



VALLEY LIFE: LAUNDRY
THE LAUNDRY TRUCK PROVIDES FREE SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS.



GALLERY: RESTAURANTS
RESTAURANTS IN LA COUNTY ARE RESTRICTED TO TAKE-OUT ORDERS.

COVID spike leads to new restrictions

New restrictions and announcements in lieu of the recent surges in case numbers, resulting in many restaurants rolling back to to-go orders only.



RESTAURANT- Customers wait for take-out only orders from Dave's Hot Chicken in North Hollywood. Outside dining was shut down by an order from California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Dec. 5.

SAVANNAH SIMMONS
MANAGING EDITOR

With the COVID-19 case surge, in-person dining came to a halt, travelers are now required to sign quarantine waivers upon arrival to the city and a new stay-at-home order is in place in Los Angeles County.

Los Angeles is now above the 5,000 five-day average of cases, according to County of Los Angeles Public Health,

which called for an update to the Safer-at-Home orders. The new orders went into effect Nov. 30, but are not as strict as those issued in March. All public or private gatherings with individuals outside of one household are prohibited and is the biggest restriction on the order. Most businesses will be allowed to remain open with less capacity depending on what kind of business it is. The city-wide curfew remains in place from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. and will continue with

the updated orders until at least Dec. 20.

“COVID-19 is more dangerous than ever ... we have to take action to protect Angelenos and stop the spread of this virus.”

- Eric Garcetti

“If this doesn’t work and two to three weeks from now we find ourselves in a worse place than we are, we’re going to have to go back and look at what else we have as options,” said County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer.

Starting last Wednesday, travelers arriving at Los Angeles International Airport, Van Nuys Airport and Union Station will have to sign a waiver that acknowledges the 14-day self-quarantine recommenda-

tion. The form is to be filled out online at travel.lacity.org and “will take less than a minute” to fill out, according to Mayor Eric Garcetti. Those who do not submit the waiver may face up to a \$500 fine.

“COVID-19 is more dangerous than ever — and from LAX to our businesses to our homes, we have to take action to protect Angelenos and stop the spread of this virus,” said Garcetti in a press release. “Our new form delivers a clear message: if you

travel to our city, we want you to be informed of guidelines that will save lives and keep all of us healthy and safe.”

Last Wednesday was also the last call for in-person dining at restaurants, bars, breweries and wineries for the next three weeks at least. Takeout, drive thru and delivery are still allowed but all dining, even outdoor, have ceased.

see Dining on p.4

The show must go on ... line

The biannual Student Showcase was held online this semester amid the coronavirus pandemic.

GABRIEL ARIZON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The coronavirus has taken its toll on the movie industries with theaters still shuttered, but the media arts department was determined that the show go on and held its biannual student screening online.

“I love telling stories,” said student director Wes Timmons. “My dad once told me, ‘If you want to shape the story, you want to be the editor.’”



DIRECTOR- Moises Yah, a Cinema 101 student pictured with the tripod and mount used to record his film “The Savior.”

On Nov. 21, the department held its Student Showcase via Zoom. The biannual event is meant to show off the work of media arts students to an in-person audience, though this time around viewers were able to watch all the films online. The movies were produced from the Cinema 101 and Media Arts 101 classes from the fall 2019 semester and the Cinema 101 class from the spring 2020 semester.

Towards the end of the night, media arts faculty presented the awards — four categories for

each semester that a film could win in: cinematography, editing, sound or visual effects. The winner in each category was decided by approximately 10 cinema and media arts faculty.

For the spring 2020 semester, the winners were: “Barbara” by Marlon Rodriguez for cinematography; “The Cure” by Timmons for editing; Danil Kinziyashev with “Astray” for sound; and David Flores with “The Little Bee” for visual effects.

“The Cure” is a comedic film about a woman’s numerous failed attempts to get rid of her hiccups. For Timmons, the idea behind it was simple as his wife (who stars in the film) often gets hiccups that he cures by scaring her. Timmons originally planned to rent an Airbnb and hire actors for his film, but decided to try it at home with the gear he had on hand. Thanks to the use of storyboards, he was able to film his project in one day and complete the editing in a few days.

“Working with the small space and available lighting I had on hand was the most difficult part,” said Timmons. “[However,] I really enjoyed conceptualizing the project as well as watching my ideas, the way I had envisioned them, find their way to the screen.”

For the fall semester, the winners were: Yerin Oh for cinematography with “We’ll meet again;” “Brief an Damian” by Miguel Jose Mercado for editing; Moises Yah for sound with

“Savior;” and “Deception” by Kaitlyn Didi for visual effects.

