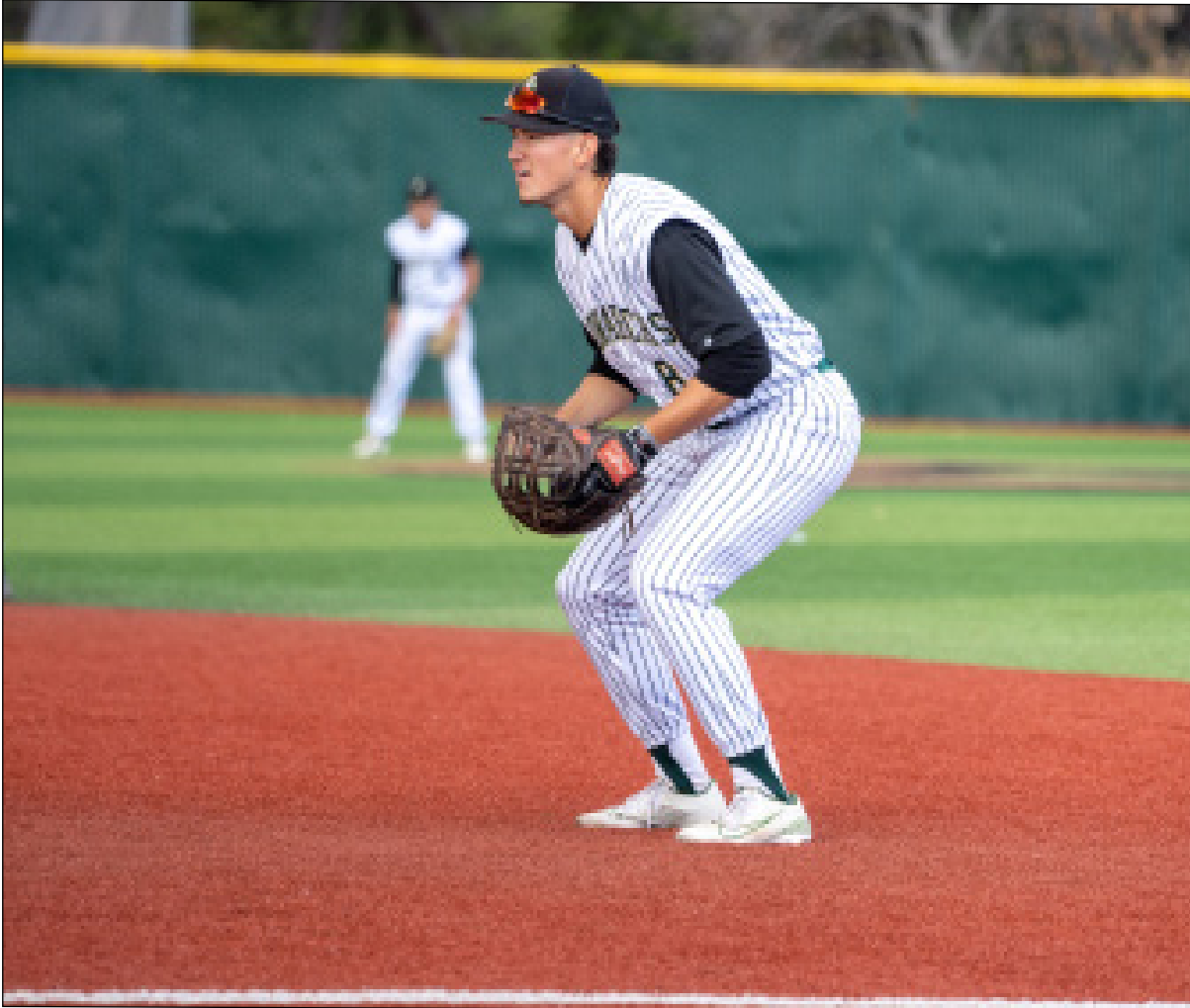
win over Folsom Lake, Amador outmatched the Raiders from the first pitch until his removal. The southpaw’s slider had Moorpark’s offense struggling to find a rhythm and forced its lineup to look off-balance through the first four innings. After collecting six strikeouts in four innings of work, Mallas removed Amador and trusted his bullpen to get them through the rest of the contest. In the bottom of the second, freshman catcher Robert Velasco gave the Monarchs a 2-0 lead. Curling a line-drive double down the left field line, Velasco brought home two Valley baserunners. Moorpark and Valley then traded runs in the fifth inning. Monarchs’ freshman reliever Daniel Parra allowed a single with two outs and freshman shortstop Dorian Asher committed an error on a grounder, sailing a ball over the head of freshman first baseman Elvis Park, allowing a run to score. However, in the bottom of the fifth, Park hit a sacrifice fly with the bases loaded and re-established the Monarchs’ two-run lead. Following Amador’s exit, the Monarchs’ bullpen continued to shut down the Raiders at the plate. Parra pitched the top of the fifth and freshman left-hander Josh Eigenbrodt twirled three scoreless frames from the sixth to the eighth,

