Campus Times

December 6, 2024 | Serving the University of La Verne Community Since 1919 | Vol. 133, No. 12



Inside

Symphony serenades La Verne p7
GenZ turns to online dating p3
Athletes share stories of perserverance p9

Commentary

Trump's inauguration on MLK Day is sad coincidence



KARINA RODRIGUEZ

Donald Trump's Inauguration Day, Jan 20, 2025, falls on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

This is a sickening coincidence and a harsh reminder that the fight for equality is not finished.

We have not won the battle against hate just yet.

The inauguration of Donald Trump, a man who promotes hate and division, falls on the day that we celebrate King, a man who gave his life for civil rights, love and community.

King was born on Jan. 15, 1929, in Atlanta. King, a most prominent African American civil rights leader and baptist minister was assassinated at 39 on April 4, 1968.

King dreamed of a world where all were equal, where no person was more or less than another. We have not accomplished his dream yet despite being in the 21st century. This country having just reelected a man who promotes hate, violence and division, and stokes racism is moving backward.

Trump incites hate. He did that very clearly on Jan. 6, 2021, when he asked his supporters to storm the Capitol to stop the counting of the Electoral College votes, a foundational process within American democracy.

Leaders of the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers, radical far-right hate groups, among others manipulated by propaganda, rioted on Jan. 6, 2021, in their anti-democratic attempt to subvert the free and fair election of Joe Biden.

Trump is a patron saint of violence because he has shown us various times, with the Jan. 6 riots being the strongest example, that he protects violent actors – if that's what it takes to keep himself in power.

King believed in nonviolence, despite being the victim of a violent murder following other attempts on his life. Segregationists bombed King's home on the 57th day of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Once King arrived at his house, he was met with a crowd of roughly 300 African American men vowing to avenge King with knives, guns and violence. King, rather than encouraging violence, told the men that the ultimate goal was to "love our enemies."

King was tested many times, yet he still maintained his position of loving our enemies.

Trump, on the other hand, encouraged violence. Trump had the audacity to call the Jan. 6 insurrection "a day of love."

King showed us time and again what love is. King had genuine enemies, segregationists and Ku Klux Klan members after him. Trump, on the other hand, his enemies are love and democracy.

King was assassinated because of his positive impact on civil rights and an inclusive United States.

Trump was nearly assassinated in July, but this was arguably due to the hate and division that he had normalized.

Inauguration Day falls on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and we will have two sides of America being celebrated.

On one side, we have a day that honors the life of a courageous man, whose activism has helped and protected us long after his untimely death.

On the other hand, we have a man full of hate trying to undo all the hard-won rights and sacrifices of people from the past, like King, who made for a more inclusive, stronger United States.

We still reap the benefits of King's activism, though the next few years, I fear, will test us and our adherence to King's principles along with our own.

Karina Rodriguez, a sophomore journalism major, is a staff writer for the Campus Times. She can be reached at ***karina.rodriguez3@laverne.edu***.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I am a graduate of the University of La Verne and have been an adjunct faculty here for 23 years. My brother and daughter both are graduates of ULV and the school has long held, as the school song says, "a dear favored spot in our hearts."

With this in mind, I am writing to bring to light what I feel is a serious issue at the University. I have watched over the years and seen ULV move from a culture of help, cooperation, commonality and family to what I see as a disjointed organization. In my mind, the strength of La Verne has always been the close relationships between administration and faculty... but, more importantly, the close relationships between faculty and students. Some examples of what I see as problem areas: (1) Departments are understaffed; as a result, faculty feel pressured and morale is affected negatively; (2) We've had chaos at the president position, including forcing highly-respected senior professors to resign; other faculty are nervous, fearful and apprehensive about the possibility of being next on the chopping block; (3) We have deans of some colleges who are rarely on campus and hard to access; (4) Because morale is low among faculty, new staff are not learning the processes by which ULV attained it's past greatness; the culture is not positive; (5) There appears to be little or no transparency; (6) It appears that publishing is becoming more of a priority than teaching; this cuts down on classroom focus and also on the amount of time faculty can spend with students.

This is all problematic, but there is a further effect that occurs as a result. I believe that any institution of higher learning should function under the philosophy that we (faculty and administration) are here to serve the students. I also believe that staff/organizational morale and culture issues trickle down to those students. I'm not criticizing students; we as an organization are responsible for creating a positive community for learning. Factoring in our own culpability, here are some trends I have noticed, both in my own classes and the classes of other instructors: (1) Far more absences than previous years; (2) Far more tardies; (3) Fewer students taking notes in classes; and (4) Less and less class participation.

I believe that many of these issues stem from students sensing the low morale of the faculty.

The students, in my opinion, are suffering due to the culture of the University. Culture in any organization starts at the top and, unless some steps are taken to address this, I believe that we as an organization will continue to struggle and that students will not receive the quality of education that ULV has long been able to provide.

I have seen, both as a student and a faculty, ULV when it was a tight-knit, productive, positive organization with a "family" culture; my desire is to help facilitate corrective actions and return the University to that state. I welcome an open dialogue re: what can be done to rectify what is seen by many as a deteriorating situation.