According to Yah, the idea behind “Savior” — which follows a vigilante beating up thugs to save a child — originated from the Netflix show “Daredevil.” The film took about a month and a half to complete, during which Yah researched real-life vigilantes to make his film more realistic and fight choreography to ensure his actors’ safety. However, he also had to contend with unforeseen setbacks. On the day of the shoot, the original actor fractured his arm in a car accident while another was stranded on the freeway. Nonetheless, Yah managed to finish his film, which won in the sound category.

“That was one of the many things I focused on,” Yah said. “I created lots of sounds by hand, and just to be recognized for that, makes me feel extremely humbled.”

To close out the showcase, faculty members announced the Audience Choice Awards, the category in which viewers voted to decide the winner. For the fall 2019 semester, Katie Mae Peters won with her martial arts film “Fighters,” and the spring 2020 semester winner was Goarik Akopyan for her silent horror film, “Dial A Spirit.”

For Akopyan, shooting the film took an entire day, while editing took several weeks. Akopyan found the editing process particularly tedious for several reasons, such as pains-



PROP- Goarik Akopyan, a Valley College student whose film “Dial A Spirit” won the Audience Choice in the Media Arts Student Showcase.

takingly converting the video files from her camcorder to a format that was compatible with her editing software and adding silent film effects.

Due to the pandemic, several of Akopyan’s plans for the film were curtailed — like the size of her cast — and she found that outdoor scenes were difficult to shoot due to various restrictions. However, Akopyan was able to manage her way around them due to the low budget and guerilla-style nature of her film.

“Winning the Audience Choice Award meant so much to me as an aspiring indie film director because it was my first real completed moving art piece for school,” Akopyan said. “To

receive such recognition for my work was very emotionally moving and motivating for me because I knew I was contending with many talented and creative artists in my class.”

The event was the first Student Showcase since the pandemic, as the one planned for the last spring semester had to be canceled. Although unable to host the showcase to an in-person audience, those in charge were still pleased with the results.

“We are very proud of all our students and their work, especially during this challenging and difficult time,” said Media Arts Chairperson Eric Swelstad.

LACCD looking for alternative security

The district is currently looking into a new security service for next year as it will not be continuing its partnership with the LASD.



VALLEY STAR | AVA ROSATE

SHERIFF- LACCD is seeking a new contract for security services for its nine colleges. The Los Angeles County Sheriff Department has notified LACCD about the termination of its contracts.

CASSANDRA NAVA
NEWS EDITOR

LACCD's 19-year partnership with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department will expire at the end of the year. With no plans to renew it, the district is looking for an alternative security service.

After five months of discussions, the district and LASD

have not reached any agreements for a new contract. The LACCD board of trustees are currently looking for a temporary security service to be put in place until a new service can be implemented. In a news release from LASD, the sheriff's department stated that the community college district is looking to provide an unarmed security service instead.

Although there is no information on what security service the district will employ, or if this is the reason the district did not renew the contract, in a recent police reform panel LACCD Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez stated, "We have been very clear about our interests in de-escalation and culturally responsive training."

The current budget for

LACCD's contract with LASD is over \$25 million a year, which includes security for all nine colleges. According to the district's press release, about 150 LASD personnel are a part of the Community College Bureau, which began in 2001.

On any LACCD campus, it is suggested that in the event of an emergency, the Sheriff's Department is the primary agency for reporting crimes. Valley's Sheriff's Station, located in the Maintenance & Operations Building, is open 24/7. It is equipped similarly to a regular sheriff's station and is staffed with two LA County sheriff deputies, 13 security officers and nine college cadets, according to Valley's website. Deputy Felix, the team leader, declined to comment on the end of the relationship between LACCD and LASD.

Deputies that worked at the colleges will be reassigned within the department when the contract expires, according to NBC.

Students across the country are calling to defund campus police, according to Inside Higher Ed. Student activists in Minnesota have succeeded in dismantling University of Minnesota campus police which

had ties with the Minneapolis Police Department, who employed police officers responsible for George Floyd's death.

Unlike Valley and the other eight colleges in the district, local colleges and universities such as Santa Monica College and UCLA are equipped with their own police departments.

The community college SMC has its own law enforcement agency. The Santa Monica College Police Department is a certified agency that uses uniformed and non-uniformed officers to patrol the campus and surrounding areas. According to their website, "Police Officers are duly sworn Peace Officers, authorized to carry firearms, have the authority and duty to conduct criminal investigations, arrest violators and suppress campus crime on the campus and on all properties owned and operated by Santa Monica College."