holding the Monarchs’ 3-1 lead. Dubon came in to try and close the game in the top of the ninth. Dubon got one out on a flyball to freshman center fielder Jackson Lapiner, but after two singles and a walk, the Raiders had the game-tying run at second with the bases loaded. The righty battled to strike out the Raiders’ leadoff hitter looking on a backdoor slider, but the next batter attacked Dubon’s earlier mistakes and hit a two-RBI single to tie the game at three. Unable to score in the bottom of the ninth, the contest entered extra innings. Needing clear frames, Mallas turned to freshman right-hander Edric Rodriguez — delivering scoreless 10th and 11th innings. Park’s aforementioned walk-off single capped off a tense ballgame that tested Valley’s depth tenfold. As soon as the runner scored, Valley’s entire roster swarmed Park as he turned around first base, celebrating in the outfield, watching Moorpark dejectedly return to their dugout. “Going up to the plate, I just wanted to do the best for my team,” said Park. “I got the pitch, I hit the single up the middle and now... we’re outta here.” Valley plays a two-game series against LA Harbor on Thursday and Friday, with the first game in Wilmington and the second at home.



PHOTOS BY JOSE CALLEJAS | VALLEY STAR
COMPOSED (ABOVE) - Valley freshman right fielder Joshua Wood takes a moment before entering the batter’s box against Moorpark on Tuesday afternoon.

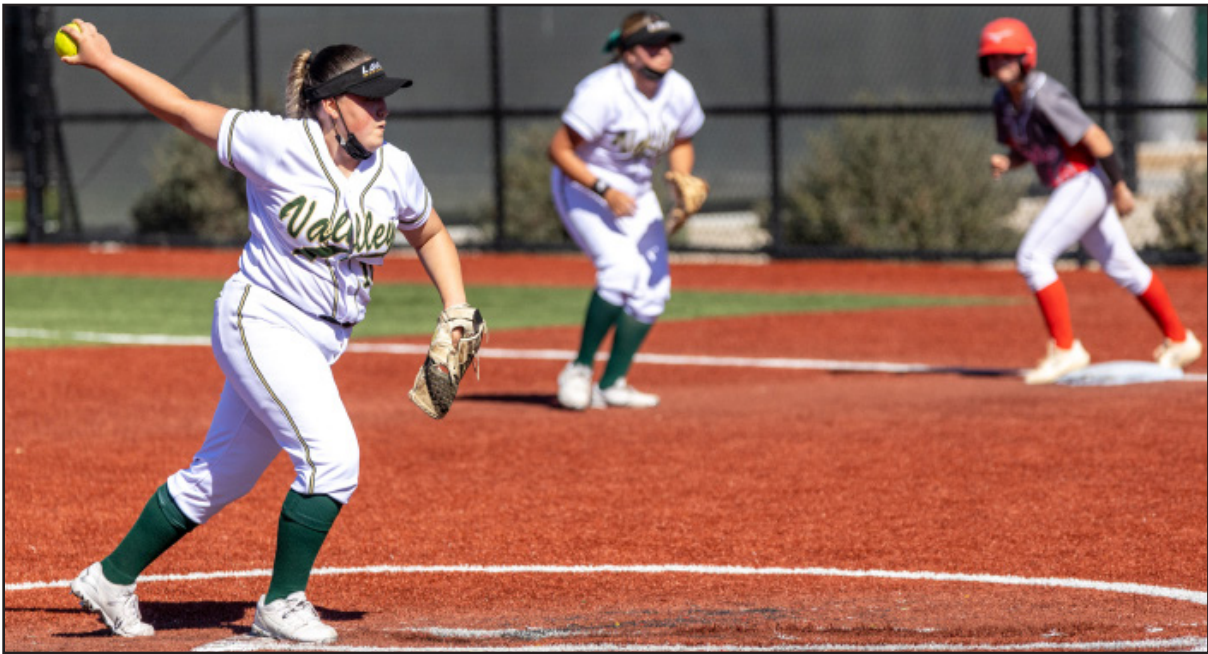
CLUTCH (BELOW) - Valley freshman first baseman Elvis Park prepares himself before the pitch is thrown. Park hit a walk-off RBI single to defeat Moorpark 4-3 on Tuesday afternoon.



