



NEWS: ANGELICA DUENAS
VALLEY ALUMNA GEARS UP FOR U.S. CONGRESS RACE AGAINST CARDENAS.



SPORTS: SOFTBALL
HEAD COACH GREG VANGER TO STEP DOWN AS ASSISTANT COACH TAKES OVER.

Vigil remembers murder of Floyd

The Valley of Change hosted a vigil at the Sherman Oaks Galleria to celebrate Floyd life.

ISAAC DEKTOR
MANAGING EDITOR

CASSANDRA NAVA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

At the corner of Ventura and Sepulveda boulevards in front of the Sherman Oaks Galleria, organizers and supporters gathered on Wednesday around a portrait of George Floyd in a display of solidarity.

Valley of Change, a nonprofit that organized the event, continues to host rallies two years after Floyd's murder. The vigil created a space to mourn his loss of life while advocating for victims of police brutality. Over honks of support, Valley of Change co-founder Latora Green and other attendees held signs, many of them reading "Black Lives Matter." The portrait, painted by community member Lori Stanford, was surrounded by flowers and candles.

"We are about building up the Black community and the marginalized community," said Green. "We are much more than being out here every day. It's more important for us to educate people."

Across the country, community members gathered to commemorate the life of Floyd, who was murdered by a Minneapolis police officer two years from Wednesday.

May 25 marked the second year since the murder of George Floyd by former police officer Derek Chauvin. A viral video of Chauvin kneeling on Floyd's neck for nine minutes and 29 seconds quickly circulated on social media, sparking protests and civil unrest across the nation.

"No one should lose a life



JOSE CALLEJAS | VALLEY STAR

VIGIL-Community members march as part of a vigil in honor of the two year anniversary of George Floyd's death. Nonprofit organization Valley of Change hosted the vigil on the corner of Sepulveda and Ventura boulevards on Wednesday.

like that," said Jose Delgado, a second-year nursing student at Valley College. "Whatever crime — whatever he did before, no one deserves that."

Chauvin was found guilty on two counts of murder and one count of manslaughter by a jury last April. Former police officers J. Alexander Kueng and Tou Thao were found guilty of depriving Floyd's civil rights as they did not intervene as Chauvin mur-

dered the 46-year-old man. Both Keung, Thao and a third former officer, Thomas Lane, face life in prison, pending a trial scheduled for June on charges of aiding and abetting murder and manslaughter.

Organized by the Black Lives Matter movement, the protests in the summer of 2020 brought calls to defund police departments. The LA City Council responded by cutting the department's budget by \$150 million. This year

however, LAPD has approved a \$213 million budget increase, citing a dramatic rise in homicide, according to the LA Times.

President Joe Biden's response echoed recent developments in police departments across the country as most opt to restore funding after slashing budgets in the wake of the unrest, which caused an estimated \$2 billion in damages, according to the World Economic Forum. Minneapolis led the charge

to defund the police in 2020, but have since restored its budget to \$191 million, a figure close to what it was before Floyd's murder.

"We should all agree the answer is not to defund the police," said Biden at his recent State of the Union Address. "Fund them with resources and training. They need to protect their community."

LACCD back in district court

ANNETTE M. LESURE
STAFF WRITER

Payan v. LACCD will return to the United States District Court of Central California after the Board of Trustees and plaintiffs failed to come to an agreement in a mediation that lasted 77 days.

After more than five years of battling, the LACCD did not agree to resolve the issues highlighted by blind students Roy Payan and Portia Mayson's lawsuit claiming "denial of equal communication," "disparate treatment" and "denial of accommodation." The decision to return to the district court will create legal fees for both parties and could delay a resolution for blind students to have accessibility to braille books and equipment.

"I am very, very disappointed to hear that the parties were not able to reach a settlement agreement," said Paul Grossman, executive councilperson for the Association on Higher Education and Disability. "Now I fear that there will be more costly litigation with money being devoted to combat instead of compliance."

An initial error in the categorizing of charges by the district court judge in 2017 allowed LACCD the option to petition both the U.S. Court of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court. The district opted out of filing the writ to the U.S. Supreme Court on March 2 and has now decided against settling, which would require them to provide necessary materials and accommodations for the blind.

"This is heartbreaking and demoralizing," said plaintiff Roy Payan. "They rejected all our demands; they aren't giving in to anything. My message to students with disabilities and their families is: We can't stop; we have to keep moving on. I'll continue this fight as long as I can, but I'm not going to give up on this. I just need the support of the community, and I need the support of all the people with disabilities to say, 'we're going to make a change,' and that's it."

Payan, who started his journey at Los Angeles City College — where these incidents took place — is now at USC pursuing his master's degree in public policy with the goal of making a difference for disabled students.

"I will keep going for as long as it takes until this is resolved," said child development major Portia Mason. "I don't want the next person that comes in line after me to have to go through the same challenges that I have been facing for these last few years. We have a lot of blind students that are afraid to speak out because they're afraid they're going to get into trouble, so if I have to do it, I will do it."

Mayson, who only needs two classes to finish her certificate in early child development, said that she feels nervous about registering for the fall semester and is afraid she will not be provided a textbook in a timely manner and will have to drop the class again.

LACCD Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez was not available for comment.

Spring Final Schedule

DAY CLASSES

Day and Date Of Final Exam	MONDAY JUNE 6			TUESDAY MAY 31		
	Time of Exam	6:30am - 8:30am	9:30am - 11:30am	12:30pm - 2:30pm	6:30am - 8:30am	9:30am - 11:30am
Normal Class Schedule	6:30 - 7:55 MW	9:40 - 10:50 MTWTh	1:00 - 2:10 MTWTh	6:30 - 7:55 TTh	9:40 - 11:05 TTh	1:00 - 2:25 TTh
	6:45 - 7:55 MTWTh	9:40 - 11:05 MW	1:00 - 2:25 MW		9:40 - 10:55 TThF	1:00 - 2:15 TThF
		9:40 - 10:55 MWF	1:00 - 2:15 MWTTh		9:40 - 12:10 TTh	1:00 - 3:30 TTh
		9:40 - 12:10 MW	1:00 - 3:30 MW			
Day and Date Of Final Exam	WEDNESDAY JUNE 1			THURSDAY JUNE 2		
	Time of Exam	8:00am - 10:00am	10:30am - 12:30pm	1:00pm - 3:00pm	8:00am - 10:00am	10:30am - 12:30pm
Normal Class Schedule	8:15 - 9:25 MTWTh	11:20 - 12:30 MTWTh	2:20 - 3:30 MTWTh	8:00 - 9:25 TTh	11:20 - 12:45 TTh	1:45 - 3:10 TTh
	8:00 - 9:25 MW	11:20 - 12:45 MW	2:40 - 4:05 MW	8:00 - 9:15 TThF	11:20 - 12:35 TThF	1:45 - 3:00 TThF
	8:00 - 9:15 MWF	11:20 - 12:35 MWF		8:00 - 10:30 TTh	11:20 - 1:50 TTh	
	8:00 - 10:30 MW	11:20 - 1:50 MW				

