Meet your Board of Trustees candidates

Story by Mark Barajas
Reporter

The Victor Valley College Associated Student Body hosted a debate forum on Oct. 7 in the Student Activity Center, where the public met the three candidates running for the upcoming Board of Trustees election. Joe W. Brady and Joe Range, both current board members joined up-and-coming candidate John Pinkerton in the debate.

Issues involving accreditation, campus climate, an educational workforce, and respect for one another were all topics of discussion. Pinkerton, counselor of Silverado High School, has been a member of the High Desert community since 1992 and hopes to bring VVC into financial stability. Brady, Trustee appointed in 2011, and Range, Trustee since 2003 shared their thoughts as board members during the current accreditation crisis. Further examination into questions rise, ‘what can these candidates do for VVC?’ It’s clear the best interest of the candidates is to keep students moving forward, taking necessary steps to a four year university. Actions speak louder than words; the Trustees should know they are here for the students. As the budget deficit rises, unrestricted reserves are what we may rely on in the future.

“The ACCJC (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges), in their first report in four to six pages show how serious our financial issues are, without the money to operate this program, we don’t have a school, without a school, we don’t have students, without students, we don’t have an educated workforce,” said, Brady.

Candidate Range spoke on solutions to accreditation issues. VVC and its staff are working together in efforts to help the college. If efforts fail to meet the primary goals of the ACCJC, VVC will face losing its accreditation.

“If we took every dollar in reserves, the five percent, assuming we can do that, it’s another problem we face. Folks want to save the school, but I don’t see a dead end, I see a turn,” said, Range.

Brady expressed his concerns about VVC’ future budget deficit and fiscal stability early on in the forum. Treating the VVC community as a company and becoming more financially responsible is key to the future of VVC. It’s time to take action and put students first.

Continued in Trustees on page 2
Although VVC faces a crisis of staff and regroup,” said Pinkerton. “Collaborating is what we need, and fiscal are most important,” said Range said, “we do it for our students.”

“Look at this as a company; you are our stock holders, our stake holders, our share holders,” said Brady. The primary goals met by the Board of Trustees are policies. Hiring a new president superintendent, setting goals for future boards are primary concerns for candidate Brady. “Collaborating is what we need, the experts are the teachers and staff, in every area, and they hold the answer. If there isn’t a class working, pulling their weight, we need to get the attention of the staff and regroup,” said Pinkerton.

Although VVC faces a crisis of a deficit, cutting costs on facilities, staff, or classes doesn’t cut it. Staff is the backbone of this campus that facilitates the student’s needs. Removing utilities doesn’t help with bringing costs down. Students need classes; the climate of the campus may change because of saving from cutting a class. VVC needs the students to continue with the gain of an education. Cutting losses distance the diversity of VVC and its students who need the leaders. A 2011 accreditation follow-up report shows that the climate has made progress but work still needs improvement following 2012. All of these topics were addressed during the forum by all three candidates. “I’m not here to cut classes, we’re looking into programs that work, four years ago we had programs that worked but probably not today,” said, Joe W. Brady. “We got to roll up our sleeves and ask are we here for the students? We will come to a figure pretty quickly of what we got to do.”

Before the forum began, Attendees were able to write down questions. Questions were written by the public, students, and staff showing great concerns about the VVC community. During the forum, ASB addressed the candidates with the attendees’ questions randomly. As the candidates publicly stated their responses, those in attendance were able to hear each candidate’s stance on particular issues relating to VVC. The Trustees are not an independent decision making board; issues presented to the board must come to a consensus vote. The candidates agreed that cooperation and collaboration are essential to a function board. Each candidate specified that it is difficult for five of the board members to come together and always agree. “Right now accreditation is number one, we are closely dealt with that, accreditation and fiscal are most important,” Range said, “we do it for our students.”

Ochoa recalls a student who was accepted to UC San Diego, but didn’t realize Math 90 did not count towards their curriculum so those credits were taken off the student’s transcript.

“All CSU’s and UC’s follow the same application process. Whereas the private schools and out-of-state schools all follow their own, so a student will need to check with that individual school,” said Interim Student Services Specialists in the Transfer Center, Kevin Barda.

Normally the CSU application process takes about half an hour to an hour, if the student does not have all the right documentation it can take longer. Using the CSU mentor website, students can fill out one CSU application and all the information will be carried over to another CSU application if the student wishes to fill it out for another school. Now UC’s are different because the application requires a personal statement that requires more time to complete. Ochoa
The application deadlines for Universities of California as well as Cal State Universities for the fall 2013 semester are coming up and some applications are available online now. If you are planning on transferring to a university, don’t wait to talk to the transfer center!

To assist with your application process, the transfer center is offering the following workshops:

- **CSU Application Workshops**
  
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Oct. 16</td>
<td>4p.m.– 6 p.m.</td>
<td>Bldg. 21, Rm. 171</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Oct. 24</td>
<td>1 p.m.– 3 p.m.</td>
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<td>Monday, Oct. 29</td>
<td>12 p.m.– 2p.m.</td>
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<td>Wednesday, Nov. 28</td>
<td>4 p.m.– 6 p.m.</td>
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- **UC Application Workshops**
  
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<td>Wednesday, Nov. 7</td>
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<td>Thursday, Nov. 15</td>
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<td>Monday, Nov 19</td>
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<td>Tuesday, Nov 27</td>
<td>3:30 p.m.– 5:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Friday, Nov. 30</td>
<td>1 p.m.– 5 p.m.</td>
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There will also be helpful workshops to get you started on your UC application personal statement Monday, Oct. 15 from 1 p.m.– 2:30 p.m. and Wednesday, Oct. 24 form 3:30– 5 p.m. in Bldg. 21, Rm. 170.

For more information visit the Transfer Center (Bldg. 55) or call 760-245-4271 ext. 2139. www.vvc.edu/transfer-center

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**Transfer from page 2**

recommends that a student should carefully write out their personal statement because it can be the difference between acceptance and rejection.

“Take advantage of the resources we have…It’s all for the students,” said Ochoa.

Ochoa says that some VVC students take an average of three to four years, depending on their major, to complete their required transferable units. This is based on students taking fall, spring, and summer classes.

