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LAST WEEK, PAST AND PRESENT.

The Independent Student Newspaper of Los Angeles Valley College



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# Biden wins 2020 presidential election

Former Vice President Joe Biden was elected the 46th president of the United States on the morning of Nov. 7, days after Election Day.

SOLOMON SMITH,  
MANAGING EDITOR, AND  
GABRIEL ARIZON,  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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

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

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

**"The purpose of our politics, the work of the nation, isn't to fan the flames of conflict, but to solve problems."**

- Joe Biden

"America, I'm honored that you have chosen me to lead our great country," Biden tweeted.



FLICKR | GEOFF LIVINGSTON

JUBILEE- Joe Biden and Kamala Harris supporters out in the streets of Washington D.C. in celebration of Biden's win on Nov. 7.

"The work ahead of us will be hard, but I promise you this: I will be a President for all Americans — whether you voted for me or not."

Harris will be the first woman, first Black person and first South Asian American woman to hold the second highest position in the country. Previously, she was the first Black woman to hold the position of district attorney in California, the first Black woman to be the state Attorney General and the

second Black woman to ever be elected senator.

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

For days, Biden and Trump had been fighting it out in key states. The initial numbers on Nov. 3 were better for Biden, but it was still too close to call until mail-in ballots and drop

box numbers began to trickle in. Some states, like Florida, went the way pollsters expected — voting in favor of Trump. Other key states were a surprise, however, such as Wisconsin and Michigan going to Biden after the mail-in ballots were counted.

Pennsylvania was a necessary state for any hope of a Trump reelection. The state appeared to initially go in favor of Trump by a large margin, but the ballots continued to come in and the lead was narrowed.

For the last few days, the state has been a near tie with Biden holding the slimmest of leads by a few thousand votes. Last night, that changed with Biden widening the gap and Trump falling further behind.

Other states that proved competitive as well, but the 20 electoral votes of Pennsylvania were do or die for Trump. Without those votes, Trump was left with no path forward. Every other state that matters, such as Arizona and Georgia, Biden

is either currently in the lead or within a fraction of a point behind Trump and slowly climbing.

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

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

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

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

## VACC still faces an uncertain timeline

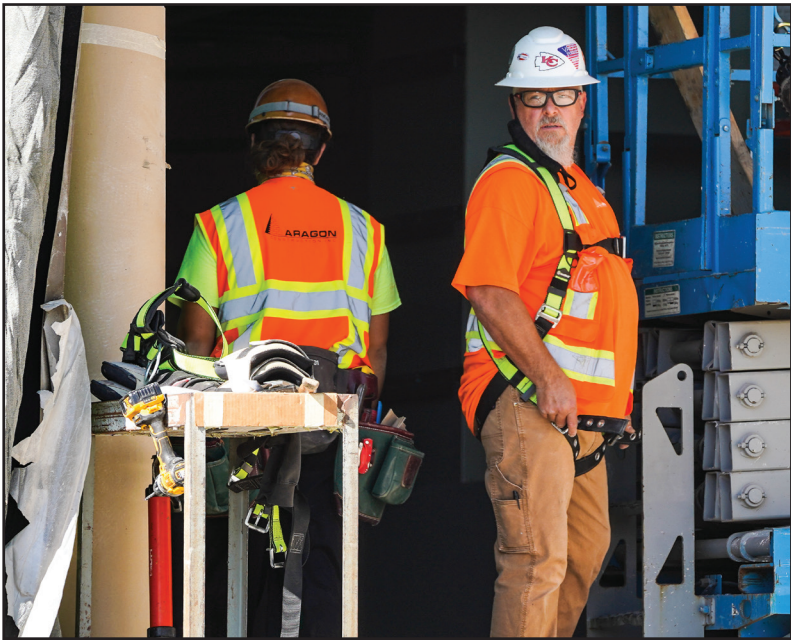
The Valley Academic and Cultural Center has been in under construction since 2016, but there remains questions on when the facility will be completed.



VALLEY STAR | SOLOMON SMITH

ABOVE- Workers dig trenches along the east side of the Valley Academic and Cultural Center, a new building planned to house several of Valley College's academic departments.

RIGHT- Builders work on the interior of the Valley Academic and Cultural Center.