HIT - Valley freshman shortstop Dorian Asher swings at a pitch against Moorpark on Tuesday afternoon.

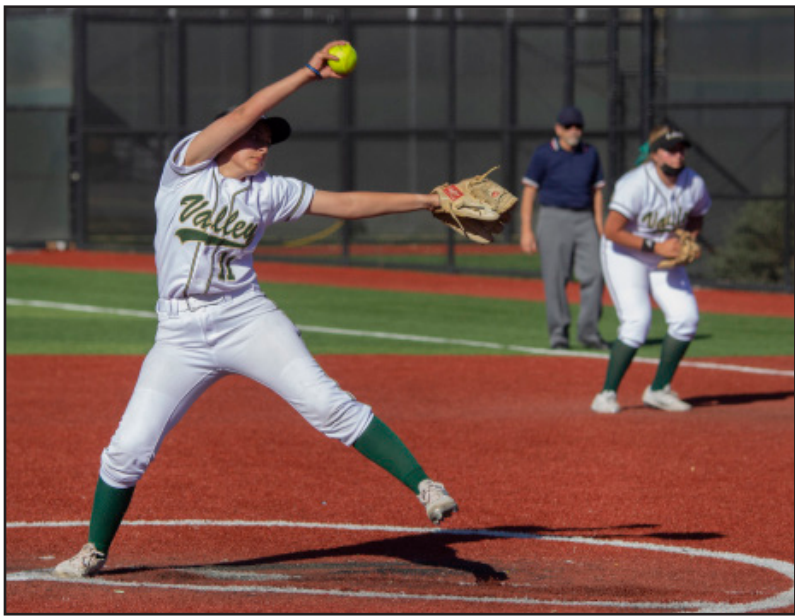
Valley splits doubleheader with Mt. San Jacinto

The Monarchs offense could catch fire at any moment but is difficult to rekindle once the flames go out.



VALLEY STAR | JEREMY RUIZ PITCHERS (ABOVE) - Monarch pitcher Isabelle Ward, left, throws a pitch with a runner on first base.

VALLEY STAR | AVA ROSATE (BELOW) - Monarch relief pitcher Amber Basham pitched the first inning of the second game against Mt. San Jacinto.



EDWARD SEGAL
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

Starting pitcher Isabel Ward’s six shutout innings helped secure the game one victory, but pitching depth proved to be the fatal flaw of the Monarchs as their relievers struggled to keep the Eagles off the board in game two.