If a student is denied, he or she can apply again but not until the next application period. The individual can attend VVC again but there are rules.

“They can return but they need to be aware that you can transfer a maximum of 70 units to the UC/CSU’s and also that after 90 units at VVC financial aid is no longer available,” said Barda.

VVC Student, Veronica Gonzalez, will complete the “Golden Four” at the end of this spring and is planning on applying to University of California, Riverside, California State University, Fullerton and many others. This is her third year here at VVC and she will be transferring with her Associates of Arts in Liberal Arts.

“I picked those schools because they are close to home and have a lot of the things I am looking for in a school. I plan to live on campus or close to campus,” said Gonzalez.

If any student is having trouble understanding the process of applying, VVC’s Transfer Center is always there to help. As Barda likes to say, “Plan early and plan often.” The center is located in the Counseling and Administration (Bldg. 55), over the lake, (760) 245-4271 extension number 2139. Students can go online to www.vvc.edu/offices/transfer-center and have many of their questions answered.
Lower campus left in the dark

Story by SarahJoy Stover
Reporter

The absence of light on Victor Valley College lower campus between the track and softball field could be a possible safety hazard and contribution to crime in that area.

According to the VVC "Campus Crime Log-2012", there were four crimes that happened on lower campus between Sept. 4th-Sept. 20 at 4-10p.m. Vandalism, burglary, petty theft, and grand theft are taking place on lower campus.

"I heard that a girl got picked up, raped, beat up, and dropped back off on lower campus," VVC student, Jessica Harrell said.

Whether these crimes are happening in the football, baseball and softball fields or in parking lots where lights are present, there are still issues with the lack of lighting. There is a bus stop on the corner where the sports fields are, and some students that ride the bus have expressed concern because the bus stop is in the dark. Also, football practice has to stop when it gets dark.

Usually, college football teams practice in the evening, when it is cooler. Without lights present, the VVC football team cannot practice football nor have games at night, due to safety reasons. Football has to quit practice as soon as the sun goes down.

"The main reason we don't practice football after dark is we can't see. It would be a big help to have lights," Assistant Coach, James Stewart said.

"I don't feel that the lower campus would be very safe at all without lighting at night because of the amount of buildings that are down there. It's a place where people like to work out, because in the evenings it's a lot cooler in the high desert, so you'd feel it's a popular attraction for people to run around the track and maybe play sports towards the evening period," said Scott Jones, faculty member of the Environmental Health and Safety Committee. "People would be at a disadvantage with safety if they didn't have lighting. The environment up here could be a target for sexual predators and things like that. It can be unsafe completely."

There are many people running around the track in the dark of the night, posing the lack of lighting as a safety hazard. It is also a campus violation that needs better enforcement.

"There should be no student or public gatherings down there after dark, and campus police should be enforcing that," said Steve Garcia, Director of Facilities.

Also, driving around the dark corner by the softball field could be a hazard to drivers and fatal to anyone crossing the street.

"I myself would feel safe driving around that corner, but if a kid were to run out in front of me into the street, the kid would not be safe," said VVC student, Abens Cajuste.

"I wouldn't feel safe driving around that corner, especially because if a car doesn't have their headlights on then you can get in an accident. This is college so not all students can afford to get repairs on their car," said Harrell.

Many students, especially the female students have to leave class in groups at night just to walk to their car, for safety precautions.

"I would feel better security for the students and staff if there were lights," said automotive teacher, David Steinback.

"It would be just around Continued in Safety on page 6"

Heard Around the Lake

How safe do you feel the campus is after dark? Would you like to see improved security precautions?

There are not enough lights, no security and no signs saying no loitering. They remove any possible way to defend yourself. I would like to see improved precautions. Better campus police who pay more attention to people who don't have classes.

Brandon Smith

It should be light in the parking lots after dark. I have never really felt endangered, I have seen a couple fights a few semesters ago. The area feels more intimidating than anywhere else.

Aron Newell

I feel the campus is pretty safe, I know security responds quickly when there is a problem. I think security is good as it is. Maybe more lights around parking lots because that can get pretty dark.

Curt Williams

It’d probably not be any safer than any other place after dark. I haven't seen security on the campus that much. I have seen police more during the day than at night. More lights would be more helpful, especially on lower campus and towards the back of the school.

Gillian Espinoza

—SarahJoy Stover
Simulation lab’s innovative technology

Story By Ivan Rivera
Reporter

The Victor Valley College Public Training Center Simulation Lab is now up and running while using some of the most advanced technology to help train new students in the Emergency Medical Technician field.

The training center, located just off of Johnson Road and Navajo Road in Apple Valley, is one of the few schools in the country offering training simulations on METIman (Medical Emergencies Technologies Mannequin).

The METIman is an instructional dummy used to train students in the field of emergency medical assistance. It has the anatomy of a human and can replicate what a human body would do under the stress of an accident. The dummies can mimic how the human body reacts to certain medication, or how the victim would excrete certain liquids.

Brian Hendrickson, a medic of 30 years and clinical coordinator at the training center, is amazed at how much the METIman units can do for students.

“The program is unique. No other colleges are doing simulations in real world environments,” said Hendrickson.

Most training or simulation programs for EMT’s take place in a static environment like a doctor’s exam room with an instructor present. With the METIman units, the instructor can remove themselves from the exam area, made possible by wireless cameras and microphones set up, and observe how the students would handle themselves in a real world situation. The dummies can record an event as it happens and play it back as soon as it is over. This helps the instructors pinpoint areas in need of improvement, even if the faulty area wasn't noticed by the human eye.

Though the training center has only been open for two weeks Hendrickson points out that the project has been underway for well over a year backed by the administration that helped them along with Instrumental Media Services (IMS). IMS and the administration were integral in getting the project and facility up and running in a year and a half. According to Hendrickson the facility opened without a hitch due to everyone’s involvement and expertise, and METIman worked just as well.

The EMT program that the METIman training is used on lasts one year, starting in June of 2012 and ending June of 2013, and is worth 39 and a half credits. The course also encompasses many skill areas. With the METIman, situations of cardiac or respiratory scenarios can be run all from the training center.