GABRIEL ARIZON  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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

**"The pace [of the construction] has picked up in the last few months."**

- Barry Gribbons

The VACC has been in the works since 2010 when Ehrlich Architects did initial design work for the facility back when it was called by a different name. The Los Angeles Community College District approved the facility six years later with a \$78.5 million budget. Originally due to be finished in two years, the building's completion date was pushed back to 2020 due to a combination of poor planning and heavy rainfall. According to information provided by Maricela Gomez — the communications manager for BuildLACCD — the VACC is forecasted to be finished next fall with academic activities to begin in early 2022. However, Valley College President Barry Gribbons was hesitant to say if the building would be finished by next year.

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

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

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

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

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

Architect for review and approval.

Gribbons also stated that there have been change orders to the facility — which result in increased costs — that run the range from \$5,000 to \$20,000, which he stated is to be expected in a project of this size. There have not been any substantial changes to the design of the building.

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

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

While construction on the VACC is ongoing, Valley is already making designs for two other buildings. One such facility is called Academic Complex 1, which will be built along Burbank Boulevard. According to the construction projects page

see VACC on p.3



# 2News

## Locals cast votes at Valley

Voters converged on campus to cast their ballots for the presidential election.

CASSANDRA NAVA,  
NEWS EDITOR, AND  
MARCOS FRANCO,  
STAFF WRITER

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

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

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

"I voted for Biden because

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

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

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

**"I feel like if [parolees] did their time and they're back out as a citizen, they have every right to have a say in our future."**

- Karim McClure

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

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

Voters shared that Proposition 22 was an important measure on the state's ballot. Backed by Uber and Lyft, this expensive measure has spent over \$200 million on advertising alone in the state. According to Business of Apps, 19 percent of Uber drivers are ages 18 to 29, while 7 percent of drivers are currently students.

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

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

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

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

An issue that concerned



Valley Star | Solomon Smith

PRIVACY- Vesko and his son were very concerned about personal privacy issues and control of their data.

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

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

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

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



Valley Star | Ava Rosate

VOTE- Voter casting a ballot in what are presumed to be pajamas.

## How Californians voted on 2020 propositions

The fate of 12 state measures have been decided by California voters, ranging from giving parolees the right to vote to denying affirmative action.

CASSANDRA NAVA,  
NEWS EDITOR, AND  
AIMEE MARTINEZ,  
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR, AND  
MARCOS FRANCO,  
STAFF WRITER

Californians voted on 12 propositions leading up to the Nov. 3 election that covered important issues like voting for parolees, expanding privacy laws and keeping rideshare drivers as independent contractors. Here are the most recent results of six ballot measures pertinent to students.

Proposition 16, a ballot measure that would have repealed the ban on affirmative action, failed to pass with 56.5 percent of Californians voting no. The section of the California Constitution that prohibits considering diversity in hiring and educational enrollment will stay the same. This is the second time since 1996 that Californian voters have rejected affirmative action. It was only passed in five bay area counties and Los Angeles. California is currently one of nine states that bans affirmative action.

The bill was originally proposed by Assemblywoman Shirley Weber earlier this year in the hopes that the increased political interest, the pandemic and deaths by police would help reverse Proposition 209, which banned affirmative action in 1996. According to Yes on 16, this proposal would have been a step toward deconstructing systematic racism and sexism. The website also states that since the ban, the admission rate at UC campuses for Latino and black students has decreased by 26 percent and the measure would have helped level the disparity.

In an article by the San



Public Domain

RIDESHARE- With the passage of Prop. 22, Uber and Lyft can continue hiring drivers as contractors.

Francisco Chronicle, some supporters suggested that voters may not have supported the measure because they were confused about it, such as believing it would implement quotas and discriminate against Asian American students. On the Californians for Equal Rights website, opponents stated this was not the case and cited some polls taken over the years to emphasize how public opinion on the subject has remained consistent. Among them was a 2016 Gallup poll that asked whether students should be accepted into higher education on the basis of merit, even if it meant fewer minorities, or if race should be considered to increase diversity, even if those students would not normally be considered. Seventy percent responded in favor of merit.

Proposition 17, which restores the right to vote for

parolees, was passed with 58.8 percent of the votes. According to the San Francisco Chronicle, it will allow 50,000 former prisoners to vote while on parole. Until now, the California Constitution prohibited people convicted of felonies from voting until their sentence and parole were completed, though it did allow those on probation to vote. Nineteen other states currently allow parolees convicted of felonies to vote, according to Ballotpedia.