Local public university UCLA also has its own law enforcement set in place as well, the UCLA Police Department. According to the university's website, the UCPD are empowered by the state to have authority to enforce all state and local laws. Similar to Valley, the UCPD

is the first resource students are suggested to call in case of an emergency opposed to calling the LAPD.

UCLA has started to demand police change. In a message from the university's chancellor and executive vice chancellor, steps to create a more inclusive space for Black Bruins were listed.

"As a first set of tasks, the new council's work will include reviewing our relationships with external police forces and examining the responsibilities resting with our UC police force to see what work may appropriately be taken on by others and what must stay with UCPD to ensure campus safety," stated the message.

Sheriffs will continue to patrol the nine colleges in the LACCD until the current contract expires on Dec. 31 of this year.

Rodriguez stated in the district's press release, "Over the next few months, we will engage in an assessment of campus safety at LACCD and use that assessment as the basis for a Request for Proposals for campus safety services."

Panic buying worries begin anew amid COVID spikes

This time markets, suppliers and even consumers are saying they are ready for the holiday season.

GENE WICKHAM
STAFF WRITER

The coming weeks of the holiday season is expected to be during the worst COVID-19 spike yet and the store shelves are showing signs of panic buying as it did in March; Los Angeles County continues to reach daily records with almost 9,000 infections and over 40 deaths in one day.

The concern for their health and safety has some shoppers buying for the long term while others are heeding the market's advice to buy just what they need. Grocers insist the food supply chain is strong and the warehouses are full. Even so, Kroger — a major national brand grocery chain that also owns Ralphs in California — posted a letter on Nov. 10 outlining their plans to limit purchases of certain products.

"To ensure all customers have access to what they need, we've proactively and temporarily set purchase limits to two per customer on certain products, including bath tissue, paper towels, disinfecting wipes and hand soap," a Kroger spokesperson said in a statement.

Kroger, Walmart and H-E-B in Texas and numerous local stores are becoming proactive with maintaining their stock. Brand name paper products like Scott or Brawny are being supplemented with off brands or the store's own labels. Cleaning supplies like Lysol or Clorox are in low supply, but more off brands and store brands are being added to help with the shortage. Milk, eggs, canned green beans, Top Ramen and Cup Noodles are some of the foods with purchase limits.

In California, Gov. Gavin Newsom's initiation of an eve-

ning curfew — and a new stay-at-home order — has many concerned. Since Nov. 20, people have been protesting the curfew and criticizing Newsom for his strong-arm tactics. The curfew, scheduled for at least three weeks, stipulates all restaurants, bars, wineries will need to close between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., as well as close their indoor and outdoor dining. Restaurants can still offer takeout and drive thru. People in Huntington Beach have been protesting the curfew while Pasadena has generally ignored the curfew because they have their own health department.

Enforcement has not been specifically arranged, according to LA County Sheriff Alex Villanueva who commented on FOX news.

"At this time no law enforcement input or assistance has been requested," he said. "But

we continue to remain committed to public safety and are here to assist the community."

At the moment, stores are maintaining their late-night schedules with Ralphs staying open until 2 a.m. In March, stores needed to close around 8 p.m. in order to have time to restock their shelves.

At a Sherman Oaks Ralphs, a week before Thanksgiving, some of the paper goods were depleted and cleaning supplies were removed, replaced with cash register coupons to control the purchase limits.

Carol Matthews, from the University of Florida, has described the hoarding mentality in a recent issue of the Florida news site, The Conversation.

"While stockpiling is planned, panic buying is an impulsive and temporary reaction to anxiety caused by an impending crisis," she said.



VALLEY STAR | GENE WICKHAM

SHOPPING- Panic buying is being mitigated by the market chains, warehouses, truckers and weary shoppers during the holidays.

"Panic buying may also include purchasing enormous quantities of a particular item, in volumes that will never be needed, or emptying a store shelf of that item."

Grocers feel confident about their plans and are optimistic about the next few months. According to South Coast Today, Brian Houghton, a senior vice president of government affairs

for the Massachusetts Food Association, has expressed optimism about the food supply in the next few months.

"Do you really need 50 pounds of steak in your freezer? And think of your neighbor who might need it too," he said. "I think everyone learned a lot from that first time at the beginning of the pandemic."



PHOTO COURTESY OF FX

TV- Actor Indya Arianna Moore stars in the hit FX show "Pose."