EVENING CLASSES

CLASSES MEETING AT 3 PM OR BEFORE 5 PM			CLASSES MEETING AT 5 PM OR BEFORE 6 PM			CLASSES MEETING AT OR AFTER 6 PM		
Class Meets	Exam Date	Time	Class Meets	Exam Date	Time	Class Meets	Exam Date	Time
M	M June 6	4 - 6pm	M	M June 6	4:30 - 6:30pm	M	M June 6	7 - 9pm
T	T May 31	4 - 6pm	T	T May 31	4:30 - 6:30pm	T	T May 31	7 - 9pm
W	W June 1	4 - 6pm	W	W June 1	4:30 - 6:30pm	W	W June 1	7 - 9pm
Th	Th June 2	4 - 6pm	Th	Th June 2	4:30 - 6:30pm	Th	Th June 2	7 - 9pm
MW	M June 6	4 - 6pm	MW	W June 1	4:30 - 6:30pm	MW	M June 6	7 - 9pm
TTh	T May 31	4 - 6pm	TTh	Th June 2	4:30 - 6:30pm	TTh	T May 31	7 - 9pm

In the event of a conflict, speak with your instructor to schedule an alternate time to take the final.

To use the schedule:

- Locate the day and hour of your class on the grid.
- Days of the week are abbreviated M T W Th F for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Finals for the fall semester are from Tuesday, May 31 to Monday, June 6.

Friday classes will have their final on Friday, May 27 during their regularly scheduled class meeting.

Saturday classes will have their final on Saturday, June 4 during their regularly scheduled class meeting.

Final examinations will be held on the day and time scheduled and in the regularly assigned classrooms.

Except for classes of less-than-semester length, the last day of regular instruction is Sunday, May 29.

IMPORTANT DATES

May 30

The campus will be closed on Monday, May 30, in honor of the Memorial Day holiday.

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

Angelica Duenas is “ready to seize the moment”

A year into her campaign for U.S. Congress, the Valley alumna says she’s ready to bring resources back to her community.

MATTHEW ROYER
NEWS EDITOR

More than a year after her campaign launched, former Valley College student Angelica Duenas is confident about the road ahead as she prepares for the midterm election on June 7.

“We have been left behind for too long and we have to take a look at who has been representing us.”

- Angelica Duenas

Running for U.S. Congress, Duenas is looking to unseat Rep. Tony Cardenas (D-CA), who has held office for almost a decade. California’s 29th District, the constituency that spans Sylmar to Van Nuys, is also home to Valley, where the grassroots challenger attended before transferring to California State University, Los Angeles. After losing in a tighter than expected race two years ago, Duenas is ready for a different battle in bringing her people-powered campaign to Capitol Hill.

“Compared to 2020, things are looking great,” said Duenas. “This year, it’s just Tony [Cardenas] and I in the race with three republican candidates. With the top-two primary, things are looking solid that it will be Tony and I once again in November. We’re ready to seize the moment



JEREMY RUIZ | VALLEY STAR
CAMPAIN- Angelica Duenas tallied 91,524 votes in 2020’s election for California’s 29th Congressional District against Rep. Tony Cardenas.

in the San Fernando Valley.”

The 2020 election, which coincided with the presidential election that brought the highest turnout in American history, saw Rep. Cardenas face his closest challenge since the district was established in 2010, as only 13 percent separated him from the mother of five.

With her campaign returning close to its pre-pandemic form,

Duenas states that human interactions will help bring her efforts to the finish line. A change from previous elections is the connections that Duenas formed along the progressive landscape of Los Angeles. With a shift in the city’s election schedule, the 2022 mid-term vote is now being held alongside the municipal elections. This allows congressional campaigns, which would usually be held

next to state elections, to directly interact and campaign with candidates for citywide offices, such as mayor or city controller.

“We’ve always wanted to be in a position to support grassroots candidates and campaigns,” said the progressive democrat. “We can highlight people running for office by already having our platforms and experience from running in the past. I feel we can unify

grassroots efforts in a way to amplify our efforts. It’s a strategy that should be looked at more widely to bring people-powered candidates into positions of power.”

A delegate and volunteer for Sen. Bernie Sanders’ (I-VT) presidential campaigns in 2016 and 2020, the former Monarch is not afraid to battle the status quo. Frustrated with what she explains as nepotism that has controlled

the San Fernando Valley’s political landscape for “too long,” Duenas has taken action in her disappointment by running for higher office and has also performed in roles within her community, serving terms as both president and board member on the Sun Valley Neighborhood Council.

“It’s very interesting that here the community is considered a sacrificial zone to too many,” said Duenas. “People who live here are those who get out there and keep our city moving. We have been left behind for too long and we have to take a look at who has been representing us. There has not been enough change in representation.”

Still active at Valley, Duenas has been influential in supporting the Women’s Empowerment Club on and off-campus. She has attended events such as the domestic violence workshop and a protest led by ASU members Sandra Sanchez and Kimberly Perez-Solis, advocating for reproductive rights. Stating that the youth has sparked hope and inspiration, Duenas is grateful that the college still has an impact in her life.

“I’m glad that students are looking towards solutions and thinking long-term,” said Duenas. “I love coming back to Valley, being able to see the potential of where things are heading and seeing how things can improve over time.”

Election Day is June 7. The top-two candidates in the primary for California’s 29th District will square off against each other on November 8, alongside the candidates for the other seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Valley’s ASA takes home quiz bowl trophy

Armenian students represented the college in the All-ASA quiz bowl, and their win holds a place in history.