The technology and the methods that are used are some of the most innovative in the nation. The students in the program are getting experience they can use out in the field and not just theory so it seems as if the VVC Public Training Center was not only a worthwhile investment for the college but also to the people enrolled in the program.

Missing Report addresses Distance Education

Story by Micah Raimo
News Editor

The Substantive Change Proposal, a report declaring the efficiency of Victor Valley College’s Distance Education Programs, known as online courses, went missing in July of 2004 due to the change in campus presidency.

VVC had to reconfirm its effectiveness in Distance Education which placed the division on the chopping block as part of the college’s accreditation probation under Recommendation Five.

If the ACCJC cancels VVC’s accreditation status, VVC will lose students, not just in the High Desert, but also in 35 states through the loss of its Online Distance Education Courses.

According to the second VVC Follow up report published on Oct. 12, Dr. Christopher O’Hearn asked the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) staff to send him a copy of the Substantive Change Proposal response letter.

“This particular accreditation cycle made us realize that we should have finished that substantive change proposal in bringing up our Distance Education programs, known as online courses, to the level of those other colleges are doing simula-

tions in real world environments,” said Hendrickson.

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“We have a responsibility to make sure that our distance education courses are at a quality level”

Continued in Distance Ed. in page 8
VVC student Caitlyn Gempler once struggled with a difficult choice: stay in school or drop out and work full time.

Living on her own, Gempler had to decide between paying for the necessities of life, such as rent, electricity, food, etc., or to continue her education and stay the course toward her career goals. This is the same position many students find themselves in today, deciding between their immediate needs and their future. For these students the Pell Grant, a federal grant established in 1965 to help undergraduate students afford college, can be the difference between staying in school or dropping out. When applying, however, students must provide their parents’ financial information if they are under the age of 24, whether you live with your parents or not. This information is used to determine your eligibility, regardless of your dependency or relationship with your parents.

Gempler, now one of our representatives to the American Student Association of Community Colleges (ASACC), has been leading the way toward making the process more streamlined for students 21 to 24, to file for a “change of circumstance” for cases when students do not live with their parents and receive no financial support from them. This filing can deem a student “independent” and no financial information would be needed from the parents.

“If you can provide proof that you are financially independent, and you are 21 years or older, you should qualify for financial aid,” said Gempler.

ASACC, a nationwide organization of 1200 community colleges that represents close to 15 million students, will hold its National Student Leadership and Advocacy Conference from Nov. 9to 11 in Tampa, Fla. Here, Gempler will try to bring the issue of independent age to the forefront. When ASACC members meet in Washington D.C. to vote on important issues, independent age will be one of them. If successful, ASACC will present the issue to a congressional or senatorial representative.

Robert Sewell, Director of Auxiliary Services, said ASACC “facilitates the ability of students to come together, to lobby and advocate, on behalf of the community college student.” ASACC ensures that the voices of the students are presented to legislators first hand, so they can see the faces of those affected by their decisions.

Gempler, having once been affected by the issue of independent age, will now be lobbying to have the process re-examined. Not a blanket change from 24 to 21, but a streamlining of the process, for those students caught in the middle.

“Those students who are working and providing to the economy, paying their taxes and trying to have a better future,” said Gempler, “should not be penalized because of their parents.”

Caitlyn Gempler was among the many students who struggled with financial aid restrictions regarding independent age. She is now a student advocate working to lower those restrictions for student who fund their own education. Photo by Rudy Gonzalez.

$400,000, just for the sports lighting around the fields, and that doesn’t take into the fact that once you install sports lighting, then there’s many many more things you have to do to make it safe at night. We were looking into making a stadium down there, putting in sports lighting, and with sports lighting comes emergency lighting as well. And you have to have the cost of bleachers, sidewalks, etc. So, it’s a million dollar price tag for us to do something like that,” said Garcia.

In order to do this, VVC would have to find a way to get a grant and raise money. A less expensive solution that the Facilities Department has come up with is the possibility of putting up a fence and signs to keep everyone out of the field areas for safety reasons.

“It’s either install lights and let everybody use it all the time and pay the utility cost that’s associated with the lights and installation and/or we have discussed maybe fencing the area to enforce those issues,” said Garcia. “The fencing would not only be used to protect the facilities themselves, but it would also be used as enforcement, so when it got dark, the gates would be locked up so the public couldn’t go into those areas.”

VVC has been looking into hiring a new police officer to better secure the campus. Many students also agree we could use more police officers.

“There are a lot of things we can do to improve the safety of lower campus, such as adding more lights. I know that we did recently put a light down on lower campus by the vocational tech building. We can definitely look at getting a new light,” said Christina Kulaxsa, the Health Science and Public Safety Senator.

As VVC looks into making lower campus a safer environment, students should be careful in the dark. It is recommended to stay away from dark areas. In case of an emergency, the extension for campus security is x2555.
Why I fall in love with Fall

Story by Amber Schwartz
Features Editor

Everyone has their holiday traditions, and I am no exception. I have my list of musts for Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. If the actions on my list are not acted out, the holiday just seems to become a dim rendition of better years long since passed. Now that October is upon us, my execution of some of the items on my personified list has become priority.

I enjoy Halloween to the full extent. Whenever Halloween comes around, it is like an old, long-distance friend coming to visit once more. There are so many things one can do during this month that can brighten the spirits of anyone stuck in the obligation of a job or education alone. When life seems to become a routine, Halloween comes around and decides to shake things up a bit.

Halloween gives the ordinary and unnoticed an eerie and strange inkling. October can allow the mind to wander about the everyday occurrences that go on. On a windy day in September, the scratches from a nearby tree branch against a window sound just as it is, but during October, the sound becomes a creepy noise that could scare a person who is home alone. Wind that stretches into the crevices of a house’s structure now sound like the wails and shrieks from some unseen being. I try to acknowledge these sounds and permit myself to playfully hallucinate, and let my imagination run so that my October can be completely fulfilled and fun.

Besides scaring myself and only partaking in the spooky side of Halloween, I also pay attention to its sweet side, and I don’t just mean the candy. Although candy corn is one thing that I must have during the month, I also just enjoy the overall “look” of October. People are not the only ones who wear a disguise, for trees put on a costume of their own when the leaves change to a different shade. Some trees lay barren when their leaves decide to depart and take up residency on the leaf-filled floor below. I try to catch a glimpse of a falling leaf caught in the cold breeze while it sluggishly slinks to the ground. I enjoy the look of leaves piled up along a sidewalk or in front of someone’s front yard.