JACK KELLY
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Over the last few years, romantic comedies have managed to find a small renaissance on streaming services, giving viewers a moment to escape their collective anxiety. They have also seen a surge of racially diverse rom-coms — "To All The Boys I've Loved Before," "The Lovebirds," and "Always Be My

Maybe" — bringing color and fresh perspectives to an otherwise very white genre. The studios' inclusion efforts are appreciated, but there is still a gaping hole in their slate: where are the LGBTQ rom-coms?

Some suggest the platforms are being extra cautious for financial reasons. "Netflix's business model is crazy," said Ashley Renne Smith, a creative exec-

Where is the LGBTQ Love?

LGBTQ rom-coms struggle to find homes as studios are hesitant to give them the green-light.

utive at Marsh Entertainment who developed the hit LGBTQ television series "Pose." "They take a lot of big swings and misses because of it. Certain decisions probably scare them."

Smith specifically mentioned the backlash Netflix received over "Cuties," a French film about the over-sexualization of young girls that caused their cancellations to suddenly increase. "When it comes to the things [Netflix is] willing to take risks on, I think they're a little safer," she said.

It is not just studios who are hesitant toward new LGBTQ rom-coms. Writer Janet Quinonez is currently developing a script based on her own experiences as a bisexual Latina and has received the most resistance from older white LGBTQ writers. "It's been done," they tell her, citing "Imagine Me & You," a 2005 lesbian rom-com starring Piper Perabo and Lena Headey, two white actresses.

Quinonez, originally from Texas, says her disillusionment has forced her to rethink her strategy to maintain her voice. "When I came here, I felt like Los Angeles, and the industry was very forward-thinking and progressive, and I was pretty shocked."

"LGBTQ stories tend to center around coming out of tragedy and we wanted something that was super lighthearted, super goofy, and something we liked."
- Kallie Tenney

"For all the discussion of inclusivity and diversity that Hollywood does, they can fail in development if they don't see that marginalized community can

make a universal story," wrote Jennie Roberson, media critic for Bi.Org. Roberson contributes to "The Unicorn Scale" where she critiques film and television for bisexual representation. She hopes that successful, positive TV LGBTQ romances like on "Schitt's Creek" will spark more film LGBTQ romances.

But LGBTQ creators are finding new avenues for their romantic comedies. During the pandemic, Hollywood has increased its purchasing of book rights. Roberson, also an author, plans to write the adapted screenplay to her LGBTQ romance novel to increase her selling likelihood.

Some paths are more straightforward. Comedy writers Sarah Soderquist and Kallie Tenney wrote and produced their web series "Gal Pals" on YouTube.

"If we did it right, took our time, and focused on the story, we could find an audience,"

Tenney said.

And they were right. Over three seasons, their lesbian rom-com has amassed over 10 million views, showing a desire for these stories.

"LGBTQ stories tend to center around coming out of tragedy," Tenney said, "and we wanted something that was super lighthearted, super goofy, and something that we liked."

LGBTQ viewers are looking for their "Forgetting Sarah Marshall" and "10 Things I Hate About You," regardless of its quality. Soderquist is excitedly anticipating "Happiest Season," the new lesbian holiday rom-com starring Kirsten Stewart and directed by Clea DuVall. The film is one of the few LGBTQ rom-com offerings in the last decade.

"I don't care if it's bad," Soderquist said. "It'll still be fun."



VALLEY STAR | SOLOMON O. SMITH
CLOTHING- The Laundry Truck LA staff member, Andre Ribiero, prepares another load of garments dropped off by residents from the Bassett Park gymnasium temporary shelter in La Puente, California.

Laundry Truck LA offers free service to homeless

Local mobile laundromat has done thousands of loads of laundry for those experiencing homelessness throughout the Los Angeles area.

MARCOS FRANCO
STAFF WRITER

In a time where personal hygiene is emphasized more than ever, The Laundry Truck LA (TLTLA) offers a life-changing public service by providing free mobile laundromats to unhoused individuals in Los Angeles.

In 2018, Jodie Dolan embarked on a journey to help those in need through hygienic services, and after a year of collecting donations, The Laundry Truck was born. At first glance, the big, baby blue four-wheeler appears to be nothing more than another Los Angeles-staple food truck, but there is more to it than just fresh linen. It began with five sets of washing and drying machines in one 16-foot trailer and TLTLA offering their services two times a week to the Los Angeles community. Their business has since expanded operations to seven days a week. This was made possible through the support of sponsors such as SoCalGas, Clorox and Maytag Appliances.

