



ASU: VALLEY ELECTIONS
MONARCHS CAN VOTE FOR IN THE ELECTION ONLINE FROM APRIL 25- MAY 1.

the VALLEY STAR

The Independent Student Newspaper of Los Angeles Valley College



GALLERY: FARMERS MARKET
LOCAL FARMERS MARKETS TOOK PLACE OVER EASTER WEEKEND.

VOLUME 95, ISSUE 5

VALLEY STAR APRIL 21, 2022

WWW.THEVALLEYSTARNEWS.COM

Horseshoe Theatre takes its final bow after 60 years



ADRIAN RAMIREZ | VALLEY STAR

PRODUCTION- Jason Beltran rehearses in Valley College's "The Blue Bird" tech week last Thursday, a week before production. Beltran will act in the role of a cat during the performance. The sold out show gives its take on "The Wizard of Oz." Valley's theater program will perform its last play in the Horseshoe Theatre before the building is torn down. After having sound problems during last semester's production, the theater program will look to redeem itself and send off the theater on a positive note. The final production will be performed from Thursday through Sunday at 7 p.m., with extra performances at 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Starbucks in line to unionize

The store successfully petitioned to unionize with United Workers.

ISAAC DEKTOR
MANAGING EDITOR

Overdoses, attempted robbery and harassment were not part of the Starbucks job description. That is what led three 22-year-old employees at a Sun Valley location to successfully lead a petition with United Workers for a unionization vote.

When Emma Chambers first saw unions spread across Starbucks locations like wildfire late last year, she did not think much about it. So far, Over 100 stores have petitioned to unionize following the success of a location in Buffalo, New York. After the psychology major received a promotion and transferred to the Sun Valley location, she decided to start a petition.

"I'm a shift lead at the store and as a 22-year-old woman dealing with full grown men overdosing in the store, with no proper training or help with that situation, I'm told to just go back to work," said Chambers.

Chambers is referring to an incident last December in which she and another employee performed CPR on a man who overdosed in the drive thru line. According to three workers of the same location — Chambers,

Noey Bravo and Nohe Torres, drug use in the store is more of a rule than an exception. Chambers plans to carry Narcan, a life saving medicine that can block opioid overdoses. According to all three workers, employees were requesting to transfer out of the Sun Valley location due to excessive 'third place issues,' but were routinely denied by a former manager.

A third place, such as Starbucks, is meant to provide relaxation or recreation to people between their home and work. 'Third place issues' include drug use, unruly customers and other disruptive or dangerous behavior. Being sandwiched between the I-5 freeway and Sun Valley park makes this particular Starbucks a cesspool for such issues.

Bravo, a 22-year-old who has been at Starbucks for over three years, was working at the Sun Valley location on the night of Sept. 6, 2021 when a gunman threatened a customer in the drive thru line.

"It was one of the scariest nights of my entire life," said Bravo. "Having to send that text to your parents and to everybody you love — nobody wants to be on either side of that text."

According to Bravo, the

police and former manager showed up 90 minutes after the incident. Instead of being offered time off, Bravo was asked to go in earlier to her shift the next day.

Chambers, Bravo and Torres all recount numerous traumatic experiences during their time with the company. They report minimal support from managers and have noticed a high turnover rate as a result.

"I've seen people who are training and the second they are no longer in that training process they quit," said Torres. "Obviously that shows that something is happening at this location. They're quick to realize that this job is more than just making drinks."

After getting over 60 percent of the store to sign the petition, the shift lead and two baristas are looking ahead to the vote, which is not yet scheduled but will likely take place in late May. If the unionization effort is successful, they hope to bargain for safer working conditions and higher wages.

"I truly have always loved working at Starbucks," said Chambers. "But I feel pushed aside, I feel mistreated. I want to feel like I genuinely have a place where I'm heard."

For the full story, read our online version.



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

UNION- (L-R) Nohe Torres, Emma Chambers and Noey Bravo stand out front of the Starbucks they work at in Sun Valley. The three are leading the rest of their staff in hopes of successfully unionizing their Starbucks as many other Starbucks across the country do the same. The employees are calling for safer working conditions and higher wages after being left without support in a series of incidents.

District considering \$29 million security contract with sheriffs

LACCD board members may continue the the decades-long partnership.

CASSANDRA NAVA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The LACCD resumed discussion regarding the fate of its contract with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, which may cost the district more than \$29 million for safety and security services at all nine campuses.

In last week's district Board of Trustees meeting, members authorized a motion to negotiate the price of the contract. The LASD stated that the contract outlined by the district will cost \$29,232,779. The district can negotiate a lower price for the contract, which would cut some services.

In November 2020, the LACCD announced that they would end the now 21-year-old contract with the LASD. As previously reported by the Star, the district stressed a focus on unarmed security, with an emphasis on de-escalation training, following a district-wide police reform panel.

However, rather than let the contract expire with no alternative in place, the district extended it, which gave LACCD time to work on a new proposal, a detailed report of security demands made available to police departments and private security companies. The proposal was set to take about a year to complete, leaving the sheriff's department as the default security system for the nine colleges.

If unable to reach an agreement with the sheriff's department, the district will select the next bidder. According to Board Member Steven Veres, the next immediate bidder is Allied Universal Security Services, which the district considered hiring in December 2020 before extending the LASD contract.

"The sheriff's department understands what our



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

CONTRACT- Campus police officers patrol in a squad car on campus grounds. The district's contract with the sheriff's department is currently under negotiations, but can cost up to \$29 million.

expectations are related to the work that we're expecting," said Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez in the board meeting. "It's not the same contract or scope of work that we have seen in the last 20 years."

The LACCD's proposal lists 57 requests including, "flexibility to provide armed and unarmed security officer services," "the ability to provide services to a diverse population" and "body worn camera capability for security officers."

The basis of the proposal came from a safety assessment conducted by Hillard Heintze, a security risk management firm. A district-wide, student-only Zoom meeting was held last May, where students from the nine colleges spoke about their concerns with campus police, following a tense year of calls for national police reform. According to the Hillard Heintze assessment, "over 76 percent of respondents listed their preferred security services provider as LASD over other options."

Trustee Andra Hoffman stated that the sheriff's contract cost about \$18 million when

she first joined the board in 2015. Hoffman aired her grievances with the amount the district could potentially spend.

"I think that's absurdly high," said Hoffman in the board meeting. "I don't think I would be prepared to approve a contract that's \$29 million. I understand that some of these things built into the contract, that are important to us, cost money. I don't know if there's a way we can really take a look and figure out what things we are willing to scale back on."