Valley College (2-6) came into Friday afternoon’s affair looking to secure their second and third win of the season and bounce back from the rocky start thus far. The Monarchs batted in run after run to ice game one, winning 6-1 and scoring over four runs for only the second time this season. Previously winless Mt. San Jacinto College

(1-6) responded in game two, reversing the outcome of game one for an 8-0 victory. “[Gametwo]wasatrappgame,” said Valley coach Greg Venger. “We won game one convincingly, 6-1, but we got a little complacent, a little too comfortable.” To start game one, Valley came out struggling in the first inning. In the first at-bat, a double was hit to the left center wall, putting the Monarchs in a vulnerable position early. After a quick ground out, Ward followed up with a wild pitch, allowing the runner to move up to third. Following the wild pitch, a line drive was bulleted past third base for an RBI single that put the Eagles up by one. Mt. San Jacinto’s lead did not last long, however, as catcher Citali Mendez sent the ball barreling at the left field wall for a double. Next, infielder Melissa Orozco hit a double into deep right field, scoring Mendez to tie the game at one. Infielder Katelyn Santisteban hit the

Monarchs’ third consecutive double, ripping the ball into deep center, scoring Orozco.

“I just made sure to keep my consistency up. I kept my cool and I kept breathing.”
- Valley pitcher, Isabelle Ward

Ward walked a pair to begin the top of the second, creating self-induced trouble after her offense provided a one run lead. Luckily, the right-handed pitcher quickly cleaned up without allowing any runs, giving the Monarchstime to build their lead. The Monarchs had a chance to strike after back-to-back 1-2-3 frames. Mendez hit a ground-er past third for a double and with a runner in scoring position, Orozco hit a single to give Valley runners on first and third. On the next at-bat, all the offensive work turned to dust. Santisteban popped the ball up to the Mt. San Jacinto shortstop to end the inning. Several outfielders came up clutch to force another 1-2-3 inning in the top of the fourth. The inning was capped off by shortstop Caitlyn Pineda making a running catch in center field for the third out. The Monarchs huddled up before the bottom of the fourth and rallied their offense to get more runs in and solidify a victory. “More runs on three, one-two-three, more runs!” was the Monarchs’ chant going into the fourth inning, and more runs they scored. Center fielder Elizabeth Flores batted first, hitting a single past the infielder and

into right field. Shortstop Tea Carbajal rocketed the ball to the left field wall for a double, setting up first and third with no outs for the Monarchs. Isabel Flores hit an RBI single down the middle to score Flores and make the score 3-1. Seconds later, a wild pitch led to Carbajal crossing home for Valley’s fourth run of the game. With runners on first and second, right fielder Lexus Freire sacrifice bunted to move the runners up into scoring position. Infielder Caitlyn Pineda hit the ball down the middle to score a run and Mendez hit a ground-out to second to score another. The Monarchs never gave up this five-run lead as Ward stepped up, allowing only two hits and two walks in the remaining three innings. “I just made sure to keep my consistency up,” said Ward. “It all goes back to the mechanics. I kept my cool and I kept breathing.” Monarchs celebrated their win during the 30-minute break between games and looked to secure a sweep. However, the Eagles flipped the script. The Monarchs’ relievers could not keep runs off the board in game two, causing a large deficit that the bats could not shrink. Valley’s pitchers Amber Basham and Sidney Hernandez combined for 4.0 innings of work, giving up three and five runs respectively. Mt. San Jacinto scored four runs in the second, three in the third and one in the fourth inning of the second contest. The Monarchs faced an uphill battle and almost rallied in the bottom of the second. Valley sent back-to-back flyballs to center field and watched Mt. San Jacinto centerfielder Veronika Prado make diving catches on both, leaving Valley with a goose egg on the scoreboard. More walks, wild pitch-

es and hits for the Eagles saw their lead increase to seven in the third, forcing Venger into another mound visit. Momentum seemed to be turning in Valley’s favor, however, when Pineda stepped up to the plate with two outs and Freire on first base. She rocketed the ball into right field and it took an awkward bounce into foul territory, allowing the runners to advance to second and third. Despite this effort, the next at-bat saw a pop-up caught by the Eagles’ infielder, ending the inning in an anti-climactic fashion. The one bright spot in the game came when Elizabeth Flores made a catch at the wall on what looked like a possible home run, but the stunning effort did not spark the Monarchs’ offense. Valley’s chances were running thin and the Monarchs needed to work some magic in order to come back. This time, however, there was no chant going into the fourth inning. The match ended 8-0 after five innings as the dejected Monarchs went home, consoled only by the fact that they won game one. “We got three outs in the top of the first,” said Venger. “Had we come up in the bottom of the first and put a number up, had we scored anything, I think that would have been a really big momentum shift going into the rest of the game. We didn’t, and we couldn’t battle back.”