Annual county costs will be increased to pay for more voter registration and ballot materials as a result. State Assemblyman Kevin McCarty, a supporter, argued that parole was meant to integrate prisoners back on to the community, not to be a punishment. Others argue that voting helps them to do just that, reenter society.

Proposition 21, which would have enacted rent control in

California, was not passed in the Nov. 3 election. Ballotpedia displays that 59 percent of voters voted no on the proposition. This has not been the first ballot measure to address housing issues, and voters rejected (the similar) Proposition 10 in 2018.

Proposition 21 would not have changed any rent control laws in place, but would have allowed cities and counties to pass their own measures. Although it was rejected, tenants are still protected under Assembly Bill 1482 which was signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom last year. This bill caps annual rent increases at 5 percent plus inflation in most rental housing more than 15 years old.

Since Proposition 21 did not pass, this means that the state's ban of certain forms of rent control will stay in effect.

California voters have given rideshare companies such as

Uber and Lyft the green light to continue hiring drivers as independent contractors rather than employees. Proposition 22, which grants an exemption to tech companies from a state labor law requiring them to provide drivers basic employee protections and benefits, was carried to a victory last week. With all votes having been accounted for, Prop. 22 has passed with a 58 percent approval rate from voters.

Prop. 22 has stood out on the ballot since rideshare companies have spent over \$200 million advertising in support of the proposition, making it the most expensive state measure in history. The approval has given app-based drivers the go ahead to continue operating without interruption. Supporters of Prop. 22 claim that with its passing, drivers can continue to earn money as they please without having a designated work schedule. Opponents claim that the tech giants have found a sneaky loophole to conduct business in California without fully abiding to state labor laws.

Since passing, Uber's stock price has increased 14 percent as well as an 11 percent increase from Lyft. With the approval of the measure, users will continue requesting rides and commuting as they did prior to the proposition.

Voters in California voted in favor of Proposition 24. The measure that sought to expand the state's consumer data privacy laws passed with 56 percent of the vote on Election Day. Loopholes created by the 2019 California Consumer Privacy Act will be closed with Proposition 24's California Privacy Rights Act.

Data privacy and concerns are a growing issue, and are especially popular locally.

Proposition 24 aims to limit businesses from using personal data, triple the fine for violating children's privacy rights and create a new agency that will enforce these rules and privacy laws. According to Fortune, consumers will now be able to ask businesses to not share their personal data, which is a customary practice in online advertising and marketing. Consumers will also be able to ask businesses to stop hoarding personal information for longer than necessary.

The state agency in charge of enforcing these new privacy rules will go into effect starting in 2023.

California voters rejected Proposition 25, which would have kept Senate Bill 10 — a legislature to replace cash bail with risk assessment for detained criminal suspects. With 55.9 percent voting no, SB 10 is repealed and the cash bail system remains. According to Ballotpedia, the assessment would have categorized suspects as low, medium and high risk. Those deemed low risk would have been released from jail until the trial. The goal of supporters was to create a safer, less expensive system, so that a rich person accused of a serious crime could not be released simply because they could afford it. But opponents argued that a computer algorithm would replace judges and be racially biased.

Results are considered unofficial until certified on Dec. 11. Until then, Californians can expect propositions to go into effect the fifth day after the secretary of state certifies election results. Some changes voters will see are parolees' right to vote and strengthened online privacy rights.





PHOTOS BY SOLOMON SMITH | VALLEY STAR

A worker wets soil at the still unfinished the Valley Academic and Cultural Center (VACC), which will house several departments including the journalism department, Oct. 26.

# VACC expected to host classes in 2022

from page 1

on the school website, the complex will consist of a 80,000-square-foot-building, a new car parking and drop off area, underground stormwater tanks and about 165,000 square feet of site development. It will contain spaces for curriculums such as classes such as mathematics, computer science, business, psychology, ethnic studies and emergency services.

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

East side exteriors have external insulation added while workers inside continue finishing the Valley Cultural Center at Valley College on Oxnard and Fullerton, Nov. 2.



Still unfinished the Valley Academic and Cultural Center, or VACC, will house several departments including the Journalism Department, Oct. 26.



A storage and rest area for workers on the west side of the Valley Academic and Cultural Center shows signs of the pandemic with hand sanitizer and masks near the exit on Valley College, Nov. 2.



# 4 OPINION

## Trump will burn it down on the way out

As the last gasp of the Trump presidential run for 2020 comes to an end Trump and Republicans continue to threaten American democracy by refusing to concede the race in a weak effort to hold onto power.