Student Trustee Coraima Martinez shared her thoughts in reference to the price as well, stating that she feels a "disconnect" with the cost, given that there are fewer students on campus due to COVID-19.

The LACCD chancellor and administrative team will negotiate the contract with the LASD and bring it back to the board for approval.

Follow up-to-date campus news and events on Twitter @ValleyStarNews

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

ASU Presidential Candidates



ANI RAMAZYAN,
FIRST-YEAR POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS MAJOR



LAUREN LUCAS,
FIRST-YEAR BUSINESS MAJOR, COMMISSIONER OF ETHNIC AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Ramazyan for ASU President

EDWARD SEGAL
Valley Life Editor

What made you want to run for student government?

“One of the biggest passions of mine is helping people and helping students. So I decided to run for president to use all of my skills, my leadership skills, my organizational skills that I gained from other activities that I did before, to help students in every possible way.”

Is student government connected to your major?

“I think they are interconnected, so one helps the other. In the legal field, it’s protecting human rights. So it is the base of both becoming ASU president and in being in the legal field. Even if I decide to become a lawyer or a judge, it’s helping people.

How do you plan to balance your other activities and use

them to your benefit if elected?

“I think [the clubs] will help me because being part of the clubs gives me a chance to explore things inside of the college. I can see the problems of communities inside of them, which will help me when deciding and organizing things as ASU president.”

What are you doing to campaign for your position?

“Because we don’t see a lot of people on campus, I’m still planning to do some in-person campaigning but mainly online. My main strategy is, you can see in my personal statement and later I will share my flier too, that I didn’t mainly concentrate on talking about myself. I include my skills and strengths so people will know that I am capable of taking this responsibility. But I mainly concentrated on the plans. I think people should know exactly what they are going to get when they elect me.”

What are your plans if

you are elected president?

“My plans are to create a lot of networking resources, create a supportive environment, encourage diversity, create a lot of clubs, events and opportunities for students. I am thinking about creating events where people from different backgrounds can introduce their culture. Diversity is a very beautiful thing because it’s our uniqueness. Students will have a chance to introduce their culture, and raising awareness of the problems [their culture is facing].”

Lucas for ASU President

NATALIE METCALF
Staff Writer

What made you want to run for student government?

“As the ASU Commissioner of Ethnic and Cultural Affairs I became more passionate about being a voice for the students. We [had] just came out of a pandemic. These students need more resources to help them succeed in their academic careers. I want students to have a voice and be represented as I continue my journey in the Associated Student Union.”

Have you always been interested in student government?

“[In high school] I was never involved in a lot of school events. But the pandemic really made me feel like I should be doing something more. I became really interested in student government and it gave me an open mind of how I can help these students pursue

their career paths while making students feel more welcome.”

Is student government connected to your major?

“Student government is not [connected to my major]. I just felt I had to help those in need that aren’t being provided financial aid. I want to help others become financially literate. Student government is a really good way to spread [resources] around on or off campus.”

What are you doing to campaign for your position?

“Currently I am spreading my campaign on social media. I’ve posted it on my Instagram and LinkedIn. I was able to get a couple of my peers to post it. I got some of my professors to post it on Canvas. I emailed club members. I’m going on campus to share my flyers with the students that I’m not connecting with on my social media. I feel like being in person and actually introducing myself would con-

vince them to vote for me more.”

What are your plans if you are elected president?

“Running for president is a big step for me and I needed more of a challenge... I want to let all the students know that I am able to build a safe environment and create events that are outside of Zoom. There are some changes that need to be made. The previous board passed having free menstrual products in the women’s restrooms. I want that to continue because women shouldn’t feel like they have to pay for stuff for their bodies. I think mental health is also very important to me. We want them to feel welcomed back. If I were to serve as the president I want to give the students the voice they deserve.”



DIEGO ENRIQUEZ,
FIRST-YEAR ECONOMICS MAJOR

Enriquez for ASU Treasurer

CASSANDRA NAVA
Editor-in-Chief

What made you want to run for student government?

“I’m currently a first year student at Valley College. I came this year, the first year after COVID. I used to come here for summer camp and used to see more student activity, so when I first saw the flow of things, I was excited. That’s why I wanted to run.”

Is student government connected to your major?

“I’m currently studying economics, so I thought it would fit the treasurer role.”

Have you always been interested in student government?

“In middle school and high school I wasn’t. I was focusing on school, I was a soccer player in high school, so I didn’t really focus on student government. But this year it interested me.”

What are your plans if you are elected?

“At the moment, there’s not really anything that I know we need to change. I’ve only been here for a year, so I don’t really know the student life aspect. I hope to learn, and find out what the people want and find out how to help them.”

No shortage of questions at sparsely attended ASU candidate forum

The upcoming elections will leave nine positions vacant, with the only contested race being for president.

ISAAC DEKTOR AND
NATALIE METCALF
Staff Writers

Associated Student Union candidates discussed topics such as student engagement, diversity, in-person events and access to resources at Tuesday’s student government forum.

The forum had 19 participants, including two moderators and five candidates. Commissioner of political affairs Kai Haaland served as moderator alongside ASU advisor Monica Flores. Many questions were asked by forum attendee student Kaya Landingin. During the meeting, students and candidates agreed that Valley’s website needs to be updated. Candidates spoke extensively about why students need access to more resources, but how this would happen was left to participants’ imaginations.

After the trustee portion of the forum concluded, Haaland opened the discussion up to Valley’s four ASU candidates: Lauren Lucas, Ani Ramazyan, Diego Enriquez and Mia Sanchez. Lucas and Ramazyan are both running for ASU president, while Enriquez and Sanchez run unopposed for treasurer and commissioner of fine arts respectively.

Engineer-turned-economics major Enriquez will use his experience in social justice to inform the budgeting decisions he will make as treasurer. He plans to prioritize funding for student life, saying that career events were the reason he switched his major.

“I feel like I am able to lead

a good discussion in any field. I thought treasurer would be a good place for me to go,” said Enriquez. “I do not have the most political qualifications. In high school I was a part of this magnet program called Core, we focused a lot on social justice and understanding the needs of different people.”

The forum always came back to the same priority: bringing events back onto Valley’s campus. The candidates agreed on every issue that was discussed, which may make the vote for the position of president revolve around prior experience and name recognition.

“I got into student government because I was very passionate about the students,” said Lucas. “I hope to one day pursue my dream of entering the stock market while helping others achieve financial literacy.”

Presidential candidate Ramazyan plans to create events in every academic field as she noticed that, last year, there were no events pertaining to law, which she is studying. Ramazyan also emphasized a commitment to diversity on campus.