Before I etch an everlasting, grinning face onto a pumpkin, I like to dart in and out and between untouched pumpkins set in a row at a pumpkin patch. I take in the sight of the long rows of pumpkins and recognize the difference in shape, size and color of each pumpkin presented.

One quality of October that isn’t hard to acknowledge is the obvious change in the weather. The air turns cold and creates a thin layer of frost on the twigs and fallen leaves scattered here and there. The cold, crispness of the air bites at my nose and causes me to bundle up, but it is one of the things that I enjoy most about this month. It has me in sweaters, scarves and hats; a fitting attire that I enjoy to be cloaked in.

My favorite thing about Halloween though, is the specials that come on television all month long. I have my own personal stash of spooky delights as well. I love the way normal television is changed during Halloween, and the holidays in general. I thoroughly enjoy all the specials and commercials about ghosts and ghouls, witches and monsters; all encompassing fantasy and the paranormal.

During the holidays, some of my traditions stray away from the universal traditions held by many, such as carving a pumpkin or Christmas caroling, because I notice the little things. I am aware of the sound of many falling leaves and I always have an ear out for any holiday music-making. In a sense, I am always prepared. I surround myself with all the feelings of a holiday and it is where I gain my happiness. Fall, for all those who have yet to discover all its joy, is always fun if you know where to look.
VVC grows despite accreditation issues

Story by Micah Raimo
News Editor

Victor Valley College helps the High Desert’s employment through a series of unaccredited fee base courses.

According to data gathered from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.google.com/publicdata/) updated Oct. 5, the unemployment rate in the areas surrounding VVC has decreased by one percent since August: Victorville has a 14.2 percent unemployment, Hesperia has 15.2 percent, Adelanto is at 18.2 percent and Apple Valley is at 12.9 percent unemployment.

With these numbers in mind, the institution changed the focus of the fee base courses to more career focused classes. So far the Winter and Spring 2012 semester students have a 65 percent success rate which makes about 35 college certified Phlebotomists. These Students would still need to pass the National Exam in order to serve my customers what they want. I don’t want to try and package something and sell it to them. Right now they are telling me they want to get back to work,” said James Johnson, VVC Contract and Community Education Developer.

Johnson has been with the Victor Valley College Foundation since January of this year. His Job as VVC Contract and Community Education Developer is to meet the needs of the community in fee based education by managing the programs from the Foundation Office and to make sure none of the fee based courses interfere with the accredited courses on the campus. He goes online and reads the catalogue when he needs to and contacts the chairs and notifies them of what he is doing regularly.

Each fee based course is either prep course for other courses or cultural based courses, but the majority of the classes are classes to establish job skills to return to the workforce. The difference between a Community fee based course and a class is that, even though both classes are hosted at VVC and VVC’s name is on the certificate, the student of the community course is certified by the state and not the college. After the training is done, the student still has to complete a test from the state.

VVC’s Accreditation Proba- tion status directly affects cred- ited courses such as English and Math. Some courses, such as Phlebotomy, were once credit course but are now managed by the Foundation as fee-based. These classes are college programs that are managed by the VVC Foundation.

Like a credited course, minimal student counts must be met in order for the class to remain open so it does not cause a burden to the college. VVC students do not have to apply to the college in order to take one of these classes.

The students pay a fee and they receive the instruction that they pay for. None of these courses can be paid for by the Board of Governors Fee Waiver or any form of Financial Aid. All of the money has to come out of pocket. Prices range from, according to the VVC For Me Website, a $13 Beginning String Ensemble course to a $1,750 course in Certified Phlebotomy Technician 1A to the new EKG Technician Course for $1,400.

A state certification in Phlebotomy opens doors in multiple cities across the United States. In the local area, a Phlebotomist could earn up to $15 per hour.

A lot of these courses are hosted at various sites including the campus. Some are at the major 6 sites (like Silverado and Hesperia High School) but others are supported by businesses across the High Desert community. VVC is looking to expand the fee based certification courses to the allied health and manufacturing departments.

“What I found is that VVC is really important to this community and they are really really rooting for us,” said Johnson.

For more information, visit the VVC For Me Website (www.vvcforme.com) or contact VVC Contract and Community Education Developer James Johnson at 760-245-4271 Extension: 214.

Distance Ed. from page 5

content from the class.

“No only do I think the way we educate people here at this level has a lot to do with math and science because they are key areas for good jobs in this economy. I think the challenge we have is providing these types of courses,” said Regino.

As indicated by the Distance Education Report submitted in April 2011, the amount of students increased by 15.5 percent every year from 2005 to 2010 for online classes. While traditional face-to-face classes fluctuated by 1 percent.

In the year 2009-2010 40 percent of city colleges offered degrees through distance education making a total of 449 certificates offered at 45 colleges, proving that distance education is growing in popularity.

“We have a responsibility to make sure that our distance education courses are at a quality level, according to the accreditation guidelines. And that’s the challenge I see at this point. And to me it’s exciting,” said Regino.

“I see us developing in these areas. I feel that I came at the college at a crucial time and a good time and to take on this responsibility.”

The current report is in the mail and is to arrive at the ACCJC Oct. 15. An ACCJC team will be revisiting the college on Nov 7.
Celebrating freedom to read, the VVC library hosted Banned Books Week Sept. 30– Oct. 6. On display were books that had been either banned or challenged in libraries around the country. Such books included Harry Potter, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and even the Dictionary. Photo by April Terrero, Reporter

Celebrating freedom to read

Story by April Terrero
Reporter

Marking the 30th anniversary of Banned Books Week by The American Library Association, the Victor Valley College library set up a display of books that have been banned or challenged worldwide. Banned Books Week was Sept 30 raise awareness about the literature being challenged and restricted from schools or public libraries.

“We want to give everyone a chance to bring awareness to that, as well as give them a chance to celebrate their own freedom to read,” said librarian Meghan Kennedy.