“The importance of having hygienic services available to people that are unhoused is extremely critical,”
--Gil Cedillo

“The connection between clothing and laundry is about dignity and self worth,” said Dolan, founder of DOLAN clothing and TLTLA in a video on their website. “It’s about trying to lift people up and helping them to not feel invisible.”

Los Angeles County currently holds the second highest population of people experiencing homelessness in the country behind New York City. Of the 10.04 million residents of Los Angeles, roughly 59,000

are homeless according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This number has increased 12 percent since 2018 and is steadily rising. Although there is not a single set reason for the amount of homelessness in Los Angeles, the county ranks sixth on the list of top 10 highest rent averages in the nation. Combined with a 22 percent poverty level, the issue seems more understandable.

According to Homeless Link, unhoused individuals are at significantly higher risk of long-term physical and mental health issues as well as drug abuse. Not only can homelessness bring illness, but it is also detrimental to a person’s self-esteem. Although TLTLA may not directly resolve homelessness, it does improve daily life for individuals. Proper hygiene can increase self-confidence and bring better life opportunities, such as employment.

By the end of 2020, the TLTLA team expects to do between 8,000 to 9,000 loads of laundry, over twice the amount done in 2019. The Laundry Truck operates primarily in City Council District 1 with six different locations available, each with their own hours of operation. Clean clothes are a fundamental component of healthy hygiene, and can serve as a token of hope during unprecedented times.

“The importance of having hygienic services available to people that are unhoused is extremely critical,” said Gil Cedillo, the Los Angeles District 1 councilman, in a video on the TLTLA website. “Not only to increase their public welfare, but also to reduce the spread of the coronavirus.”

Off to a successful start, the non-profit still requires just over \$4000 per month at each location to maintain operations. TLTLA has partnered with Amazon Smile in order to maximize donations to continue providing hygienic services. When shoppers select “The Laundry Truck LA” as their designated charity, Amazon will donate 0.5 percent of their purchase total at no additional cost to the user.

Through clean clothing,



THE SPIN- Marco Sanchez uses the laundry services on a regular basis. Clean Laundry offers a chance for those experiencing housing insecurity to save resources and focus on other needs.



FREE- Angela Bramlett uses the free laundry service to clean her clothing as well as her sleeping bag and blankets to save money.

TLTLA aims to restore dignity and hope to homeless communities and has successfully done so for almost two years. Readily accessible personal care services such as free laundry can positively impact the everyday lives of unhoused individuals during challenging times.

The Laundry Truck team has not only brought awareness to the issue in our local communities, but has also worked to wash away the stigma surrounding the subject.



FOLD- (Below) Andre Ribiero marks checked-in laundry inside the laundry truck as he prepares to fold and return garments to their owners.



VALLEY STAR | AVA ROSATE

The San Fernando Valley landmark Casa Vega on Ventura Boulevard is open for to-go orders only after new dining restrictions recently went into effect following the Thanksgiving weekend.

New restrictions hit Los Angeles restaurants

[Spike, from A1]

In the words of Garcetti, “more Angelenos getting tested for COVID-19 helps keep our city safe.” Luckily, a new free walk-up site is available at the San Fernando Recreation Park. Those who do not have access to a car for the drive-thru testing or are unable to travel to the farther walk-up sites scattered other places in the city now can get tested at the local park.

“Testing remains an essential tool in stopping the spread of COVID-19, tracking the virus, and saving lives — and we will continue to deploy our vital testing resources where the data and science tell us they will do the most good”
- Eric Garcetti

This location, run by Curative, will provide up to 3,000 tests a day and will also have 500 flu shots available on site during their 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. hours of operation. No appointment is needed for this walk-up site.

“Testing remains an essential tool in stopping the spread of COVID-19, tracking the virus, and saving lives — and we will continue to deploy our vital testing resources where the data and science tell us they will do the most good,” said Garcetti in a statement on his site. “Our new San Fernando Park site will deliver critical support to a community hit hard by this pandemic, and ensure Valley residents know their status and take the necessary steps to protect themselves and those around them.”

To schedule an appointment or find the other sites for a COVID-19 test, click here.



Rancherito restaurant in Van Nuys placed chairs on their tables Thursday as new dining restrictions go into effect.



Customers continue to use open salsa at Rancherito as new restrictions only allow for take-out orders in Los Angeles.



Countywide mask mandates, along with 6-foot social distancing restrictions, are in effect at Casa Vega at the drive-thru pick up.



With COVID-19 death rates reaching the Spring peak, the County of Los Angeles Public Health office updated the safer-at-home orders to include take-out only at restaurants starting Nov. 30.