“I will create cultural types of events which will give students an opportunity to show their cultures,” said Ramazyan.

The forum broadly discussed “the issues,” such as COVID-19 policy. When prompted by an attendee, Lucas addressed concerns regarding Valley’s official website and emphasized the importance of updating it in order to create more student engagement.

Sanchez, a freshman running unopposed for commissioner of fine arts, seemed excited about the prospect of planning events

in the field that she majors in. “I want to create events not only just for art but also to showcase diversity within the art community at Valley,” said Sanchez.

Kenneth-Alan Callahan, a Los Angeles City College student and candidate for student trustee, had the floor to himself for 30 minutes as his opponent, Matthew Bakalinski, was absent. Callahan claimed that he postponed transfer in order to run for the position of trustee. The candidate took advantage of his time in order to introduce himself to students both as a leader and as a peer, while refraining from naming his opponent who, at this point in the race, was nowhere to be seen.

“I have my own agenda and I’m going to push that agenda,” said Callahan. “As a trustee, not only am I trying to be more visible by attending these forums, but I also want to facilitate a stronger foundation for future leaders and student leaders in and outside of our district.”

If elected, Callahan plans to prioritize financial literacy while pushing for school-supplied cell phones for students in need. When asked whether the district could build student housing, the City College student said that nothing should be off the table.

“We are slowly turning into an institution that supplies students with basic human rights,” said the trustee candidate.

The elections will open April 25 and will run for the entire week. Students can cast their vote on their student portal. Nine of ASU’s positions have no one running, and last year’s election left three out of 12 positions vacant.



MIA SANCHEZ,
FIRST-YEAR ART MAJOR

Sanchez for ASU Commissioner of Fine Arts

ISABELLA VODOS
Staff Writer

What made you want to run for student government?

“I wanted to run for student government because I think it is a great experience to have in college. It gives me a chance to work and meet many students in order to continue improving and making community college a great place to be.”

Is student government connected to your major?

“I think the Commissioner of Fine Arts position is definitely connected to my major because I would be working with the art department and other students interested. Being an art major is one of the reasons I decided to run for the position. I was interested in seeing more art-related

events on campus, so I decided to take initiative and help create those events. Being a part of student government also gives me a chance to meet people.”

What made you want to run for student government?

“I wanted to run for student government because I think it is a great experience to have in college. It gives me a chance to work and meet with many students in order to continue improving and making community college a great place to be.”

What are your plans if you are elected?

“Although the annual fine arts festival is one of the events that this position hosts, I would definitely like to create an event for the fall semester as well.”

Valley College Theater program prepares to perform the year’s last produc-

Valley’s theater students give the soon-to-be-destroyed Horseshoe Theatre a final goodbye with the play “The Blue Bird.”

ISABELLA VODOS
STAFF WRITER

After spring break, a sense of magic and fairytale enchantment whistled through rehearsal for the play “Blue Bird,” as over 30 valley college students’ vocals and dance numbers lit up the Main Stage Theater. The entire cast will present an adaptation of “The Wizard of Oz,” a story about facing obstacles through adventure that leads to friendship and challenges. Much like the story of Oz, “Blue Bird” includes an ensemble of fairytale companions such as a fairy, a dog, a cat, bread, milk, fire, water, sugar and light found through the different settings as the siblings travel through time. In the play, two young siblings, Tytyl and Mytyl, are ungrateful and selfish by nature. One night they come upon fairy Berylune who accompanies them on a journey to seek happiness by finding her lost bluebird. Throughout the journey, the audience learns an overall message that the power of happiness is giving.

“It’s a really fun play, because you get to see fantasy. There is a lot of music and dancing and a lot of things are quite funny. The approach is very interesting as it asks the audience to use their imagination to see the characters and the places they go.”

- Chris Coddington

Thirty-five cast members were present at Friday’s rehearsal and eight crew members worked on lighting and sound. The cast worked for over 3 hours during technical rehearsals. Rehearsal started at 5 p.m. “It’s a really fun play because you get to see fantasy,” said director Chris Coddington. “There is a lot of music and dancing and a



VALLEY STAR | ADRIAN RAMIREZ
CRAFT - Fairy assistant Avalon Kerr (left) and performers Jason Beltran (middle) and Chevy Knight (right) are relaxing during a break from rehearsing “Blue Bird” in the Horseshoe Theater at Valley.

lot of things are quite funny. The approach is very interesting, as it asks the audience to use their imagination to see the characters and the places they go.” Alexandrina Alonso, who plays Mytyl, will sing the closing

song “Sun” and “In Between” with Orion Bohena, who plays Tytyl, and will accompany Alonso with his tenor vocals. “This song [Sun] represents finding hope and being together no matter how treacherous

the journey is,” said Alonso. In 2019, theater major Bohena prepped for the show Urinetown. The week before opening night, production abruptly ended while the whole school went into lockdown. He

grieves the loss of the theater as it brings back memories. “This theater has been here for so long with so many productions,” said Bohena. “This is going to be the last time in the Horseshoe Theater; it’s pretty heartbreaking that it all tumbled down.” The Horseshoe Theater will be torn down in late summer or early fall of 2023 with the department planning to move into the Valley Academic and Cultural Center located next to parking lot B. The building is currently under construction. The theater department is working with Dean Carmen Dominguez on fundraising. The next play is still under consideration, but the idea is a latin written play. The average cost to attend is \$10 and the box office income will be used for the next production. The tickets can be found on the college’s theater website. The play spans four days, from April 21- 24. On the first two nights, the performance will start at 7 p.m. and on the last two days there are two showtimes, one at 2 p.m. and at 7 p.m.

“The Power of the Dog:” A story of gender stereotypes in the Wild

Oscar award-winning director Jane Campion takes viewers back to the American West in a captivating period-piece drama.

MARCUS RODRIGUEZ
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The period piece and dramatic thriller “The Power of the Dog,” based on the 1967 novel by Thomas Savage, is an unsettling, psychologically piercing and somehow tender examination of the turn-of-the-century American West and the male archetypes which were birthed and venerated during this turbulent and violent time.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NETFLIX
HUNTERS - Peter, played by Kodi-Smit McPhee (left), and his step-uncle Benedict Cumberbatch, played Phil Burbank (right) hunt for animals as they discuss their family history.

“‘The Power of the Dog’ doesn’t try to intellectually dominate its audience, or dwell in contemporary politics, it simply and patiently reveals one single human tragedy in a sparse and hostile environment.”