CASSANDRA NAVA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Valley College’s Armenian Student Association took the first place trophy in the All-ASA quiz bowl earlier this month, becoming the first community college to ever win.

Founder and President Anna Ramazyan formed the club of about 30 students last fall to inform them on the culture and history of her country of origin. Ramazyan came to the U.S. only three years ago, as a junior in high school. Her passion for Armenian history proved useful in preparing her teammates for the quiz bowl.

Edging out UCLA after being tied in the final question, five Monarchs won the trivia-style quiz bowl. Gagik Hovhannissyan, Hayk Harutyunyan, Sargis Hovhannissyan, Arsine

Majnunyan and Ani Ramazyan represented Valley in the event. Questions involved American politics and history, but had a focus on Armenian history, politics, current events, art and traditions. As a committee member of All-ASA, the larger organization that allows students to create associations across various campuses, Ramazyan was selected to ask her teammates the questions for the quiz bowl.

For the tiebreaker question, only one participant from Valley and UCLA’s team had an opportunity to answer correctly. Ramazyan credits the win to Majnunyan, who not only succeeded under the pressure, but was an active member throughout the quiz bowl.

“I would say due to her, we won,” said the president of the association, “but all of them were very involved. So if we

missed just one of the members, we wouldn’t have won.”

Since the inception of the ASA quiz bowl in 2013, only University of California campuses have won. With Ramazyan and her team’s victory, the association will host next year’s event at Valley.

With Ramazyan and her team’s victory, the association will host next year’s event at Valley.

The goal of Valley’s Armenian student association is to encourage all students to learn about the complex history of



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNA RAMAZYAN
TROPHY- (L-R) Gagik Hovhannissyan, Kristin Yegoyan, Hayk Harutyunyan, Anna Ramazyan, Sargis Hovhannissyan, Arsine Majnunyan and Ani Ramazyan celebrate their win outside of UCLA’s Royce Hall on May 7.

the country, along with its cultural significance. Members can take advantage of networking opportunities, as Ramazyan frequently schedules guest speakers who have career paths aligning with student goals.

“We have a network with universities that give us a chance to have discussions and experiences to help students be involved,” said the biology and anthropology double major.

Because they hosted more events than any other chartered club, the ASU awarded the Armenian Student Association with a \$300 prize.

“I have an opportunity to share my knowledge with students. I want students to be informed about us, especially since there are so many of us in this area,” said Ramazyan.

Six films receive awards at Media Arts student showcase

Student films received recognition in five technical categories and two popular votes in Saturday’s virtual event.

ISAAC DEKTOR
MANAGING EDITOR

Snapshots of 2021 dominated this year’s collection of student films, highlighting COVID-19, loss, love and possessed cats.

Valley College’s media arts student showcase on Saturday featured awards for cinematography, editing, sound design, visual effects, screenwriting and audience choice. Students worked within the constraints of one minute runtimes to create original content that was presented to faculty and students. Winning filmmakers received \$25 Amazon gift cards. Eduard Asaturov’s film, “Breaking the Habit,” took home two awards: best screenwriting and an audience choice award.

The film tells the story of a young girl, a broken home and a ballerina music box. In a fit of rage, her mother breaks the box and seemingly shatters the girl’s dreams — but repents by taking her to ballet class, ending the film on an uplifting note.

“Coloring Emotions,” a film by Katie Bonilla, won an audience choice award as well. With a poignant narration about creative expression and a score consisting of only drums, Bonilla’s film features a dancer, a drummer, a painter and a boxer exercising their craft.

“Everyone has their own way of expressing themselves,” says the narrator. “Express-



JEREMY RUIZ | VALLEY STAR

SPLICE- Chase Shurtz is a camera assistant who won best editing in Valley’s Media Arts student showcase for his short film “Love At First.”

ing what they are passionate about and showing their creativity can come in many ways.”

The award for best cinematography went to “Distancing” by Alikanuiokalani Achong. Achong uses a contrast of color and black and white to illustrate the tonal shift that occurred when COVID-19 lockdowns began. The

29-year-old utilized split screen presentation to tell more story within the short time constraint.

Chase Shurtz’s comedy “Love At First” won best editing for its sharp cuts, flawless continuity and upbeat tempo. Based on a true story, Shurtz’s minute-long meet-cute gone wrong shows viewers what can happen when a



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MEDIA ARTS DEPARTMENT

AWARD- Eduard Asaturov’s “Breaking the Habit” was selected as the audience’s favorite at Valley’s student showcase. The film also took home the award for best screenwriting.

stomach ache crashes a first date.

Robert William’s experimental and semi-autobiographical film, “The Painter,” took home best sound design. The veteran drummer and musician mixed various sound elements brilliantly, creating anxiety through a multi-voiced narration and breaking the tension as the credits rolled with a head bobbing rock song featuring the ringtone that haunted the narrator throughout the film.

Best visual editing went to “Normal,” Roy Kirk’s ambitious dystopian drama. “Normal” exaggerates the effects of the pandemic — helicopters crash and gas mains explode as the main char-

acter walks from scene to scene, with a narration voiced over.

“These last few years, the world has really changed,” says the narrator. “It’s not safe to breathe the air outside without a mask. Nothing is what it used to be.”

Two films that were authentic in their own right, “Missing You Today” by Elisa Agello and “Stevie” by Randall de Ruiter, did not receive recognition in Saturday’s showcase.

“Missing You Today” tells the story of a family that has lost a loved one. The authentic slice of life scored simply

by piano seemingly falls into the category of documentary.

A story about a man who has to watch a friend’s cat for one weekend, “Stevie” flips horror on its head. Classic horror folly sounds, tastefully dark cinematography and a razor sharp screenplay leaves viewers simultaneously amused and terrified.

Although not all films were recognized on Saturday, the showcase strived to celebrate all of Valley’s student filmmakers.

Dance production students show off their moves

The dance department brings creativity with entertaining solos and group dances for audiences to enjoy in the Mainstage Theater.

ISABELLA VODOS
STAFF WRITER

Over 20 dance students filled the Mainstage Theater on Thursday to showcase their semester of hard work.