SOLOMON O. SMITH  
POLITICAL NEWS EDITOR

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

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

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

After the election was called with former Vice President Joe Biden at 306 estimated electoral

vote to Trump’s 232, according to the Washington Post, instead of handing over the keys to the presidency, Trump sought to burn it down. First, he and Republicans set the kindling by casting doubt on every aspect of the election (from mail-in votes to ballot counting), then added the heat with frivolous lawsuits in every battleground state and finally breathed life into it by fanning the flames of dissent among die-hard Trump voters looking for a reason to overturn the system.

“This is a fraud against the American public.”

- Donald J. Trump

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

“This is a case where they’re

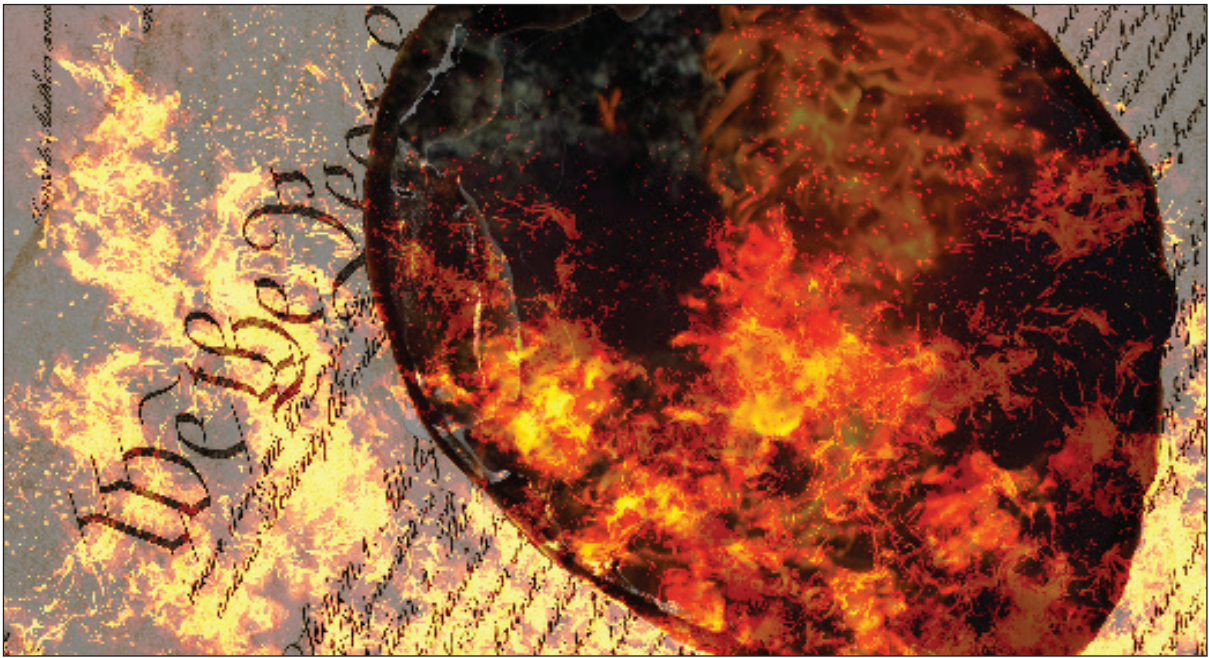


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | SOLOMON O. SMITH

BURN- The president’s refusal to conced a race he has no way of winning is a monument to his ego.

trying to steal an election.” said Trump. “They’re trying to rig an election and we can’t let that happen.”

Trump is setting a precedent which weakens the roots of democracy (the vote), but worse has slowed the continuous workings of the government. With 22 court cases on the dockets of the Supreme Court, according to SCOTUSblog.com, and only one win, Trump has sought to overturn the election through legal

trickery by disenfranchising Americans. In his world, only votes for him should count.

Trump’s attempts to overturn a fairly run election because he did not win has gotten as far as it has because Republican leaders have not vigorously defended the election process for fear of losing power in congress. Dictatorships and illiberal democracies are not created only at gunpoint. They are also birthed by the method-

ical dismantling of democratic norms that seem innocuous, like a peaceful transfer of power. Trump has created a rot, a distrust in the founding principal of stability in America’s democracy. It is slow moving but no less destructive.

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

## Apple releases point-less iPhone 12 series

The newest iterations of iPhones offer few incentives and little innovation.