And the film, which just nabbed Jane Campion her first win for best director at the 94th Academy Awards, reveals how these archetypes can be used by everyday people as a way to mask their true iden-

tity, often to destructive ends. The gloves are off, and this revisionist western is a bruising left hook from the poetic and meditative mind of Campion. Good films run deep and are far more probing than the politics of their day, and “The Power of the Dog” doesn’t try to intellectually dominate its audience, or dwell in contemporary politics, it simply and patiently reveals one single human tragedy in a sparse and hostile environment. With a narrative that slowly unravels, like snowmelt trickling down from the Montana mountain ranges, yields to gravity’s tug. In the tradition of cinematic works such as Clint Eastwood’s “The Unforgiven,” Robert Altman’s “McCabe & Mrs.

Miller,” as well as the novels of Cormack McCarthy, Campion’s new film takes a much more sober and decidedly unromantic look at the American Western. The film follows the story of two wealthy and successful ranchers in 1925 Montana. Phil Burbank, played by the superb Benedict Cumberbatch exudes a whisper of the “clenched fist” tension reminiscent of Heath Ledger’s Ennis Del Mar in “Brokeback Mountain.” He is a bitter, steel-eyed asshole, who spends his days on the ranch belittling and abusing his slightly dim-witted and diminutive brother and business partner, George Burbank, played with subdued sensitivity by Jesse Plemons. The brothers,

who inherited their land from their parents, live a solitude and depressing life, ranging, slaughtering and selling cattle. Things change when the ranchers take rest in a nearby inn run by a widow, Rose Gordon, played with raw vulnerability by Kirsten Dunst, and her quietly intelligent and effeminate son, Peter, played by Kodi Smit-McPhee. Despite the bitter objections of Phil, George quickly courts and marries Rose and invites her and Peter to pull up stakes and move into the Burbank Ranch. Cumberbatch’s Phil, who seems to be playing another sort of imitation game, is curiously jealous of his brother’s newfound happiness. He has long ago clamped down and destroyed any possibility of sensitivity within himself, and the mere sight of Peter and Rose propels him into sneering and hostile verbal assaults. Think “Meet the Parents” mixed with “The Proposition” in a Henry James novel and that about approximates Phil’s brand of rustic, turn-of-the-century psychological torment directed towards his new in-laws. Phil belittles Peter in front of everyone at the ranch, with blunt verbal jabs in scene after scene of humiliation and emasculation. He’s far crueler to the lady of the house though. In addition

to attacking Rose directly, Cumberbatch’s Phil revels in the shadows, like a bird of prey, as he plucks and claws at Rose’s tenuous nerves, watching the taught line of her sanity fray and tear. Dunst’s Rose, who’s pushed to binge-drinking because of Phil’s onslaught, is a brutally heartbreaking woman undone. The more time passes the harder Ms. Dunst’s performance hits me. Despite the savagery of how his character is written, viewers may find themselves falling out of belief that Cumberbatch encapsulates this character. Cumberbatch is a brilliant actor, but he has such natural warmth and sensitivity — that even with his virtuosic range and sharp ear for speech — it is hard to believe he was this sadistic rancher, at least not until his character migrates into more of a tragic figure towards the end. With Peter, although some of his behavior and wardrobe decisions seemed a little anachronistic given the time period, he was brilliantly played by Smit-McPhee. Peter is a truly interesting and fascinating character innovation, as he embodies both the revenge-seeking, anti-hero protagonist of classic westerns, while at the same time giving hints of the femme fatale of Hollywood’s film noir pictures: Peter slowly gains the trust of

Cumberbatch’s Phil, disarming his gruff facade and teasing him with hopes of companionship and a whispering glimpse towards a freedom of sexual expression which haunts Phil to his core. Peter rope-a-dopes Phil and brilliantly dissects his pathos with the patient calculation of a grand master chess-player, as he deftly presents a mask of youthful naiveté, all the while carefully and meticulously hiding his true intentions of revenge. Despite his ultimately heroic acts however, Peter bears a cold, distant and mechanical personality that at times makes it difficult to emotionally invest in his struggle. But, as we find out, there’s a reason he’s so shut down and calculating. It is an intelligent, mercurial and scarifying assured performance by 25-year-old Smit-McPhee. As tensions rise, elevated superbly by the sparse string musical score by Johnny Greenwood, Campion’s film slips forward with quiet precision as the audience are left guessing how any peace will ever be delivered to this seemingly quiet Montana ranch. But, as the masks come off and the archetypes fall away, we are left clutching and fumbling with the tensely-knotted mystery of this haunting, suspenseful neo-western.

From concert fan to graphic designer, Audrey Cordova flourishes with her pas-

The first-year sociology student promotes various artists with her talents in graphic design and her passion for music.

ISABELLA VODOS
STAFF WRITER

Audrey Cordova’s bright smile lights up the room along with her rocking red glasses and her favorite Harry styles hoodie.

“I think it’s really important that, as a woman of color, to be in the industry because we’re so unrepresented.”

- Audrey Cordova

Cordova’s fascination with music and record collecting began at 13 years old when she went to her first concert. Her dad, a music fanatic, took her to a free Plain White T’s show

at the Grove, beginning her passion for the music industry that has only grown since. The 19-year-old designer attends Valley remotely. She is currently studying sociology, as she likes looking at trends and people’s behavior. When going to concerts and events, Cordova looks to see people’s experiences more deeply thanks to her studies in the field. Outside of college, she continues to fight for her dream, creating merchandise and vinyl mock-ups for record labels. “I think it’s really important, as a woman of color, to be in the industry because we’re so unrepresented,” said Cordova. “I think sociology is fun because I get to see the background of things and people’s way of living.” Cordova was born and raised in South Central Los Angeles and is Salvadorian. Her parents never accepted the idea of her going into the arts, because they saw it

as a hobby rather than a career. “Twitter is something I always kept to myself,” said Cordova. “I never expressed that with my parents or my siblings because they would see it as a waste of time even though it has given me amazing opportunities.” Through having a social media fan account, replying to tweets and streaming song artists, she has gone to various events including the American Music Awards, Jimmy Kimmel Live, an album release event at Capitol Records, the People’s Choice Awards and Interscope records, all of which have opened opportunities for her. “I’ve been running a fan account for about five years now called ‘hopelessnesscity’ on twitter,” said Cordova. “From interacting with artists, from always being active online, to constantly replying to tweets, I was able to get in touch with

their teams. I’ve gathered follows from artists like Halsey, Troye Sivan, and Slayyyttr. “ After interacting with

artists on Twitter and posting about their music, she got noticed by the Selena Gomez Fan Club on Instagram and was



VALLEY STAR | JEREMY RUIZ
DESIGNER - Audrey Cordova is a first-year sociology major at Los Angeles Valley College who uses her graphic design skills to create unique t-shirts devoted to her favorite musical artists. Cordova’s t-shirt mockups garnered the attention of the official Selena Gomez Fan Club, which expressed an interest in having her make designs for them.

invited with four other friends to meet the former Disney star at Interscope Studios. Cordova has been to over 100 concerts and owns over 120 labels. Out of those, she has designed two of her own record labels and one item of merchandise. “I created a graphic design hoodie for Selena Gomez’s song ‘Past Life,’” said Cordova. “I also created a vinyl record mock-up for The Weekend’s song ‘After Hours’ and Ally and AJ’s song ‘Ten Years.’ I sell my designs to specific artists’ web stores, and to local record shops.” Her goal is to be a fan club president for a record label. “I’ve been a fan my whole life, so I think it would be cool to be a professional fan who deals with merchandise, releasing music and interacting with artists,” said the aspiring creator.