The show began at 5:30 p.m. As guests found their seats, music played subtly over a babbling crowd with “Valley Dances” programs in hand. The 90-minute showcase included four short dance films created by students who were part of Dance Production in 2020, the time of the lockdown. After the first showcase, a rehearsal of the dance “Here. Now. Together” was projected on the screen where students introduced their different styles of dance. Under the projector, a group of dancers appeared and danced their hearts out.

When the crowd settled down following the introductory performance, Professor Elizabeth Casebolt made a speech about how happy she is to be back on stage after three years. She mentioned that the performance featured

student choreography and snippets of last year’s dancers in quarantine throughout the show.

Guest choreographer Noah Jackson had been part of dance production since 2018 and took on the role of choreographer after receiving an invitation from Casebolt.

Jackson expressed his excitement to come back to Valley and dance in person, because his 2019 showcase was

“Everyone hypes each other up and I just feel like I’m a better performer when we have an audience.”

- Savanna Scott,
Dance Student

canceled due to the pandemic.

“I chose to choreograph because I didn’t get a chance to perform in 2020, which would have been a proper close to



ADRIAN RAMIREZ | VALLEY STAR

PRECISION- Valley dancer Alma Sanchez leads the team through the routine in the final theater performance in the Main Stage

my chapter at Valley College,” said Jackson. “Coming back now just felt right. The opportunities you could receive as a student are challenging and strengthen your craft.”

There were fourteen dance numbers including contemporary, hip hop, tap, ballet, street jazz, waacking, modern and

1970s Musical Theater. The choreography was centered around finding a sort of serenity and coming back from the pandemic. Most of the dances were about isolation, being separated from friends and family and the joy of being back together.

Dancer Kotama Estall performed a tap dance to a

poem about isolation called “Isolation Is” where she described that we need a sense of community to find ourselves.

Before intermission, a group musical theater dance highlighted the night with a jazz performance about waiting at a train stop. The background was a video of a train coming by and

was enhanced by red lighting. In front of the scenery, a conductor and passengers danced excitedly for the ride of the train.

Dance student Savanna Scott performed a solo called “Power Play” to a Taylor Swift song, “My Tears Ricochet,” which Scott choreographed while in quarantine. She said the dance started off on a chair because there wasn’t much space to move around. The dance is about a girl who has a singing superpower. When she sings nobody else can hear it. In the dance, she sang about her deepest emotions.

The night ended with an upbeat hip hop dance where students wore pops of pink and black to represent their fun energy. All the dance teachers bowed and the curtains came to a close.

“I’m so excited to be back on stage performing,” said Scott. “When we were in COVID, we did a lot of zoom type of performances, so this is gonna be just much fun and you can feel the energy. Everyone hypes each other up and I just feel like I’m a better performer when we have an audience.”

Academic senator and music department chair’s swan song

The track runner turned lyric baritone shares his experiences, both academic and professional, with his stu-

ISAAC DEKTOR
MANAGING EDITOR

Metal on the outside and folk rock on the inside. Christian Nova found his musical footing as a young man in the early 1980s, kickstarting a long career that would eventually bring him to Valley College.

“I suppose I showed some promise in music somehow. At least that’s what the nuns said.”

- Christian Nova, Music Department Chair

Originally from La Jolla, Nova started taking guitar and piano lessons at five years



JOSE CALLEJAS | VALLEY STAR

SINGER- Christian Nova, head of the Music Department at Valley College, performed renditions of “Shall We Gather At The River” at the Music Recital Hall on May 27.

old while attending Catholic school. He joined a choir in middle school, where his ability to sight read in both bass and treble clefs landed him solos.

“I suppose I showed some promise in music somehow,” said Nova. “At least

that’s what the nuns said.”

The Valley professor started his higher education as a biology major at Pomona College while running for the track team and singing in a few talent shows. A friend from track who happened to be a music major agreed with

the nuns — he encouraged Nova to pursue a career in music.

“My mind was opened to this whole new world that I had never really thought about,” said Nova. “That’s how it sort of all took off.”

Nova went on to study music after graduating from Pomona College, receiving both his master’s and doctorate from UCLA. With musical ambitions that extended beyond the classroom, the Bruin alum moved to the Big Apple where he scoured the pages of Backstage, rushing from one audition to the next.

The lyric baritone’s first part on Broadway was as an ensemble member and swing performer in a musical version of “Cyrano.”

“I had to know the movements, parts and vocals of nine different guys because if any of them went out I had to fill in for them,” said Nova. “Needless to say, it was extremely anxiety producing, but it was a great challenge.”

In his mid-20s, Nova acted

as understudy for the titular character in a national touring show of “The Phantom of the Opera.” He also played the role of Anthony in the Sondheim musical “Sweeney Todd” and sang in a chorus at the Hollywood Bowl alongside the iconic Spanish tenor Placido Domingo.

After performing and studying with some of the most influential musicians in the industry, Nova now strives to cultivate a balance between the technical and artistic aspects of music in his teaching.

“You really can’t do one without the other,” said Nova. “It [artistry] is usually what draws people in, this thing of ‘I want to express myself.’ Any great artist worked incessantly on the technical aspect in order to be free to express what they wanted to say through their art. It didn’t just happen.”

Nova landed a full-time teaching job at Valley in 2005, which was a bittersweet year

for the music department chair as he also finished his doctorate and lost his mother. Using his inheritance, Nova bought the piano he still has today and launched a house concert series, bringing in friends, family and colleagues to perform and share nights of music in his home.

“That was my way of honoring my mom’s memory,” said Nova. “Historically, this was a very common practice — a lot of times people had chamber concerts. That was the way a lot of people heard music, in a sort of very small intimate kind of setting. There seems to be a resurgence of it.”

This year is another pivotal one for Nova. As the curtains close on his three-year Academic Senate term and role as music department chair, he looks ahead to his future in teaching, resurrecting the beloved house concert series and continuing to organize Valley’s free Wednesday concert series.

Valley celebrates Latinx heritage on El Dia de Reconocimiento

Valley raises awareness about Latinx student’s accomplishments and recognizes the community’s class of 2022.

ISABELLA VODOS
STAFF WRITER

Over 200 Latinx students gathered with their families to celebrate their success on Wednesday next to the Student Union Plaza.