Banned books recognition began in 1982 but didn’t start keeping statistics until 1991, according to Kennedy. Challenged books are books that are deemed inappropriate, usually by parents. Banned books are officially taken out of the libraries. There have been over 10,000 books challenged since 1990 for being labeled as unsuitable, inappropriate, offensive or for sexual explicit content.

VVC students were given the chance to look through and check out the featured books from the library’s display. The display was on the entry level of the library by the periodicals. The shelves of the display were covered with statistics of challenged books along with facts posted on the cover of each book.

“We are adults and have the right to read any material we want, because no matter what it is there will be some who actually do need that information for an assignment or work. Even if it’s for just entertainment purposes, we still have the right to read it to take a break from school and relax with a good book.” said VVC student Angelina Renfroe.

“I think it is good that the library is displaying books people tried to ban; it may bring the topic of censorship to some people’s attention.” said VVC student Robert Fox.

The books are chosen by using the top 100 list which changes every year.

“It may have not been banned, it may have been challenged so I bring that out to people’s attention. Every year there’s something new added to it, but they’re still within the top 100.” said librarian Ramona Boyton.

Banned books have included “Harry Potter”, “The Hunger Games”, “A Clockwork Orange”, “Charlotte’s Web”. With statistics changing every year, Boyton even predicts “50 Shades of Gray” will land in the top 100 challenged books by next year.
High Desert Pumpkin Patches are open for business!

Photo Essay by Kelli McGurk
Editor-in-Chief

Boulder Creek Harvest Festival/ Pumpkin Patch-Hesperia
Raising the bar in scrubs and sneakers

Story by Kristen Martin
Reporter

The graduating class of 2012 for Victor Valley College’s nursing program received the results for their National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), and for the first time in 11 years, they reached a 100 percent passing rate.

“I’m extremely proud of the faculty and staff and how much time and effort they’ve dedicated not only to this program, but also the fostering of students success,” said Doctor Joseph Morris, Director of Nursing and Allied Health. “I feel very excited, words can’t explain; Feelings of happiness. I’m overjoyed.”

In California, the average passing rate for the NCLEX is 87.4 percent and 91.1 percent is the average passing rate in the United States. Only the top schools in California and America achieve a 100 percent passing rate, and VVC’s nursing program proved they are a force to be reckoned with.

“It is an exemplary opportunity for the college and its nursing program...we need to recognize the excellence we have here” Luther expresses. “Give credit where credit is due; the faculty really deserves recognition on this great accomplishment.”

Morris feels very strongly about the outcome of the NCLEX. He has been at VVC since Jan. of 2010, and in that time his students have came close to a 100 percent passing rate, but did not accomplish it.

Such a large gap between accomplishments may come as a shock to many, but Luther had anticipated this outcome.

“I had heard the students were doing well, so it’s very believable,” said Pat Luther, Dean of Allied Health and Public Safety. There have been a few changes throughout the years that they need to succeed and the teachers are accommodating them to the best of their ability. “The bar has been raised.”

The nursing program continues to grow and progress to bigger and better things. One improvement to the nursing program is the new electronically controlled mannequins with the ability to do most all human functions. They help the students by giving them the opportunity to work with life-like scenarios of a hospital.

“Hands-on training is the best way to get the students to really understand what it’s like, and they really enjoy it,” Luther says.

At the end of the year, once the students have graduated, Morris provides a lecture review course for his students to ensure full preparation for the upcoming NCLEX. The review course is $350 per student, but he provides it at no cost to his stu-

Full preparation for the upcoming NCLEX. The review course is $350 per student, but he provides it at no cost to his stu-

Freshman nursing students work on a dummy before they get to handle the electronic simulation men, a new feature added to the nursing program that has allowed students to have real life hands on training. The nursing department is continuing to raise the bar and excel proven by the success rate of VVC Nursing grads in the state licensure examination.

Photo by Kristen, Reporter

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Photo by Kristen, Reporter

Freshman nursing students work on a dummy before they get to handle the electronic simulation men, a new feature added to the nursing program that has allowed students to have real life hands on training. The nursing department is continuing to raise the bar and excel proven by the success rate of VVC Nursing grads in the state licensure examination.

Photo by Kristen, Reporter
The scent of gasoline permeates the air. It’s overwhelmingly noisy and the shop is filled with spare parts and complicated machinery.

The Victor Valley College Automotive Department has traditionally been headquarters for the ultimate boys club, but now it bustles with diversity. Male and female, young and old; Automotive Technology is a growing industry with a stable employment rate. But are there opportunities available for anyone with a passion for working with these mechanical beasts?

Brandy Jimenez, a student at VVC, has been studying with the schools automotive program for four years. She is part of the 15percent of women on campus now working towards an Associate in Automotive degree.

“I’m sure at first the guys probably thought that women were here as just a pretty face in the shop,” Jimenez said, “but once they saw my knowledge and enthusiasm regarding the cars, they started treating me like one of the guys.”

Jimenez, whose father was a mechanic, has loved cars since she was a child. Before attending VVC, she spent her time fixing up low riders to show – now she’s taking courses to learn more about their inner workings.

Title IX, signed by former President Nixon nearly 40 years ago, barred all educational programs from excluding any student on the basis of gender. Regardless of the law, the stigma has been hard to shake. Slowly, women began taking advantage of this change in policy. The nation is now beginning to witness a shift in several fields widely considered to be “men’s work.”

The more recent adjustments to this demographic are due in part to advancing technology in today’s cars. Cars are becoming increasingly reliant on complex electrical systems to regulate and enhance the mechanical workings. Electronics now control everything from engine function to seatbelts, adding a new whole element to auto shop.

In addition to heavy mechanics, VVC offers classes that don’t require a huge amount of brute strength, which can be a good start for women who are just getting started in the field. Courses on electrical systems, shop management, service writing, drivability and hybrid mechanics, utilize student’s heads much more than their hands.

Still, John Sweet, Instructor and Department Chair of the Automotive Programs, says the women in his program aren’t shying away from getting down and dirty alongside the rest of the guys.

“There’s a difference between women and men as far as strength in most cases, so they’ll do the more technical work and less of the heavy overhauling,” Sweet said, “but a lot of women do it anyway.”