WENDY ROSALES  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The new iPhone 12 is all Apple fans are raving about, but a breakdown of what the series includes shows it is not worth buying for those with newer models.

At this point, it almost seems like Apple has run out of innovative ideas. The iPhone 12 has few new features able to catch the attention of users with more recent versions.

This year’s model offers 5G, which would increase speed and connectivity from the current internet speed of 4G. Having it, however, is a personal preference.

No one really needs it unless they download a lot of videos or games. The other features include only slight improvements. The iPhone 12 has the same amount of RAM as the iPhone 11, the iPhone 12 and iPhone 12 Mini have the same camera design — regular, ultrawide and selfie cameras — as its predecessor. The changes: Night Mode photos now work on the ultrawide and selfie cameras; HDR mode has faster, quicker shots and darker settings; and video quality is also slightly enhanced, though not enough

to fully want to upgrade from a model that is just one year old.

Additionally, the iPhone will no longer include charging boxes which means another purchase (along with the phone). One could say Apple did this for the environment, but it seems like they are just trying to sell consumers everything they can.

On a good note, for those who do want a newer iPhone, the prices for the iPhone 11 have declined drastically. With the addition of the iPhone 12, the price for the iPhone 11 has dropped from \$699 to \$599. This edition also has a charging port giving customers a lot of bang for their buck.

The iPhone 12 Mini costs \$699, the iPhone 12 is \$799, the iPhone 12 Pro is \$999 and the iPhone 12 Pro Max is \$1,099. So much can be saved on a model that despite few changes is basically the same for a \$599 difference. Buyers should think critically and see what is best for them and their wallet.

Those who already have a new iPhone may want to wait for a better, more impressive, upgrade and that is just not the case with this one.

Unless consumers wish to take advantage of the 5G and slightly faster camera, this phone is unnecessary.



VALLEY STAR | AVA ROSATE

COVERING- Valley College bought 10,000 masks and distributed many to students and faculty as part of the campus’ ongoing response to the continuing COVID-19 threat as infections rise across the nation.

## It’s not about you; wearing a mask protects us all

Following safety precautions by masking up can help stop the spread of COVID-19 and protects those most at risk.

ANTHONY LOPEZ  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

A simple face mask, paired with maintaining a safe distance from others, is one of the most effective methods that has been proven to save lives against the deadly new coronavirus.

Face masks offer much more protection against COVID-19 than most people think. Masks do not just protect the health of the person wearing it, but they can help defend others from coming in contact with germs. This is especially important to keep unknowingly infected people from spreading the virus.

New research on face coverings shows that the risk of infection to the wearer is decreased by 65 percent, according to Dean Blumberg, chief of pediatric infectious diseases at UC Davis Children’s Hospital.

“Everyone should wear a mask,” Blumberg said. “People who say, ‘I don’t believe masks work,’ are ignoring scientific evidence. People who don’t wear a mask increase the risk of transmission to everyone, not just the people they come into contact

with. You’re being an irresponsible member of the community if you’re not wearing a mask.”

The coronavirus, similar to the flu, can spread mainly from person-to-person, especially those who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). The virus can be contracted through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby and can possibly be inhaled into the lungs. The symptoms that come along with the virus include: cough, fever, chills, and loss of taste and smell, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The scariest part of this virus is that a person could be asymptomatic and become a carrier. The virus is highly contagious and it can infect pedestrians, family members and children. Most importantly, COVID-19 has a significant impact on the elderly.

According to Stat news, “COVID-19 kills an estimated 13.4 percent of patients 80 and older, compared to 1.25 percent

of those in their 50s and 0.3 percent of those in their 40s.”

More than 20 states, including California, have issued orders requiring people to wear face masks in public spaces to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. According to UC San Francisco, “A recent study published in Health Affairs, found that mask mandates led to a slowdown in daily COVID-19 growth rate, which became more apparent over time. The first five days after a mandate, the daily growth rate slowed by 0.9 percentage-points compared to the five days prior to the mandate; at three weeks, the daily growth rate had slowed by 2 percentage-points.”

Coronavirus deaths and cases continue to increase to record heights in the United States. NPR stated that, “The U.S. has recorded more than 1 million coronavirus infections over the past month alone, pushing the number of confirmed cases past the 3 million mark this week.”

So be sure to do yourself — and others — a favor by wearing your face mask at all times.