This is Valley’s eighth annual celebration partnered with Mi Comunidad, a volunteer organization that supports Latinx students and encourages them to succeed. The collective includes faculty and staff who identify as Latinx and are allies of students. Through this sponsor, students are able to participate in numerous activities that strengthen the Latinx community.

The nonprofit’s last in-person event was in May 2019. In 2020 and 2021, the event was interrupted by COVID-19.

As the event began at 5 p.m., guests traversed in, filled their spots and lined up for food and refreshments. They were given a program decorated with bougainvillea flowers and rustic bricks curated by Dianna Flores Martinez, the Mosaic Center secretary. Flower centerpieces with a monarch butterfly symbolizing undocumented students were placed on every table.



GRIFFIN O’ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

RECOGNITION- Graduating students of the class of 2022 line up at the Dia de Reconocimiento graduation in the Student Union Plaza. Dia de Reconocimiento is hosted by Mi Comunidad, a campus volunteer organization dedicated to building up Latinx students.

There were four guests who spoke on behalf of the graduates. The speakers included Acting Associate Dean of Student Equity Alex Ojeda, President Barry Gribbons, Vice President of Student Services Florentino Manzano and the

LACCD Board Vice President David Buelna. While the speeches continued, Mi Comunidad presented a slide show of the first generation students.

Buelna launched the evening with a speech of the achievements of Latinx stu-

dents in their time at Valley. He explained that students are survivors and fighters. He told everyone to think of everything they have accomplished, such as the long study nights. At the end of his speech, he asked graduates to stand up and reminded

them that it can be so hard to graduate as a person of color.

“You’re history, you have weathered the storm and now you’re here,” said Buelna in his speech. “Twenty percent is Latinx background yet only one percent of textbooks and movies have to do with Latinx. We got to contain, receive, obtain and grab. We need to stay involved to manage power.”

Ojeda mentioned that events like these exemplify Latinx students. He concluded that a lot of Latinx students are parentified, meaning that even though they aren’t necessarily parents they serve in parental roles to their younger siblings, creating an additional layer of adversity towards receiving a diploma or degree.

“Having this in-person event is a welcome back and a farewell, because a lot of students are transferring and have never been on campus before,” said Ojeda. “It lets students know how important their success is despite their struggles in the past.”

Martinez, the Mosaic Center Secretary, is proud of her program design as it reflects the Latinx culture.

“When I was first thinking about the way I wanted every-

thing to look, I thought of just flowers,” said Martinez. “The first thing that came to my mind was a hacienda, a Mexican hacienda and just the way they are very rustic and old. I wanted to bring the beauty of that into our actual design.”

The Student Union Plaza was lived with cheese enchiladas, rice, beans and pan dulces, which are Hispanic pastries. There was a live music show performed by a Hispanic group called Trio Ostia and directed by former Valley employee Roberto Gutierrez. Students received scholarship recognition from administrators and were honored with medallions to recognize their hard work.

“I really love that this event is on campus and in person with all the families here because most of my semester was pushed online,” said Jasmine Hernandez-Meza, a psychology major. “Even though I left the semester before all of this I was still sent an email saying we still want to celebrate you as a Latin American graduate here with your family and honestly it’s amazing seeing different cultures.”

A man who cares about equality would get a vasectomy

Men should partake in the most effective form of birth control as women's rights are threatened.

CASSANDRA NAVA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Women are once again at the forefront of the bodily autonomy movement, defending their right to choose. But, biologically, it takes two to tango. We should cut to the seed of the issue, and bring vasectomies into the conversation.

According to Planned Parenthood, a vasectomy is the most effective form of birth control, with a near 100 percent effectiveness rate. The procedure depletes sperm creation, halting men's fertility. With an almost foolproof prophylactic on the table, men should be held responsible for the decision of bringing life into the world.

Let's turn the issue on its head and ask men to alter their bodies rather than place the burden on women.

In an effort to maintain equality among the sexes, men should consider a vasectomy. There is a societal expectation for women to take "the pill" or pursue birth control methods after an unwanted pregnancy (such as Plan B or abortions). But if the sperm is what blooms life in a woman, the choice should not fall on a woman's shoulders.

Women must bear the burden of weighing out an unwanted pregnancy, or getting an abortion. But before the life altering decision of either option, women can pursue invasive birth control measures.

An intrauterine device — otherwise known as an IUD — is a contraceptive inserted into a woman's cervix that can last an average of 12 years. While its allure of convenience may draw people in, many report to feel sharp pain and cramps after the procedure. According to WebMD, about one in 10 women will get an ovarian cyst the following year. The cyst can cause pain and swelling, and in the most extreme cases it can rupture and trigger sepsis — a life-threatening infection that can cause organ failure.

Compare this to the procedure of a vasectomy. There is no invasive surgery and little cause for concern in side effects, besides limited duration of pain or discomfort. The physical and emotional toll of methods for women to control their bodies can be easily alleviated if men take the extra step. In the wake of women's rights potentially being stripped out from under them, men should manage their bodies to convenience those they are intimate with.

Vasectomy skeptics can rest assured knowing that the procedure is reversible. According to the Mayo Clinic, pregnancy rates after the reversal will range from about 30 percent to over 90 percent. Although this window of success varies, if a reversal is not too long after the vasectomy, there is a higher chance the pregnancy will be successful.

A woman must consider a multitude of factors when deciding between keeping a baby or pursuing an abortion. Will the birth of the child halt her career, education or goals? Will she be able to access the healthcare she needs with a potential reversal of Roe v. Wade? It is time to force men to make the choice,



ISIAH ZARCO | VALLEY STAR
RIGHTS- A man and woman both hold homemade posters that display messages in support of abortion rights during a march organized by Rise Up 4 Abortion Rights in downtown Los Angeles on May 21.

as their ability to impregnate women is at the root of this issue.

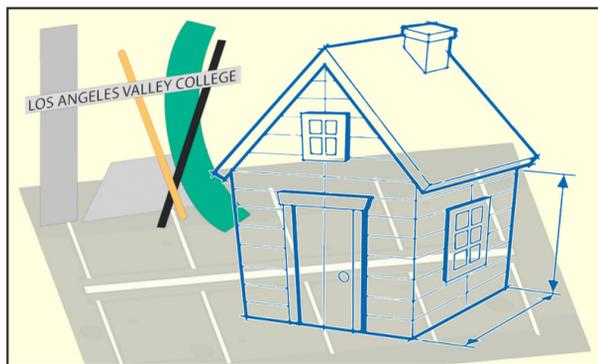
Women should have the same freedoms as men — including the freedom of not worrying about the aftermath

of intercourse. If men were educated on the positive impact vasectomies can have for a better society, perhaps the procedure would be at the forefront of the birth control conversation.