Monarchs must participate in student elections

Students at Valley College should prioritize voting on those making decisions on behalf of the student body.

MATTHEW ROYER
NEWS EDITOR

Two percent, three percent, two percent and one and a half percent. This tantalizing data set represents the student-voter turnout over the last four years of ASU elections, according to The Star. This year students must make their voices heard and take control of the legislative body that represents them at Valley College.

While some students at Valley pay their yearly dues to receive ASU benefits and few even serve on the executive body, it is fair to assume that a majority of students either do not know what the ASU does or simply do not care. But the cycle continues. A year after the lowest recorded turnout according to The Star, the cycle must come to an end.

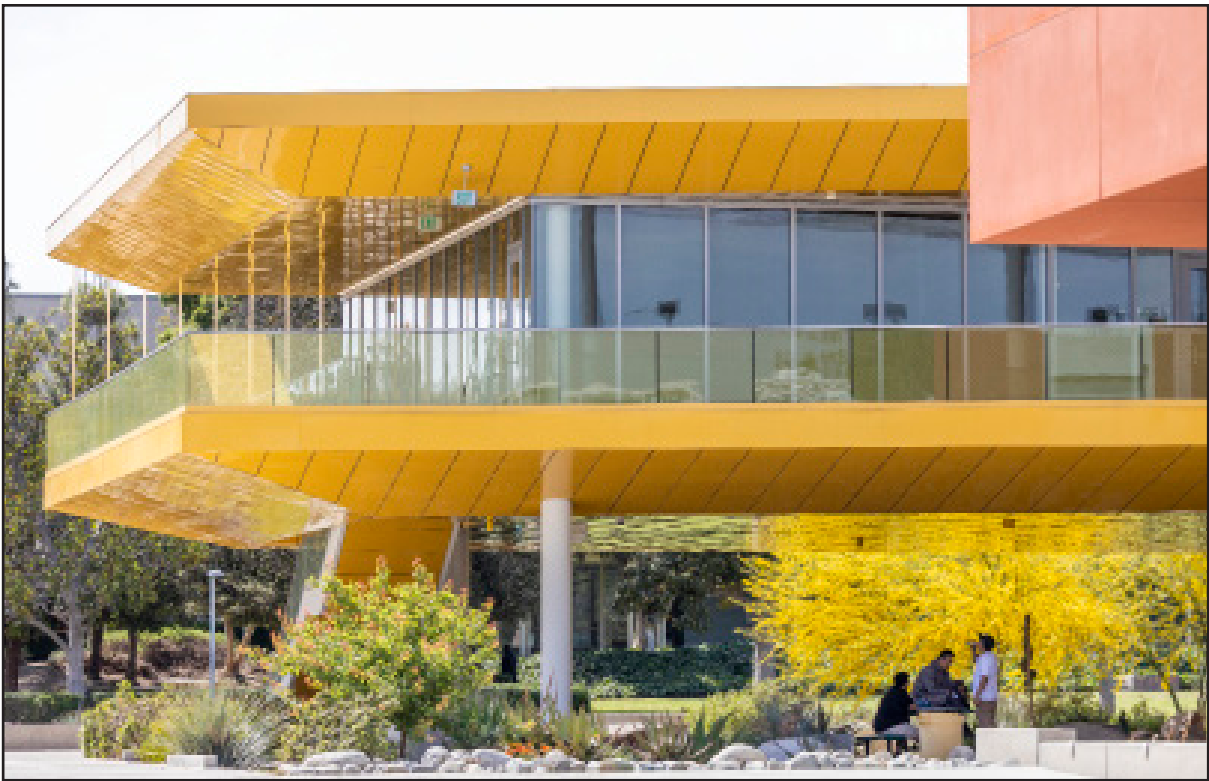
The campus community would cease to exist without the ASU.

Constant vacancies and the occasional scandal are not much to convince Monarchs to care

about one of many student services on campus, but the ASU is more than just a service. Students come together every semester to ensure their wants and needs are met, helping find balance when it comes to the diverse backgrounds which make up the mosaic that is Valley. Last year the ASU allocated \$25,000 to “Helping Hands,” the campus food bank, allowing students to receive \$200 grocery cards, as well as also providing free menstrual products for students on campus the same semester.

Those who toss their names in the hat for a student election take a chance not just to gain leadership experiences, but also to represent the Valley community and campus. The ASU presents an opportunity for like-minded individuals to “accomplish anything,” to borrow a few words from incumbent ASU President Sandra Sanchez.

With the power to enact shifts in campus policy and work with distinguished faculty on campus, the student officers allow for students to have a point-person to represent them when feeling voiceless. During this past year at Valley, the ASU has held events including a vigil for lives lost in the war in Ukraine and a domestic violence defense workshop, among others. In addition, open office hours create dialogue, which can lead to agenda topics for upcoming executive council meetings.



JEREMY RUIZ | THE VALLEY STAR
STUDENT UNION PLAZA - Students gather underneath the Sky Box Conference Room on Wednesday.

In fact, the campus community would cease to exist without the ASU. Since the return to campus, the ASU has been the driving force in pushing through new events and gatherings for students to interact with one another. Its second branch, the Inter-Club Council, is made up of members from each club presiding on campus. Receiving funds from the ASU, these clubs make up different sectors of Valley's student body. Whether it is cinema aficionados, the Armenian Student Association or even Valley's honor society, clubs offer students a place to grow their skills and form connections with others here in Valley Glen.

Attend informational gatherings for the upcoming elec-

tion, log onto the student portal and take the leap. Casting a vote is as simple as a click of a button. Students may be surprised in a few months with the benefits that click might return. Students can vote starting April 25 through May 1.

TikTok is harmful to students' mental health

The popular social media platform, like many others, creates an addiction that many have suffered from.