## The Valley Star

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
LAYOUT EDITOR  
ONLINE EDITOR  
GABRIEL ARIZON  
@sundevilg

MANAGING EDITOR  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
EDITOR  
SAVANNAH SIMMONS

NEWS EDITOR  
CASSANDRA NAVA  
@cassienavalavc

VALLEY LIFE  
EDITOR  
AIMEE MARTINEZ  
@aimeemintchip

POLITICAL NEWS  
EDITOR  
SOLOMON SMITH

PHOTO EDITOR  
AVA ROSATE

GRAPHIC  
DESIGNER  
GENE WICKHAM  
@genewstar

STAFF WRITERS  
MARCOS FRANCO

JERRY OUGH  
@MusicNBA4me

PHOTOGRAPHERS  
MARGARITA  
GARUSHYAN

JUAN GRAJEDA II

AVA ROSATE

SOLOMON SMITH

LEAH THOMPSON

ADVISORS  
WILLIAM DAUBER  
GERARD BURKHART

## GOT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR?

Letters to the editor can be submitted online at [www.thevalleystarnews.com](http://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.



PIXABAY | MONSOOR KHAN

TECH- Pictured, an iPhone Pro 12, a new phone from Apple’s recently released series of iPhones. Many of the new phones have little to differentiate them from previous and less expensive models.



Police reform panel addresses systemic racism

The online discussion, organized by LACCD, highlighted ways in which communities affected by police violence can demand change.



VALLEY STAR | SOLOMON SMITH  
SHERIFF- Officer Guillen waits at a traffic checkpoint at the intersection of North Spring and Temple as she and other LA County Sheriffs wait for “Jackie Lacey has got to go” protesters to disperse.

CASSANDRA NAVA  
NEWS EDITOR

LACCD held a panel on police reform with University of Maryland professor Rashawn Ray who shared his research on the issues of race, equity and community policing. The discussion was hosted by Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez and moderated by James McKeever, a Pierce

College student advisor for sociology. Ray presented part of his decade-long examination of police misconduct and how the reallocation of police funds can benefit the department and communities. Police department budgets have been under scrutiny at recent protests, as activists point to the excessive spending used to militarize the police as the root of unnecessary violence, according to the ACLU. Social justice movements such as Black Lives Matter and The Movement for Black Lives have used “defund the police” as a slogan in their protests. Ray broke down what this phrase really means. “The ‘defund the police’ movement does have merit, and my research suggests that we take an evidence based, market driven approach to police fund-

ing and spending,” said Ray at the Nov. 12 event. “The important point is that ‘defund the police’ does not mean abolition; it means reallocating funding away from police to other things like social services.” Ray encouraged community members to speak out since they are the ones who pay for police services through taxes. He suggested that the taxpayers’ money should be invested in local communities and added that payouts for police misconduct are unfair for taxpayers and families. Some examples of wrongful death settlements are those for the families of Tamir Rice, Eric Garner and Breonna Taylor. Ray claims that his research suggests that most of the officers were not charged. “Over the past five years, from 2015 to 2020, the U.S. police departments have paid out over \$2 billion in civilian payouts for police misconduct,” according to Ray. In the Breonna Taylor’s case, \$12 million was awarded to her family, but Brett Hankison, former Louisville police officer, was not charged for Taylor’s murder. Hankison was charged with wanton endangerment, the “extreme indifference to the value of human life,” according

to CNN. “He [Hankison] was charged for shooting bullets into the drywall that separates her and her neighbor’s apartment,” Ray said. “In that regard, Breonna Taylor’s wall received more justice than her physical body. To add insult to injury, the \$12 million awarded doesn’t even come from the police department budget, it comes from general funds. So Breonna Taylor’s own taxes that she paid for taking care of people as an EMT, was used to pay her family back for her wrongful death.” Ray also noted that the flawed system can be traced to the mental health of police officers. His research found that 80 percent of police officers suffer chronic stress and one out of five report being suicidal. Despite their mental health issues, 90 percent never seek help. “Oftentimes we are sending sick people to help sick people,” said Ray, in relation to when calls for mental health emergencies land on unprepared police departments. Ray offered two solutions that would seek to reform the department from within, which focuses on the well-being of officers and community relationships.