Kimberly Moran, a mechanic at Victorville’s Rancho Motor Company and alumni of the VVC Automotive Program, has done just that. A single mother of two boys, she was looking for a way to support her children when she found the program. After taking several courses, a friend recommended that she apply for her first job, changing oil. Within a year, she found herself conducting inspections on used cars.

“It’s fun, as long as you’ve got a thick skin and a good sense of humor,” said Moran, although she admits there are still challenges for women mechanics.

During an interview with a shop in Las Vegas, she was told that people on staff may say or do things that could be seen as offensive and was asked if that would become problematic. Moran didn’t get that job, leaving her to question whether the decision was based on her gender. She chose to move on without causing a fuss about it, stating that to do so would likely “reinforce that perception.”

Traditionally, women in male dominated industries earn higher salaries because these pioneers have a high work ethic and excellent on the job performance, having had to work harder for recognition in the field. So, why is it that only one out of every six repair shops in the High Desert employs a woman mechanic?

Brian Damgaard, from A&A Any Car Auto Shop has a theory, “Maybe women are just too smart to become mechanics…”
As the lights in the Victor Valley College Performing Arts Center auditorium dim, and the audience quiets, the first act of the opening-night showing of "A Streetcar Named Desire" is about to begin. Oct 4, was the first day of the performance, directed by Ed Heaberlin, and put together by VVC's drama program.

"It's a phenomenal, beautiful play. It's a Pulitzer Prize winning stage-play by one of the most fantastic American playwrights," said Heaberlin. "It's a great vehicle for my students to learn from."

A Streetcar Named Desire was written by Tennessee Williams. It follows Blanche Dubois, a former Louisiana schoolteacher whose dark past forces her to move in with her sister, Stella, and her husband, Stanley Kowalski. Blanche's incompatibility with Stanley ultimately leads to her destruction.

The 20 person cast did a spectacular job in delivering the classic, oftentimes emotional script of this play. Throughout the opening night showing, the cast did not fail to keep the audience engaged. Sounds of laughter, oohing, and ahhing echoed throughout the theater that night. The production functioned like a well oiled machine. It was clearly well rehearsed. The set and costumes were all very well done. Heaberlin also felt the production was strong.

"The set is great, the costumes are great, and the actors are great," he said.

On the subject of actors, Blanche and Stanley, were predictably the most memorable. Johnny Uhorchuk (Stanley) did a fantastic job in portraying the unpolished, brutish nature of his character. He did a fine job of making the audience hate Stanley by the end of the play. The fact that Uhorchuk was in no way afraid to really belt our his lines was most impressive. The delivery of his explosive and raw dialogue oftentimes shocked the audience's ear-drums. It seemed the audience was initially taken aback by the volume of his performance, but I think it had a good effect on making them feel like he was going to "blow his top" at any moment.

"It was a little bit hard to break out of my shell at first, but it just progressed. I got more and more comfortable with it that I came out of my skin a little more each time we rehearsed. Ed showed me how to do it, and it just got easier as it went along," Uhorchuk said. Although Uhorchuk does not relate much with his character other than the fact that in Stanley's case, it's not genius; its drive.

"I have a drive for this," he said. "It's what I'm passionate about."

Most people who have seen the play will come to the conclusion that Blanche is in complete contrast to Stanley. She is refined, and often comes off as timid. Despite the fact that Stephanie M. Gastineau was cast as the challenging role of Blanche, you would not be able to discern the fact that this is Stephanie M. Gastineau first time onstage. She did a fantastic job playing her emotionally unstable role as Blanche.

"It was kind of hard to get into her emotional state. She's kind of on an emotional roller coaster throughout the entire play," said Gastineau. She portrayed the emotional instability quite well, especially without any prior experience performing. At the more emotional parts of the play, it would have taken an weathered critic's eye to expose the fact that it was Gastineau's first time on stage.

"I really enjoyed it. This is my second time seeing it," said playgoer Ashlee Pendlebury at the third showing of A Streetcar Named Desire. "It was done really well actually. I surprised at the quality of it." Pendlebury has posted about the play on Facebook and says she would definitely recommend the play to her friends and family. The set was constructed superbly. The dingy apartment gave off the claustrophobic feeling that the original writer intended. The costume designer, Ashley Garcia, made the costumes in such a way that they were memorable and reflected the character's personalities. Taking into consideration the fact that this was educational theater and that the cast and crew were only amateurs, this was a fantastic, memorable play. The cast and production staff made a wonderful version of "A Streetcar Named Desire."
Metal and Hardcore Converge, but vocal styling is ‘left behind’

Review by Todd Hadler
Editor

Converge is without a doubt, one of the most influential bands to come out of the metal scene over the last 20 years. They are one of the first bands to combine hardcore music with heavy metal, as well as throwing in mathcore and sludge metal influences. Their technique of playing “metallic hardcore” would later become the benchmark for a whole new form of metal genre, “metalcore.”

Converge’s new album, “All We Love We Leave Behind,” incorporates all of the band’s influences. Songs like “Aimless Arrow,” “A Glacial Pace” and the title track show off their metal influences while songs like “Trespasses,” “Sparrow’s Fall” and “Shame In The Way” present the mosh pit inducing hardcore influences.

The vocals, however, do not seem to be up to par with everything else on the record. Lead singer Jacob Bannon seems so underproduced and underdeveloped compared to the instruments. Bannon utilizes the screaming vocal style, yet he seems so far behind other vocalists in the genre. Although his voice leaves something to be desired, one has to admire his passion and fervor.

What Bannon lacks in vocals, he makes up for it in lyrics. He writes all the lyrics for Converge and he is one of the best in the business. The first song on the album, “Aimless Arrow,” is easily one of the best written songs on the album, as Bannon compares himself to an aimless arrow: “I’m that aimless arrow lost from my very start. Violence without purpose, born of broken hearts. No one will ever guide me as I sail through the air. Now I just bring sadness in those who choose to care.”

Other than the vocals, this is an exceptional album. For Converge fans, metal fans and hardcore fans alike, this is a must buy. For everyone else, this is at least a must listen.

‘The 2nd Law’ still in theory

Review by Daniel Compean
Entertainment Editor

With hyper charged, progressive rock inspired hooks, Muse prematurely blasts off for the cosmos with dire consequences.