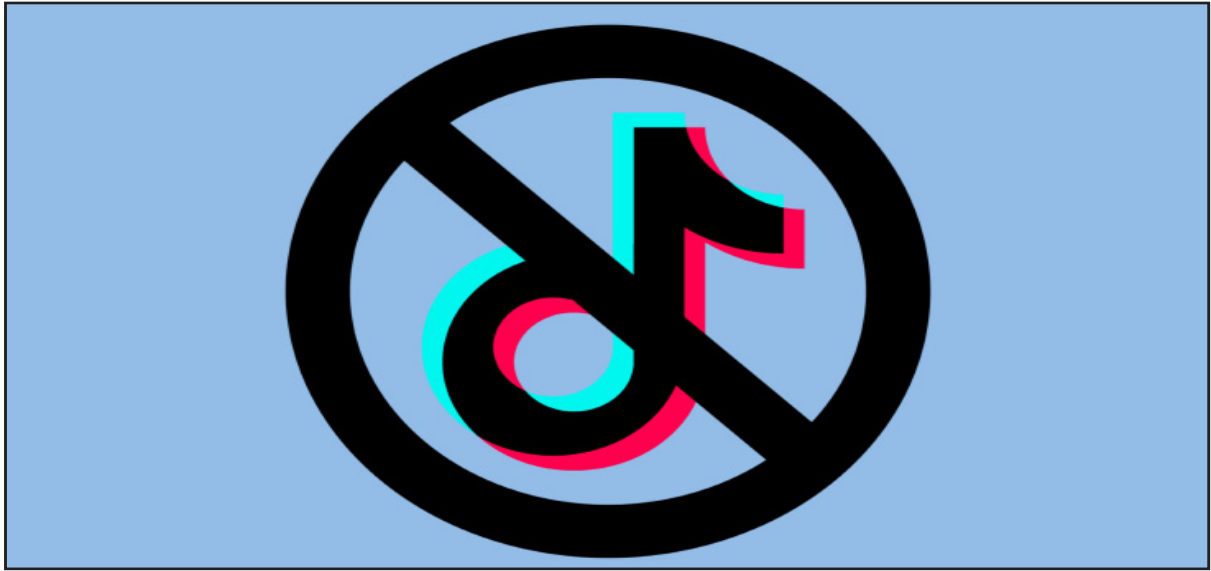
NATALIE METCALF
STAFF WRITER

TikTok has gone too far in its transformation into an escape and users of the app should be limited to 40 minutes per day instead of spending hours on the app. As much as TikTok can be enjoyable, its addictiveness causes more harm than good. The constant scrolling becomes more of an obligation than entertainment. Students spend too many hours on TikTok, as 37 percent of America's mobile internet users access the social media app at least once a day.

“Whenever I look at my screen time, I’d say it’s about an hour to an hour and a half.”
-Connie Memanno, first year student

The app is commonly used as a distraction from confronting stressful events, such as studying for exams and homework. It is easier to forget one's problems by scrolling through videos and numbing the stress of school and current events. Limitations should be placed upon users so students could obtain a healthier experience with the app.

“Whenever I look at my screen time, I’d say it’s about an hour to an hour and



GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION | NATALIE METCALF
DAMAGING - The famous and addictive social media app, Tiktok, is causing harm to users.

a half,” said first year business major Connie Memanno.

As of April 2021, six percent of TikTok users spent ten hours every week on the app. In order to change this high number of hours, there should be a limitation to how much time is spent on the app every day.

Douyin – the Chinese version of TikTok – has a 40 minute time limit for children under 14. Here in the United States, it would also help college students. TikTok users in America should be given the 40 minute limit as well, to reduce wasted time.

Last year, “The Wall Street Journal” launched an investigation into the app. Based on whom users follow, what videos they like and how many times they watch them, the social media app pushes users to watch more videos. The journal created bot

accounts and within 36 minutes TikTok was able to find their interests. Eventually, 93 percent of the user's “for you page” content is related to topics the person is interested in. But the more time a person spends on the app, the more time they are wasting.

California's Attorney General Rob Bonta recently announced a nationwide investigation into the social media app, looking into how TikTok can be harmful to younger viewers. The investigation will also examine the methods the app employs to boost user activity, including how much time is spent scrolling on the app and how it can be so addictive. Bonta has joined with attorney generals from Florida, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, Tennessee and Vermont.

According to CBS news,

app are toxic, especially when the content involves invasion of privacy and oversexualizing women by promoting high beauty standards. This gives younger viewers a false version of life. As a result of the excessive internet use, they will grow more comfortable talking behind a screen rather than in-person.

In order to reduce time spent on the app, students can put their energy into other activities. Other rewards for time spent studying could include physical activity or hanging out with friends. Students can limit their usage to 30 minutes a day or use TikTok as a reward for themselves after finishing homework. If studying is difficult to accomplish alone, they can form a study group with classmates.

It can be difficult to flee from the largest form of modern escapism, but it is not impossible.

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 | WHAT STRATEGIES DO YOU USE TO CURB YOUR TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA? *TEXT BY EDWARD SEGAL* *PHOTOS BY JEREMY RUIZ*



“I use it [TikTok] for my graphic design and just to follow my friends. Because I have multiple social media accounts that I have to post on, that keeps me from staying on it too long. I just go from one app to the next.”
- AALIYAH ORTEGA,
FIRST-YEAR STUDIO ARTS MAJOR



“I have a hard time focusing sometimes. When I'm frustrated I'll grab my phone and throw it on the other side of my bed where I can't reach it, that way I can focus.”
- AXEL OLIVEROS,
SECOND-YEAR GEOGRAPHY MAJOR



“I just look at a few posts and then stop. I'm not motivated to keep scrolling. But sometimes when I have nothing to do I stay on social media longer.”
- JAYLEN HARVEY,
FIRST-YEAR COMMERCIAL MUSIC MAJOR



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
LAYOUT EDITOR
CASSANDRA NAVA

MANAGING EDITOR
ISAAC DEKTOR

PHOTO EDITOR
AVA ROSATE

ASST. PHOTO EDITOR
JEREMY RUIZ

VALLEY LIFE EDITOR
EDWARD SEGAL

NEWS EDITOR
ONLINE EDITOR
MATTHEW ROYER

SPORTS EDITOR
BENJAMIN ROYER

GRAPHIC
DESIGNERS
MATTHEW ROYER
NATALIE METCALF

STAFF WRITERS
EMILY FAITH GRODIN

NATALIE METCALF
ISABELLA VODOS

PHOTOGRAPHERS
JOSE CALLEJAS

LUIS FLORES

ADRIAN RAMIREZ

GRIFFIN O'ROURKE

ISAIAH ZARCO

ADVISORS
BILL DAUBER
GERARD BURKHART

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.