“There are two bottom lines: first, police officers should be mandated to have mental health counseling. Second, police officers should be mandated to live within the district, or at least within a certain boundary of the place that employs them.” During the open forum, a student asked Chancellor Rodriguez if the district plans to defund the Sheriff’s department. “We have been very clear about our interests in de-escalation and culturally responsive training,” said Rodriguez, who oversees a district that has a \$25 million contract with the Sheriff’s department. “Our sheriff’s department contract will end at the end of this calendar year. We are discussing it now, but we will know before then whether we retain our relationship.” Ray ended with policy steps for equitable policing: restructure payouts for police misconduct, reallocate funding, mandatory mental health counseling for officers and more. “In order for the United States to truly become equitable,” said Ray, “we can’t do that unless we deal with disparities in the criminal justice system, primarily as it relates to policing in the United States.”

Drive-in theater finds revival

Drive-in features are keeping the entertainment industry afloat during venue closures.

MARCOS FRANCO  
STAFF WRITER

As traditional in-person movie theaters remain closed throughout most of California, drive-in style film features have become an increasingly popular alternative for the entertainment industry. With drive-in movie features having reached its peak during the 1950’s and 60’s, the old-school form of cinema date-night has been revived in the age of COVID-19 and is quickly gaining popularity once again. As society slowly makes its way back to a more normal way of life, social distancing guidelines are still in place for public spaces. In order to be in compliance with these regulations, the entertainment industry has adapted by offering drive-in movie showings. “It’s no surprise drive-ins are becoming popular again,” said Eric Swelstad, Media Arts

department chair at Valley College. “It’s safe and a great way for an entire family to have the moviegoing experience while getting to leave the house and do something, even if it’s for a few hours.” While most tend to associate drive-in movies with the classic 50’s era of greaser slick backs and leather bomber jackets, the first drive-in was opened on June 6, 1933. Originally marketed to families, Richard Hollingshead debuted his drive-in cinema in New Jersey as a solution to small and uncomfortable theater seats. It was not until two decades later that drive-in movie features peaked in popularity with more than 4,000 drive-ins scattered throughout the country at the time. Although drive-in movie pop-ups have been around prior to the coronavirus, the pandemic has forced other sectors of the entertainment industry to offer

in-car style features. Concerts and comedy shows have also transitioned to drive-in showings. Despite adapting to pandemic-safety guidelines in order to continue performing, the money earned through these features is only a fraction of what it was before the pandemic. Over the course of the next five years, the film and television industries are projected to suffer a \$160 billion loss in revenue. After setting a global record at the box office last year with a massive \$42.5 billion in ticket sales, global sales for 2020 do not appear to be as promising. According to The Hollywood Reporter, worldwide cinema revenue is expected to drop 66 percent from last year. While drive-in showings are especially advantageous in a time of social distancing, the halt of filming and production earlier this year has caused most

drive-in screenings to show older films rather than newer features. Pricing for these events can be high depending on the location. Prices can be calculated either by the amount of people in the group or by the size of the vehicle itself. Payment can range anywhere from \$10-\$25 per person or \$40-\$75 for flat rate pricing based on the vehicle. “It can be pretty expensive at times, and the movie selection isn’t always the newest,” said Swelstad. “I look forward to going again, but I’ll wait for the A list new releases.” In Los Angeles County, drive-in showings are permitted to offer viewers on-site food services as long as they adhere to all applicable safety protocols. Though the county allows “permitted concession stands,” temporary concession stands, food trucks and carts are not allowed. Walmart has also begun offering drive-in movies at



VALLEY STAR | AVA ROSATE  
THEATER- A Regency employee ushering cars to their parking spot.

160 of their supercenter locations. Showings are free, but reservations are required. The superstore has partnered with celebrities such as Drew Barrymore, Neil Patrick Harris and LeBron James to virtually host the events. Walmart does not have any features scheduled in California yet. Although drive-in mov-

ies may not be as exciting to watch as the newest high resolution features on the Imax big screen, it is the only option for Californians at this time. What was once a dying piece of America’s pastime has now become the primary method of a night out at the cinema.



ILLUSTARTION COURTESY OF AZIZA GAFURJANOVA  
ART- “Opal’s Timekeeper” by Valley student Aziza Gafurjanova.

SAVANNAH SIMMONS  
MANAGING EDITOR

The annual student art exhibition looks a little different this year, but has given more students the chance to have their works of art included in the gallery. The annual LAUNCH program, this year called LAUNCH20, is currently being

held completely online, including works from 40 artists with a selected 72 pieces on display. “This year, instead of having [the exhibition] juried, we are exhibiting every single art piece that was submitted to us,” explained Professor Jenene Nagy, who curated the show. “And that is doable because it’s virtual, so there’s no physical restraints for the artworks.”