Let's turn the issue on its head and ask men to alter their bodies rather than place the burden on women. In a society built to favor men, this is merely a small contribution they can make to women everywhere.

The LACCD should make student housing a priority

Homelessness has become an increasingly common challenge for students; the district needs to address it.



GRAPHIC BY MATTHEW ROYER | VALLEY STAR
DORMS- Valley College would benefit from student housing.

ISABELLA VODOS
STAFF WRITER

Many students struggle to balance an education with the challenges of everyday life. The LACCD should guarantee that the issue of housing is not one of them.

Even though the district provides resources on campus that support students in poverty, the lack of a safe environment comes with additional educational risks. Every person deserves to be provided with shelter

to focus on their schooling.

According to the Real College Survey administered by Temple University, nearly half of college students in the United States experience housing insecurity, while 14 percent encounter homelessness firsthand. In addition, California has the most homeless students in the country. While the LACCD supports students who encounter food insecurities through Helping Hands, the administration has not implemented a housing strategy. This predicament

makes it difficult for homeless and housing insecure students to continue their education.

"Too many of our students are housing insecure and have had their studies heavily impacted by the lack of a safe and quiet place to sleep and study," said Gabriel Buelna, LACCD board of trustees president, last month in a press release.

Earlier last month, the board of trustees enacted SB 330, which authorized the district to develop a pilot program to build affordable housing for students. However, the pilot program only offers \$1.5 million for homeless students, which is insufficient to support the student population. Over 220 thousand individuals enroll in the district's nine community colleges.

According to a 2020 California Community Colleges press release, only 14 community colleges have been awarded a three-year annual grant of up to \$700,000 by the state legislature to help with homelessness, with only LA Southwest College participating. The district recently created and released a survey to identify community colleges that are most in need. The selection process was based on basic needs and housing insecurity — Valley is now one of them.

Valley and the district must implement a space for students to sleep and rest in order to facilitate safety and academic success.

Some colleges in the state, such as Long Beach City College, have already repurposed parking lots as safe spaces for homeless students. If Valley freed up old buildings completed before the 1970s, the college could assemble a new parking lot for students to rest.

According to a press release, LBCC has built a pilot program providing overnight parking for over 100 unsheltered students. The program directs over \$1 million of funding.

Long Beach is not the only community college housing success story. According to Ed Source, Cerritos College received the Higher Education Student Housing grant in 2020, which allowed the school to open the state's first housing project for community college students facing homelessness. As a result, the college now has seven townhomes, six of which are three-bedroom and three-bathroom. With each townhouse nearing 1,500 square feet in total, the village can house up to 28 students.

The district's current building fund of \$3.6 billion does

not fulfill projects on all nine LACCD campuses. But with proper approval and a push in the right direction by the board of trustees, Valley's administration should be able to build new facilities for student housing, creating a new sense of comfort for students who have faced challenges finding a safe place to live.

The outcome of more homeless students is not the district's intention, but it is one that the LACCD will have to tolerate if they do not act now.

With contributions from
Matthew Royer

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 COULD YOU BENEFIT FROM STUDENT HOUSING?

TEXT BY ISAAC DEKTOR
PHOTOS BY JEREMY RUIZ



"It would be more convenient for sure. It would be good for students looking to move away from their parents but not too far. That first step - it would make it easier."

- TALIA TALAMANTES,
FIRST-YEAR STUDIO ARTS MAJOR



"I could go over there and take a nap real quick. Just take a nap, come back to class and be refreshed."

- JASON BUSTAMANTE,
FIRST-YEAR PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR



"If there is student housing I wouldn't have to worry about having a car, and that would save cost. Especially if I worked here - because I would basically have everything here."

- JUAN SANCHEZ,
SECOND-YEAR ENGINEERING 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

ANNETTE M. LESURE

ISABELLA VODOS

PHOTOGRAPHERS

JOSE CALLEJAS

LUIS FLORES

GRIFFIN O'ROURKE

ADRIAN RAMIREZ

ISIAH 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.

Softball coach Greg Venger steps into smaller role

The coaching switch will see assistant coach Andrea Contreras get promoted in both title and duties.



JOSE CALLEJAS | VALLEY STAR
NEW ROLE- Coach Greg Venger crosses his arms in the game against Bakersfield on April 14. The fifth-year coach is to move to an assistant-like position within the softball program prior to the 2023 season.

BENJAMIN ROYER
SPORTS EDITOR
EDWARD SEGAL
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

In an effort to retool Valley softball's leadership, coach Greg Venger will become an assistant, while Andrea Contreras is primed to become the head coach. Following a turmoil-filled season, Athletic Director Dave Mallas is switching things up with softball, as current assistant head coach Contreras will be moving into an in-game and practice-focused role. Venger, the head coach, will step down

into a more minor role. The fifth-year coach – who finished up his fourth season as head coach – led the Monarchs to a 7-23 record. The last-place finish in the Western State Conference East wrapped up Valley's worst result since 2016-17. "I'm just kind of changing roles, I'm not leaving anything really," said Venger. "More recruiting, more behind the scenes helping the girls and making sure they get their classes. As you can see this year there was less on the field stuff so the role has already changed. It wouldn't be me addressing the team first like what you would

see after a game, it would be Andrea (Contreras) instead. We're just switching roles." Venger has a 60-61 record as coach, taking over the program before the 2017-18 season. The Monarchs achieved two victorious seasons from 2017-2019 – winning 23 games in both years – but has faltered since the COVID-19 affected 2019-2020 campaign. The multi-sport coach also pilots the women's soccer program, leading them to a 4-14-2 record in 2021-22. He is listed as the associate head coach of the team, along with Melissa Fernandez. Venger may take pointers from his co-coach-



JOSE CALLEJAS | VALLEY STAR
PROMOTE- Assistant coach Andrea Contreras walks off the field in the game against Allan Hancock on Feb. 17. Contreras will be transitioning into the head coach position within Valley College Softball.