If the old adage of “standing on the shoulders of giants” lays anything to bare, Muse further proves it. Building upon the framework laid down by past innovators such as Radiohead, Queen, Depeche Mode and Jeff Buckley, Muse generated a unique and captivating rendition that landed them major success. This was largely their appeal; they had a palatable brand that combined the charm and catchiness of pop with the progressive and experimental tendencies of space rock.

However, with their overall formula is here to stay as evident in the release of their sixth studio album, “The 2nd Law.”

Opening in true Muse fashion, the album begins with their trademark distorted guitar ascensions and string accompaniments in “Supremacy.” With a distinct Freddie Mercury quality yet lacking any of his inherent charisma, “Madness” follows up as the pop induction to the album. “Panic Station” sees a paradigm shift as the mood transitions into 80's inspired dance with funk infused bass lines.

While unrewarding, “The 2nd Law” is still not without its merits. Lead singer and chief songwriter Matthew Bellamy experiments with this album and is largely successful in this endeavor. Yet, Bellamy seems to have a desire to one-up himself with each release, creating a Frankenstein monster of influences. When the listener is not bombarded with the iconoclastic dubstep of “Follow Me” and “The 2nd Law: Unsustainable,” one can expect opera inspired ballads such as “Explorers.”

Muse has a certain talent for building up a song. Whether this is through the sheer brilliance of “Knights of Cydonia” from their 2006 release, “Black Holes and Revelations,” or even the more radio friendly “Starlight,” they show a level of authenticity with their music. “The 2nd Law,” however, is an obstacle course of forgettable hooks, 80's electronic music and uninspired songwriting. It’s as if Bellamy is purposefully holding himself back.

Judged on its own terms, the album is not entirely unsuccessful however. It will no doubt receive warm reception from fans, but still feels like it lacks the color and personality Muse has proven to themselves to be capable of. “The 2nd Law” aims for the stars, yet fails to escape orbit.
Ram Reviews: Movies

‘Argo’ delivers despite flaws in the mission

Review by Daniel Compean
Entertainment Editor

★★★★★

With films such as “Lawless,” “The Pursuit of Happyness,” and “The Motorcycle Diaries,” based-on-a-true-story films are a dime a dozen as of late. Staying true to actual events and maintaining artistic creativity poses a problem for these films. While taking some creative license, director/producer and actor Ben Affleck adds “Argo” to the growing roster of docudrama movies.

“Argo” follows CIA technical operations officer Tony Mendez (Affleck), who is involved with covert missions for hostage recovery. Set during the 1979 Iran Hostage Crisis, Mendez is tasked with removing six Americans hiding in the Canadian Embassy. The six Americans are given cover identities as filmmakers scouting locations for the faux movie “Argo.”

Affleck has a far stronger presence behind the camera as the director/producer than actor. The dramatic tension of the decisions Mendez must make is at odds with Affleck’s lulkaster performance. Key scenes with Affleck reflecting on risky choices lack the emotional impact of his character the film was attempting to convey.

Even with the weak lead, “Argo” is held up by its strong supporting cast. Alan Arkin gives a stand out performance as the sardonic director Lester Siegel. Equally, John Goodman shines as the snarky make-up artist John Chambers.

With conservative use of special effects, scenes that make use of visual effects can blisteringly stand out. “Argo” encounters this problem with scenes suddenly changing to computer graphic landscapes or airplanes that conflict with their surroundings.

Liberal in its take of true events, “Argo” follows the fairly standard writing formula established in most Hollywood dramas. In true Hollywood format, the protagonist stays true to his morals and prevails in the face of bureaucratic opposition.

Despite cliché story arcs, “Argo” still successfully tells a compelling recount of the Iranian hostage crisis. Yet, as engaging and interesting the storyline is, Affleck doesn’t deliver a strong enough performance to carry the movie as its protagonist. Even with its inherent flaws, Affleck directs a riveting drama that is as immersive as it is fascinating.

‘One Shih Tzu… Seven Psychopaths’

Review by Joseph Ciulla
Contributing Writer

★★★★★

It seems unlikely that there would be such appeal to a movie about dognapping, but Seven Psychopaths has cult classic written all over it. From director Martin McDonagh (In Bruges), Seven Psychopaths has it all: a hilarious script, excellent cast and thrilling scenes. It reminded me a lot of McDonagh’s previous film In Bruges, but also of one of my favorite films Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang.

The movie follows Marty, played by Colin Farrell (In Bruges), a struggling writer working on a script about seven psychopaths. Marty seeks the help of his best friend Billy, Sam Rockwell (Moon), who is in the business of kidnap-ping dogs and collecting the rewards. Chaos ensues when Billy steals the wrong Shih Tzu from a gangster, Woody Harrelson (Zombieland) that leads to one wild ride of a movie. Other psychopaths include Hans, played by the scene stealing Christopher Walken, a friend of Billy’s and Zachariah, played by legendary singer-songwriter Tom Waits, a strange psychopath that carries around a bunny throughout the film.

The dialogue between characters is one for the ages, but it also has to do with the cast. Walken and Rockwell own this movie. Every scene they are in is just pure gold. One scene in particular that is a stand out comical scene is when they are discussing the ‘final show-down’ for their script and Rockwell goes on a rant similar to that of Willem Dafoe in Boondock Saints.

Along with a great amount of comedy the movie also had its moments of raw emotion, similar to In Burges. There were plenty of shocking scenes and emotional dialogue that kept it in the upper echelon of films released this year because you can take it seriously.

The only downside is the over-the-top action that occasionally appears in the film. I’m not opposed to blood and gore occasionally but it just seemed to not fit within the context of the movie itself.

Overall this is a movie worth seeing because there was never a dull moment. I believe it is sure to be a movie in people’s collections for years and years to come.
Womens soccer still alive and kickin'

Story by James McDaniel
Reporter

Despite another loss being added to an already poor season, the Victor Valley College Rams women’s soccer team is not worried. After losing to Antelope Valley College on Oct 9, both schools’ coaches had words of praise to offer.

“I don’t check the scores or rankings whenever I’m going to play Mike’s (VVC) team because it is always a physical battle,” said coach Jerry Stupar of AVC.