OPINION: Monarchs softball’s lack of preparation showcases disaster on the field

Valley College softball’s season fell into failure and coach Greg Venger is mainly at fault.

BENJAMIN ROYER
SPORTS EDITOR

Valley College softball has fizzled from adequate performances and failed its coaches, players and athletic department with a negligent attempt to appear competitive. Valley presented a promising product on the softball field in 2019, one that would inspire optimism for years ahead. A 23-12 record inspired a triumphant campaign for the Monarchs in which they should have entered the playoffs, but were spurned from the opportunity to compete after not being selected for the Play-In or Regional. Even when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in 2020, Valley held a respectable 7-13 record before the season was scrapped, splitting the final 10 games they played 5-5. The downfall of the 2022 campaign now sees the Monarchs sit at 6-22 and without a win in conference play. The results point directly at the man who leads the program. Coach Greg Venger has been at the helm of the Monarchs (6-22, 0-10 WSC East) since 2018. In a press release from August 2017, Valley claimed that Venger would transition and leave his role as Valley women’s soccer coach to focus on his new job — head coach of the softball program. However, there was never a shift from the pitch to the diamond and Venger remains an associate head coach of the soccer program while continuing his other occupation — athletic director of Cleveland High School. He oversaw winning years in 2018 and 2019, but the dissent into a stage below mediocrity has left the team in disarray. The overscheduled routine of the man in charge of two sports and a high school athletics program has caused softball to falter and entrust the brunt of the responsibility to assistant coaches Andrea Contreras



JOSE CALLEJAS | VALLEY STAR
FRUSTRATION- Valley coach Greg Venger argues with the umpire after “time” was called by freshman shortstop Tea Carbajal, but was not given to her during the Monarchs’ game against Bakersfield College.

and Brianna Velasquez — an unfair task for individuals working without the salary nor the job title that Venger receives. Scheduling also affects the players. Monday and Wednesday practices — planned for 3 p.m. — are not mandatory, and only a handful of players show up. College students, especially student-athletes, can have an overbearing slate of activities throughout their days, but in a collegiate sports environment — whether it is at the NCAA or JuCo level — the drive to compete and win games needs to be the dominant focus. In the 2-year or 4-year college sports world, coaches are liable for two halves of their job: setting up the student-athletes for success and undertaking a sports program to help bring it to relevance. At Valley, neither is being

fulfilled. Despite the national attention that would be shown at a high-profile school, Venger and Co. are disappointing the student body with its mistake-filled performances on the field, at the plate and on the mound. Averaging almost eight runs allowed per game, the Monarchs would need to hit their way out of any game played in 2022. Poor enough to rank 65th out of the 70 teams in the state, their 7.98 earned run average has proven keeping runs off the scoreboard to be impossible. If the pitchers are unable to perform, the Monarchs’ hitters would need to pick up the slack, but somehow, somehow, the lows sink further in the batter’s box. A .236 batting average, with two home runs and 79 RBIs, reads like the stat-line of one player, but at Valley, it represents a 15-woman effort at the plate.

Valley’s batting average ranks even lower than the pitchers do in their main category as the second-lowest in the state, as well as compiling the third-lowest number of hits in the state with 145. Non-mandatory practice breeds faulty performance, which corresponds to the lack of victories on the field. Teams cannot build chemistry or learn how to get better without attempting to improve in the first place. Yes, some players do want to win, there is no doubt about that. Not one person wants to lose; it is against the human condition to purposefully fail. But the way Valley softball operates needs to change, or else further damage will be made to the college’s athletics, the players’ morale and the coaches’ reputations. Many of Valley’s losses

Valley softball’s inconsistencies have fostered a losing season

Lack of practice for the Monarchs has caused success in games to plummet.

EDWARD SEGAL
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

Limited depth, an unorthodox practice schedule and beat-up pitchers have caused the Monarchs to drop their last four games as they drift further away from the rest of the Western State Conference. Losing 22 of their 28 games this campaign, Valley College softball (6-22, 0-10 WSC East) has proven that the lack of practice coupled with the sporadic absence of coach Greg Venger is not a winning recipe. Practice is not enforced due to the players’ off-field responsibilities, though the coaches’ pre and postgame pep talks show an attempt to replace the bonding that would normally occur during training. This lack of togetherness has contributed to this defeat-filled season for the Monarchs. “We’re all student-athletes,” said sophomore pitcher Sidney Hernandez. “We have to go to school, some of us work full time and some of us work part time. It’s just a lot on us, it’s very stressful. And the mental aspect of the game, it takes a lot to make sure you’re on the field on time. As our coaches state, ‘it’s like clocking in for work,’ we just have to clock in, and that’s something that we haven’t been doing.” The Monarchs can be seen practicing or conditioning postgame, which is occasionally the only time the entire roster is on the field. Oftentimes, assistant coaches Brianna Velasquez and Andrea Contreras bat and catch while the short-handed Monarchs practice defense. Not enough players show up to cover all nine positions, so the team has to improvise. “The girls do have obligations to work so we try to work around it and we usually have two sessions of practice,” said Velasquez. “The first session will be the girls who can make it in the afternoon, and me and coach Andrea would stay later and the second group would come in.”

es could be attributed to self-inflicted mistakes. Being outscored 105-17 in their last ten losses, struggles on the field have seen the Monarchs fall apart. In their home loss against Citrus College on March 17, six runs were brought in by walks or wild pitches in a game that, until the sixth inning, was close. With only part of the team coming to each practice, the pitchers have a limited amount of hitters they can practice pitching to. Whichever way the story of the down year can be spun, the Monarchs’ 22 losses are not just placed on the players’ backs, but on the coaches as well. Head Coach Greg Venger’s professional duties, including his job as athletic director at Cleveland High School and role as associate head coach for Valley women’s soccer, have caused him to spend less time with the team. According to Venger, he is unavailable for practices due to helping the team. “It’s because I’m out recruiting,” said the two-sport coach. “I’m going out to high schools, recruiting early, because during the fall, we only had three or four players at practice and because of that, we are behind. A lot of the players on our team are older, even some of the freshmen, and they might not return after this semester. So I’m recruiting ahead of time.” Contreras and Velasquez take care of the training while Venger acts in more of an advisory role for the team, preparing for next season to avoid similar issues in 2023. With their only victories in April coming in a Barstow College double header on April 2, the Monarchs are trying to pick up a few more successes before the campaign ends. The Monarchs’ final two games will see them travel to play College of the Canyons on Thursday and Glendale College on Tuesday. Both contests will start at 2:30.