ing role from soccer and transfer the skills to softball. When asked about the process of Venger stepping down or into a different role, Mallas remained bullish, but did not deny the prospect of the situation. "Nothing has been finalized yet," said the second-year athletic director. "(Softball) has just been wrapped up and the spring sports have just been wrapped up. Nothing has been finalized, but that is a possibility — yes." Contreras has been working with the softball program since 2017 – when Venger took over – in an assistant role, but also works alongside at Cleveland High School – where Venger is the athletic director – as a teacher's assistant. The soon to be promoted coach is currently finishing up

her physical education teaching credential at National University, alongside the completed bachelor's degree in Kinesiology. Contreras earned from California Baptist University. Wanting to focus on recruiting and helping the players through school, Venger hopes to take advantage of the full year ahead to prepare the team for the 2023 campaign. "We're recruiting like crazy. We're out there every single day recruiting. Talking to players, players are narrowing their four-year letters and acceptances have come out. So a lot of those girls who are going four-year, they're moving on, the ones who are going junior college, they're narrowing it down between us and local colleges, so I hope that they choose us."

Lakers down to three

Terry Stotts, Kenny Atkinson and Darvin Ham are in the hunt for LA coaching job.

EDWARD SEGAL
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

Firing Frank Vogel after his second down year with the team, the Lakers' search to find a head coach suitable for LeBron James and Co. has zeroed in on three final candidates: Terry Stotts, Kenny Atkinson and Darvin Ham. The City of Angels' winningest franchise failed to make the playoffs despite being ranked third in ESPN's power rankings before the season. Winning nine of the last 34 after hovering around .500 near the all-star break, the Lakers realized their formula for success did not work, and fired their head coach following the conclusion of the 2021-22 campaign. About a month later, with Vogel gone and the NBA finals looming, the Lakers' search for a replacement has led them to three choices. Stotts has been coaching since the 1994-95 season, becoming a head coach in 2003 with the Atlanta Hawks. As an assistant, Stotts was a member of the 2011 NBA champion Dallas Mavericks, and the 1996 runners up, the Seattle SuperSonics. He had four unsuccessful seasons at the helm of the Hawks and the Milwaukee Bucks in the early 21st century before assisting until the Trail Blazers hired him in 2012-13. Stotts led the team to eight straight playoff appearances but advanced past the second round only once in that span. Earning multiple Western Conference Coach of the Month honors with the Blazers, but, unable to find the defensive formula in Portland, Stotts was fired in 2021 after the Blazers decided to switch things up. Atkinson has been coaching since 2008-09, making the conference finals with the Hawks as an assistant before taking the reins of a rebuilding Brooklyn Nets team in 2016. After the Nets fired him in 2020, Atkinson served as an assistant on the Los Angeles Clippers team that made the Western Conference Finals last season and is currently behind Steve Kerr on the possibly championship-bound Golden State Warriors. With less experience and playoff success than Stotts, Atkinson has coached rebuilding teams before and has not had a chance to lead a team full of veterans. In Brooklyn, Atkinson's focus was cultivating the young talent and giving many players a chance on the court. Ham, unlike Stotts and Atkinson, found a place in the league as a player. Signed by the Denver Nuggets in 1996, Ham played for six teams in nine years, including the 2004 NBA champion Detroit Pistons. Ham joined the Lakers as an assistant in 2011, moving on to Atlanta in 2014 before settling with the Milwaukee Bucks and winning last year's championship. Due to his experience on the court – and in his Lakers coaching stint – Ham commanded respect in the locker room of his prior teams and was able to build rapport with the players. He provides a strong voice to the table, hoping his relationship to James and his teammates will make up for his lack of experience as head coach. Trying to fill the void early in the offseason, the Lakers are attempting to ensure the new coach has time to gel with James and company, as well as find the balance to handling the star talent and personalities.

Valley College to renovate athletic facilities

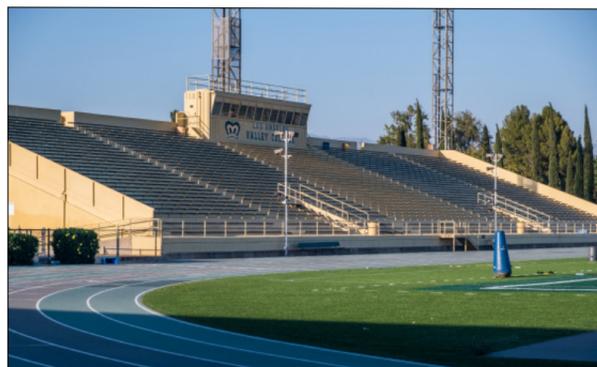
The Baseball and Softball Fields, Monarch Stadium and Grass Soccer and Football Field are receiving upgrades.

BENJAMIN ROYER
SPORTS EDITOR

Valley College sports programs and stadiums are set to receive facility upgrades for the 2022-23 athletic calendar. Following the completion of the Spring sports catalog, Athletic Director Dave Mallas tells The Star that construction is intended to facilitate "much needed" improvements for Valley's athletic programs. Overhead lights will be implemented at the Baseball and Softball Fields – bringing the possibility of night games to the Spring 2023 season – and the Grass Soccer and Football Field, which is directly next to Lot F Parking, will be renovated to improve playing conditions for the fall. Women's soccer practices and plays on that surface, while football occasionally uses the area for practice. The short offseason between spring and fall sports gives Valley the opportunity to break ground on both projects. "That will be a big upgrade for our athletics program," said Mallas. "They are hoping to start that (soon).... If it goes through, there is going to be a bond that is supposed to be on the ballot come November, so if that happens, we are hoping to do some more stuff in the future." A budget surplus provided to Valley and its athletic department would allow the college to further improve the South Gym – the home of men's and women's basketball – and consider larger and more dramatic proposals that are not currently up for discussion. Mallas considers fixing the stands of South Gym a high priority. Currently, the seating arrangements are not ADA compliant, which could create issues for fans with disabilities who visit the arena. "Los Angeles Valley College will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all College programs, services and activities," the ADA Compliance sec-



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR
NIGHT- The Baseball and Softball fields will have the lights on for evening games in 2023 after overhead lights were implemented at the complex.