Focusing on traits that he has seen in previous generations of VVC women’s soccer players, as well as the current team, Coach Stupar compliments the professionalism and level of physical prowess of the players.

But even with being there physically, the team still lost with a score of 1-3. According to Rams Assistant Coach Lucas Kim, the team is comprised of relatively new players.

“One of the biggest problems we’re suffering right now is that there is a lack of prior development; that initial teaching the fundamentals that the girls should have learned at an early and young age” said Coach Kim.

Head Coach, Michael Bradbury, is still looking at the positives of the situation though, and feels that his team won in some aspects of the game. Along with the progress the players have made as individuals in the previous few months, the team as a group worked quite well together, particularly more in the defensive aspect.

“We got to figure out how to break through and get a little bit of that luck on our side, but you create your luck,” said Bradbury.

The team certainly has the potential to break through their losing streak. Down 0-3, the players refused to give up, which lead to Brianna Johanson scoring with help from Jessica Karlen.

Both Coach Bradbury and Coach Kim expressed that the players get better and better with each game, and the players are fairly good considering their experience.

Though they didn’t get the win against AVC, perhaps the Rams team will avenge their loss during their future game against AVC scheduled for Nov. 2. However, current focus should be aimed at their next match against the women of Chaffey College, the current leaders in the conference, on Oct. 16 on their home ground.

Rallying a winning streak

Story by Gabriel King
Reporter

On Wednesday Oct. 3, the Rams Volleyball team broke their four-game losing streak in a three-set sweep against their conference rivals the San Bernardino Valley College Wolverines. They also improved their overall record to 5-7 and their conference record to 2-0.

This year the Rams volleyball team is mostly freshman who have never played together before this season. Christa White, coach of the Victor Valley College Rams’ volleyball team for 16 years, is inexperienced in starting over with a new team.

In 2009, Whit started the season with a brand new team and one sophomore transfer. They ended up second in conference that year and didn’t like it. In 2010, the same team went undefeated in conference.

“It was one of the best teams I’ve had,” said coach White.

SBVC assistant coach Laura Walker made it clear that this was a must win for the Wolverines. “(Victor Valley) is our biggest rivalry, and after today the Wolverines will be 6-7,” said Walker.

In the first set, the Rams took the lead and never gave it up. The plays and game plan worked in every aspect against the Wolverines. They passed the ball great which was key to set up their plays. Taking the first set, the Rams went up 7-1 but after the Wolverines first time out SBVC started to make a rally and eventually brought the score to 23-13, but the Rams were too focused and didn’t let up.

“This team this year is very cerebral and sometimes in volleyball you just have to react,” said White.

The Rams cut down those errors and beat the Wolverines in the second set 25-16. They brought the intensity up by rallying from four down in the final set, with the crowd in full support. Even the Ram’s base-ball team came out painted with the word R-A-M-S-! on their chests in support of the girls. The Rams won the final set, 25-22, winning the match 3-0.

“We never got it going, there wasn’t a turning point in today’s game,” stated Wolverines head coach Tricia Rossman.

“It was a little bit rough in the beginning and I think that we were just kind of like ‘Oh yeah were going to win this game’ and then we eased up a little and once we realized that, no that cannot happen anymore, so we just put the intensity to the max,” said Freshman Util., Kali Gray for the Rams.

Although the team is fairly new as this year’s Rams team has shown potential to be a great team such as the one from 2010. The chemistry for the Rams seems like a veteran team; passing the ball, setting up plays, and rallying when they were down. The Rams, started a winning streak, defeating Cerro Coso 3-0 on Oct 5, and College of the Desert 3-1 on Oct 10.

Cross Country aims high

Story by Ethan McCarvey
Reporter

With the cross-country season already underway, Victor Valley College runners hope to improve from last season and qualify for the California State Championships.

During the last cross-country meet, on Sept. 28 at the Foothill Invitational in Ontario, the VVC men’s team placed seventh, 20 points shy of fifth place. The women’s team, however, did not fare so well.

“The goal this year is to make State [Championships] as a team,” said coach Kevin Barda, “the team is one of six schools vying for the last two spots. If the team runs good, they can make it.”

Coach Barda sees promise in his team’s future. The men’s team is led by Sebastian Angelo and Tyler Kilgus, with a sound freshmen crew running third through sixth. Earlier this season at the So-Cal Preview Meet, the men’s team finished twentieth, but barely missed seventeenth place by a handful of points.

The women’s team may be struggling with the new freshmen, but they should look to their leader, Samantha Knutsen, for inspiration.

“She is our number one runner, she was fifteenth in State last year and has been our number one runner this year. I expect her to continue down that path,” said coach Barda, about Knutsen.

Coaching at a two-year school and not having athletes for very long is one challenge Barda must face. He builds a new team every year while keeping that team competitive and consistent.

“To overcome this challenge and have a strong team, we need to keep building on the freshmen, so they can learn the way, and next year will be just as good,” said Barda.

The next cross-country meet is the Foothill Conference Championships on Oct. 23 at VVC.
NEW! @your library

1. Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night by Nicholas Rogers (Left)

2. The Conflict: How Modern Motherhood Undermines the Status of Women by Elisabeth Badinter

3. WikiLeaks: Julian Assange’s War on Secrecy by David Leigh and Luke Harding

4. Mary Boleyn: The Mistress of Kings by Alison Weir (Right)

5. Great Tales of Horror and the Supernatural compiled by Bill Pronzini, Barry N. Malzberg and Martin H. Greenberg

6. When Chicken Soup Isn’t Enough: Stories of Nurses Standing Up for Themselves, Their Patients, and Their Profession edited by Suzanne Gordon (Left)

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Tweets include everything from resume advice to real job postings. Companies posting jobs here include Comcast, Allstate, and Microsoft, just to name a few.

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-Kelli McGurk, Editor-in-Chief

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Presidential Debate #1

Comic by Mark Barajas, RamPage Reporter
I'm not saying AMERICA AGAIN is a foolproof roadmap to wealth & success, but I'm not saying it isn't, either. (It is!)
Get Ready to Shake Out.

During this drill, be prepared to Duck, Cover and Hold. All students, faculty and staff will be directed to exit to their designated evacuation points until the "All Clear" notice is issued. Please look for your Building Emergency Staff for further instructions.