Monarchs expand win streak behind Kyle Ayers and Danny Veloz’s pitching performance

Led by Ayers and Veloz commanding the strike zone and the offense providing six runs and 14 hits, the Monarchs extended their win streak to eight.

NICHOLAS OROZCO
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The Monarchs earned a hard-fought victory on April 14, as the entire team worked together and rallied behind freshmen pitchers Kyle Ayers and Danny Veloz to win 6-3. Newly-ranked at No. 23 in California, Valley College baseball (23-11, 9-6 WSC South) entered the matchup against Pierce College (7-25, 4-14 WSC North) enduring a seven-game winning streak, but after defeating the Brahmas, the Monarchs expanded their run to eight. Freshman pitcher Kyle Ayers started on the bump for the Monarchs and managed to pitch a total of four innings, striking out six hitters and only allowing two runs to come across. The right-hander was then relieved by freshman pitcher Danny Veloz, who hurled the remaining five innings, only giving up one run and matched Ayers by also throwing six strikeouts. “It feels good, you know. The team looked good today,” said Veloz after the game. “I was just trying to get my defense the ball and it worked out today” The game began with a breath-holding moment on the field. A soaring pop-up was about to fall between freshman right fielder Grant Rasmussen and freshman second baseman Jack Coscolluela in short right field. Both players made an attempt to catch the ball and the two collided — Rasmussen

was unintentionally kicked in the head by his teammate, which knocked him unconscious and potentially gave him a concussion in the process. “You know you never wanna see that happen. We were very pleased to know that he was able to get up and walk off on his own,” said coach Dave Mallas. “We knew he was shaken up and hopefully it’s just a concussion.” Rasmussen was taken to the hospital and was replaced by freshman outfielder Yeonwon Jeong in right field. “I was trying to play strong,” said Jeong. “I was sad because I lost my teammate.” The Brahmas struck first, adding insult to injury in the bottom of the first when they scored a run off a double down the left-field line. Valley responded immediately in the top of the second, starting the frame off with a double from freshman left fielder Andrew Howe, who usually appears as a relief pitcher for the Monarchs. Jeong followed the double by laying down a successful bunt-single. Howe advanced to third and scored on a safety squeeze from freshman first baseman Tyler Olivas — using the small ball to manufacture a run. Valley added to its lead in the top of the fourth. Jeong reached on an error from the Brahmas’ third baseman and followed it up by stealing second base. With two outs, Olivas laced a double that deflected into foul territory off the third baseman. The

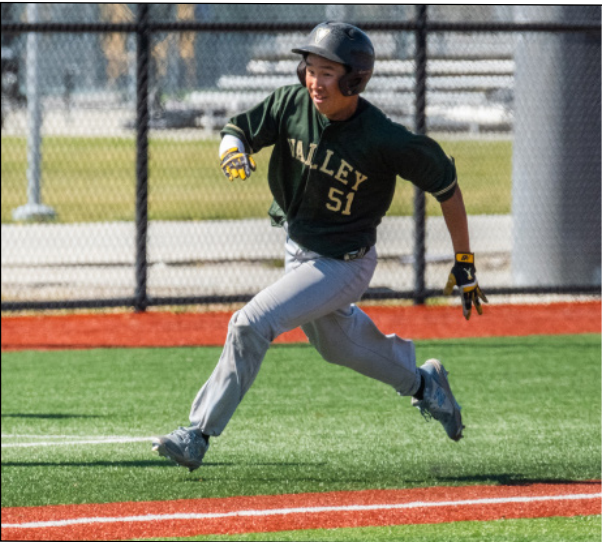
right-handed hitter’s two-bagger scored the Korean from second and gave the Monarchs a 2-1 lead. The Brahmas tied it up quickly thereafter. With runners on first and second in the bottom of the fourth, a line drive into right field scored the runner from second and tied the game at two. In tug-of-war fashion, Valley managed to break the tie and reclaim the advantage. Beginning the attack was freshman center fielder Lee Brandzel, who hit a double. Sophomore designated hitter Connor Kelly scored the cleanup-hitting slugger, ripping a triple into center field to break the tie and give the Monarchs a 3-2 advantage. Jeong launched off the top of the sixth, earning a base hit through the left side of the infield. Coscolluela then hit a bunt to advance his teammate to third. Freshman second baseman Bryant Colon stepped up and hit the ball out of the reach of the right fielder, allowing Jeong to come home. After Pierce cut the lead to one in the bottom of the sixth, Howe brought freshman catcher Gravelle home with a single into left field after the latter hit a double into left field. Howe added on in the top of the ninth, hitting a hard single, allowing Brandzel to score from second, making the final score 6-3 for the Monarchs. Valley will face off against first-place Glendale College Thursday at 2:30 p.m.



GRIFFIN O’ROURKE | VALLEY STAR
OUT- Valley College infielder Jack Coscolluela tags the Pierce College runner during April 14’s contest.



GRIFFIN O’ROURKE | VALLEY STAR
FASTBALL- Freshman pitcher Kyle Ayers delivers a pitch against Pierce College.



GRIFFIN O’ROURKE | VALLEY STAR
STRIDES- Valley College freshman outfielder Yeonwon Jeong runs home during the Monarchs’ affair against Pierce College. Valley won the game 6-3 to extend their winning streak to eight games.

(Right) A 1954 Ford F-100 is showcased at the monthly San Fernando Outdoor Market. The classic truck was part of a 15 car display.



LUIS FLORES | VALLEY STAR

(Center) Local San Fernando DJ Ruben Urquiza poses for a photograph on his lowrider bicycle at the San Fernando market.



LUIS FLORES | VALLEY STAR



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

Bouquets of fresh flowers on sale at the Studio City Farmer's Market on Easter morning last Sunday.



VALLEY STAR | GRIFFIN O'ROURKE

Patrons of Studio City Farmer's Market stroll through Venture Place between Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Radford Avenue on a bright Easter Sunday morning. The vendors offer a wide range of products including organic produce. The market is a non-profit organization that donates its proceeds back to the community of Studio City.

Markets In Bloom

Bustling Valley farmer's markets cater to customers from pedals to petals with spring offerings over the weekend religious holidays.



LUIS FLORES | VALLEY STAR



LUIS FLORES | VALLEY STAR

San Fernando resident, Mia Cruz poses with the Easter bunny for her mother Reina Tapia at the San Fernando Outdoor Market over the Easter weekend.

(Far Left) Spray paint artist Eduardo Reynozo holds up a freshly finished painting before making it available for purchase.