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR
NEW- Monarch Stadium's three-year switchgear project was fixed in the fall term.



ADRIAN RAMIREZ | VALLEY STAR
GOAL- The Grass Soccer and Football Field is to be improved in the near future.

tion of Valley's website states. However, the athletic department recently received notice that the bleachers would not be renovated to adhere to the ADA, and would have to push the project into future plans instead. Regarding Monarch Stadium, Mallas sees adjustments as a quality of life change that could help both the school, its students and its tenants. "We are also trying to upgrade the scoreboard and sound system at the football field," said Mallas. "Our sound system has been in dire need of being upgraded for football

and women's soccer games, as well as for our graduation that happens every June." High school football programs across the San Fernando Valley are able to use the stadium as Valley sublets the property for their home games and practices. The sound system is defective and has forced Mallas to rent similar devices to replace the lack of noise. Overheating during summer and early fall events – some of which for high school sports – rendered the scoreboard to be less useful, forcing the athletic department to shut it off as a pre-

caution to attendees because of a possible fire or smoking hazard. Monarch Stadium underwent construction, which was recently completed during the spring semester. A switchgear replacement was set to be finished in 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic pushed the project to be finished two years later. The project overhauls the

electrical room in Monarch Stadium, mainly because the previous switchgear was "quite old and barely functions," according to the construction notice. Additionally, the structure that held the switchgear carried an electrocution risk during inadequate weather because the wood on which the structure was built disintegrated.

Spring 2022

Super Flower Blood Moon Lunar Eclipse in the Sherman Oaks neighborhood on Sunday, May 15. The next Super Blood Moon will appear on November 8.

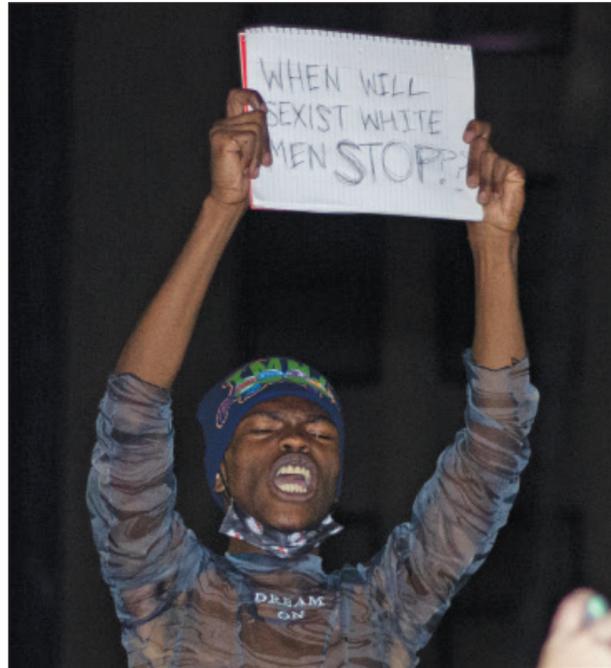


JOSE CALLEJAS | VALLEY STAR

Lady Monarch Jordyn Jiron slams a sledgehammer into a device that measures impact during the Los Angeles Fire Department's physical ability test Monday, May 2.

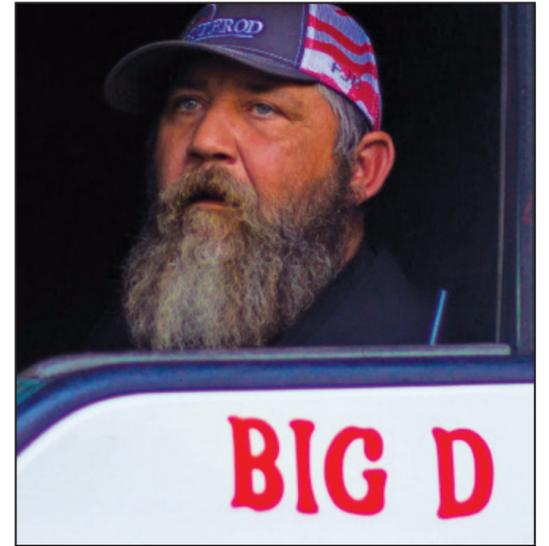


GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR



AVA ROSATE | VALLEY STAR

A pro-choice activist shows support at the abortion rights rally in downtown Los Angeles on Tuesday, May 3, the night following the leaked draft of the overturn of Roe v Wade.



AVA ROSATE | VALLEY STAR

A People's Convoy trucker traveled from Nebraska to California in support of eliminating vaccine requirements at the End the Mandate Rally in downtown Los Angeles on Sunday, April 10.

The semester in review

War, abortion rights, civil rights, high inflation and school shootings set the tone for students returning to campus in the new pandemic world.

College athletics saw strong wins in baseball and diving, and losses in softball. The Horseshoe theater closed their curtains with a last performance. Musical performances returned to campus after two years. A daily COVID-19 check-in computer was stolen along with \$64 worth of copper wiring from Campus Center.

What will next semester hold?

Text by Isaiah Zarco



ADRIAN RAMIREZ | VALLEY STAR

Chevy Knight and Jason Beltran embrace during a scene rehearsal in the production of "Blue Bird" on Thursday, April 14.



JOSE CALLEJAS | VALLEY STAR

Dianette Wells of Malibu walks across Grand Park in Los Angeles before an abortion rights rally in front of City Hall on Saturday, May 14.

Monarchs' shortstop Maddox Latta steals third base after a wild throw sailed into left field in a pickoff attempt on Thursday, April 21. Their final Western State Conference South record was 12-9.



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

(Center) Monarchs' pitcher Kyle Ayers throws a pitch in a game against the Glendale City College Vaqueros on Thursday, April 21.



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

(Right) Monarchs' pitcher Isabel Ward tosses a pitch against the Glendale City College Vaqueros on Thursday, March 31. Their final Western State Conference East record was 1-11.



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

Oksana Dotsenko holds up a sign demanding an end to the war and in support of Ukraine at the beginning of Russia's invasion on Saturday, March 19.



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

The Kadima String Quartet violist Beth Elliott performs at the music recital hall on Wednesday, March 16.



ISAIAH ZARCO | VALLEY STAR

Psychology major Ruby Aguilar donates blood on campus during the Red Cross blood drive on Monday, March 21.