Next Games
Feb. 17 vs Allan Hancock
Feb. 21 vs Rio Hondo
Feb. 23 vs Chaffey

Short-handed Monarchs collapse in second half

After staying in the game through the first half, tired legs got the best of Valley College resulting in a 40-point blowout.

EDWARD SEGAL
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

What started as a close match through its first 15 minutes turned into a one-sided affair when the Monarchs’ poor ball control resulted in several Wildcats’ 3-pointers and an eventual 88-48 win for West L.A. Valley College men’s basketball (2-15, 1-5 WSC) went to a 2-3 zone on the defensive end to start the game, trapping players and effectively crashing the boards. Led by freshman forward Andre Parris, the Monarchs built their lead to five, but when the leader of the Western State Conference, West L.A. (18-3, 10-0 WSC), opened up a 12-0 run, the Wildcats took control and never looked back. “When we play with effort, we can compete with anybody in the conference,” said Valley coach Virgil Watson. “But we just can’t sustain that right now throughout this time when we have limited numbers.” Valley’s roster has been short six players since their return to action on Jan. 26, and with six games in the last 13 days, it took a toll on their energy level. When sophomore guard Jonas Holt was pulled from the game for concussion protocols following his attempt to draw a charge on Valley’s first defensive play of the game, the Monarchs felt the loss of depth. “It did not look like he had a concussion. He could still see pretty good,” said Watson. “But having one of our leading scorers out hurt us and we just couldn’t make shots.” Through the first 10 min-

utes, Valley broke through the Wildcats’ full-court press and knocked down several three-pointers to keep the score close early on. Up 12-10, Valley turned the ball over and fouled West L.A. forward Kalique Mitchell. After he missed both free throws, freshman guard David Rauda buried a long three to build the Monarch lead to five. The short-lived Monarchs’ triumph vanished with about seven minutes left in the first half as the Wildcats answered with 12 consecutive points and continued to dominate the rest of the night. “After the COVID thing hit us and they were forced to play game after game, we’re trying to rest their legs, but their legs are just gone,” said Watson. “They gave us effort, they tried, but from the last seven minutes of the first half to the end, we couldn’t make a shot.”

“Just some good, really good kids who don’t quit and give it everything they got.”
- coach Virgil Watson

Down 31-24 at the end of the half, the Monarchs’ seven-point deficit was not insurmountable, but their tired legs got the best of them. The direction of the contest quickly shifted. The Monarchs started the second half with a sloppy offensive

rhythm, turning the ball over seven times. This resulted in a 35-13 Wildcats run, allowing them to build the lead to 29. Valley’s rebounding went downhill as their stamina decreased, and whenever West L.A. missed, the Wildcats would collect the offensive rebound and convert on their second chance opportunities. Many Wildcats caught fire, knocking down three after three and showcasing why they are ranked first place in the conference. It was smooth sailing for the rest of the contest, as West LA cruised till the clock expired. This is Valley’s fifth straight loss in a season that saw multiple players miss time due to injuries and COVID-19 protocols. The Monarchs played a solid first half, proving they could take on the toughest of opponents, but the exhaustion of the several guys who were forced to play 35 minutes left them with nothing to show for it. “Just some good, really good kids who don’t quit and they give it everything they got,” said Watson. “They’re a good group of guys to be around because they are high character guys who just refuse to give the game up. They just keep playing and keep playing.”

Next Games
Feb. 18 @ Antelope Valley
Feb. 21 @ SMC
Feb. 23 @ Bakersfield
Feb. 25 vs. Glendale



VALLEY STAR | JEREMY RUIZ FOUL (ABOVE) - Sophomore guard Jonas Holt lies on the floor injured after attempting to draw a charging foul as freshman guard Aidan Acosta stands over his teammate.

VALLEY STAR | ADRIAN RAMIREZ (BELOW) - Freshman guard David Rauda (center) dribbles behind his back as the West L.A. defense converges towards him.