A different kind of LAUNCH

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

In a pre-pandemic world, LAUNCH would be set up and run like a real exhibition at an art gallery where students would have to submit work, get rejected or accepted and have the opportunity to meet notable Los Angeles gallery owners or curators during the show. This creates a professional setting for students to learn from, add to their resume and get the full experience of the art world and all of its parts — even if that means rejection. Though that process was not a possibility this year, a new opportunity presented itself in the online version — creating space for every art work to be put on display. “Watching mine and other students’ art online felt that art is still alive, even though all exhibitions and museums are closed,” said Shiva Nosrati, a stu-

dent artist who has two pieces in the show. “It was a really good experience for me to attend the student art show — especially during a pandemic.” Nosrati’s works, “Mother” and “Parallel Universes”, are both works from Spring 2020 in Professor Tom Mossman’s Photographics I course. She explained she was able to turn to art during the pandemic to keep her going, spending most of her time painting and shooting photography. Art “helps me feel alive,” she said. Artclasseshavealsochanged in 2020 moving to the online platform. Aziza Gafurjanova, whose works “Untitled” and “Opal’s Timekeeper” are also in the show, shared that the online platform has been an immense change. In-person classes come with time in the studio and the

ability to observe classmates’ work and progress, which she says is incredibly important when students are stuck themselves. Studio time for an artist is sacred, especially when not everyone has the luxury of space to work in peace. “I think whatever we create should always be seen,” expressed Gafurjanova when referring to her participation in the online gallery. “You never know when something you have made could spark an idea, bring comfort, touch feelings or bring back a memory to the viewer. It doesn’t matter where it’s seen.” Although the LAUNCH20 is not physically in the gallery, something else has been left standing. MMXX is the art faculty biennial show that opened the day of the initial coronavirus shut down back in March. It

was left up under the impression that the opening would be rescheduled in two weeks after the shelter-in-place orders were lifted, but that was not the case. Now, it is only viewable virtually, though the photos of the gallery walls do create a feeling of being there. “This [exhibit] shows that research and practice is integral to teaching,” said Nagy. “There’s also responsibility involved in exhibiting artwork, that’s kind of 50 percent of the equation of being an artist, it’s that opportunity for dialogue and exchange. It’s important for the students to be viewers.” Both the student art exhibit, LAUNCH20, and the faculty show, MMXX, are available on lavcartgallery.com and will be up for viewing until Dec. 30.



# GALLERY

## In Remembrance



VALLEY STAR | JUAN GRAJEDA II

GRAVES- San Fernando Mission Catholic Cemetery in Mission Hills prepares for a solemn 2020 Veterans Day as U.S. flags are placed alongside the headstones of veterans.

## 2020 Veterans Day, giving thanks for our military

Quiet reflections in the time of COVID-19 honoring the veterans who served

GENE WICKHAM  
STAFF WRITER

Even during a pandemic, America pays tribute to its veterans and those who paid the ultimate price for their country.

This year, Veterans Day parades have been moved to Zoom out of a concern for safety. As people learn to navigate through public spaces fraught with restrictions like masks and social distancing, the holidays have become a difficult space to negotiate.

Veterans Day traditionally includes parades, picnics, flags

and remembrances. It is a time when the president honors those who did not come home, laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

While Memorial Day is a time to recognize all of those who have served their country, those who have died in service often receive special recognition for the sacrifices they have made. Flags above gravestones have become a common image of this type of recognition for the fallen.

Alfonso Martinez Hidalgo was 19 years old at the start of

World War II. Earning the rank of sergeant, the longtime north Los Angeles County resident served in the Army, receiving the Bronze Star Medal for distinguished service.

Created on Feb. 4, 1944, the Bronze Star Medal can be awarded to members across all branches of the military. The medal may be awarded either for meritorious service or for combat actions, where the “V” device, for valor, is attached. It is one of the most respected medals awarded in the armed services.

Hidalgo is buried

in the San Fernando Mission Catholic Cemetery in Mission Hills. His grave, along with the resting places of other veterans, had their headstones adorned with flags, showing respect and marking their sacrifices.

There are currently an estimated 40,056 veterans living on the streets, according to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV). They provide resources to veterans in need. For those seeking to help a vet they can be reached at 1-800-838-4357.



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MARKER - Headstone of Bronze Star recipient Alfonso Martinez Hidalgo who served during World War II.