Dan Kennan
Adjunct Professor of Sociology

Campus Times
Fall 2024

Editor-in-Chief
April Cambero

News Editor ..... Jordan Alcasas
LV Life Editor ..... Margaret Contreras
Arts Editor..... Stephen Gilson Jr.
Sports Editor ..... Jonas Holt
Photography Editor ..... Chris Rodriguez
Assistant Editors ..... Ethan Anderson
Thatiana Gibbs

Reporters
Samantha Acevedo, Stephanie Amaya, Lillian Barocio, Bryce Anthony Edwards, Leila El Sabbagh, Emma Gonzalez, Justin Ries, Karina Rodriguez, Olivia Russo, Sonya Sexton, Joshua Villegas

Photographers
Mia Byington, Emily Casillas, Camille C.Nan, Anthony Eramya, Liberty B. Garcia, Stephen Gilson Jr., Jonas Holt, Vicente Rodriguez, Chris Rogers

Advertising Manager ..... Jayleen De La Cruz

Chief Adviser ..... Elizabeth Zwerling
Photography Adviser/
Production Manager..... Eric Borer

Campus Times Online

The award-winning Campus Times online edition is updated throughout the week with event coverage and breaking news. Visit **lvcampustimes.org** for additional current and past stories. You can like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram **@campustimes,** TikTok **@campustimes** and Bluesky **@campustimes.bsky.social** for all the latest updates on local and on-campus news. Send us story ideas over social media or email to **ctimes@laverne.edu**.

Corrections

The Campus Times is committed to accuracy. When we make mistakes, however, it is our policy to correct them as soon as they are brought to our attention.

If you find a mistake in the Campus Times, please let us know at **ctimes@laverne.edu**.

Letters to the Editor

The Campus Times encourages readers to submit letters to the editors regarding topics covered in the paper. Letters should be no more than 400 words in length and are due by Tuesday at 3 p.m. The Campus Times reserves the right to edit letters for clarity, space and libel. Letters may be sent to **ctimes@laverne.edu**.

The Campus Times is published weekly by the Communications Department, except during examination and vacation periods, by journalism students of the University of La Verne, 1950 Third Street, La Verne, California, 91750. The Campus Times is a laboratory publication for Newspaper Production classes Journalism 220, Journalism 320 and Journalism 408. Signed columns are the opinion of the individuals and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Campus Times. For advertising information, call 909-448-4761 or email ***ctimesad@laverne.edu****.*

©Campus Times, 2024

On the Cover

The La Verne Symphony Orchestra performs during their 2024 winter concert Nov. 24 at Morgan Auditorium. The symphony performed classical pieces by composers such as Bach, Dvořák and Rimsky-Korsakov. / photo by Mia Byington

It's Not Your Fault.

1.800.656.HOPE
National Sexual Assault Hotline
Free. Confidential. 24/7.

(Operated by RAINN—the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)

Gen Z ghosts in-person connections

20-somethings go all in for online dating, embrace apps for casual encounters, true love

April Cambero
Editor-in-Chief

Married Millennial couple Shawn and Christina Hur, who met through Hinge, formed interest quickly. They messaged for only a few days before meeting in person. They hit it off right away and even planned a trip to Tahoe on their first date.

They soon realized, however, that they had gotten swept away in all the excitement of meeting someone and vibing immediately, and they did not end up going on that trip. They instead planned many more dates together.

"My intentions were just to see what she was like." Shawn said. "One of the first things that was a safe option was just to meet a person at the bar, and if I liked (her) I would schedule a second date. On our first date we ended up getting dinner after the bar, which I had never done before. I (didn't) usually take girls to dinner on the first date."

Shawn was excited to meet someone that he could have intellectual conversations with, which was one of the first things he noticed about Christina. Christina was attracted to Shawn's photos and also noticed that he had a solid career, which was a green flag for her.

Online dating takes off

Sitautionship, sneaky link, ghosting, soft launch, red flag, cuffing and love bombing are all terms used in the Generation Z community in regards to dating. These terms come with niche ways of connecting as times have changed in dating and dating culture. According to the report "Disintermediating your friends: How online dating in the United States displaces other ways of meeting" published in 2019 by National Academy of Sciences, there was a 37 % increase between 1995 to 2017 for American couples who met online.

There were also significant decreases from 1995 to 2017 for American couples who met in person via situations such as meeting through friends, at school and through work, the report found. It also found that from the end of World War II to 2013, the most popular way of Americans meeting romantic partners was in-person.

Thanks to the rise of the Internet, the most popular way for Americans meeting their romantic partner today is online.

The first popular dating website, Match.com, emerged in 1995.

According to Match.com's about section, they helped pioneer online dating to help singles find their "someone special." Match.com has come a long way since its establishment, and had an early influence in dating culture for earlier generations such as Generation X and Millennials.

Other early popular dating websites include eHarmony established in 2000, Christian Mingle established in 2001, and OkCupid established in 2004. These sites have allowed users to scope out the dating pool, filter through to their preferences for potential matches, connect with their matches, and set up dates that lead to opportunities for lifelong connections.

According to the 2020 report "The Virtues and Downside of Online Dating" by the Pew Research Center, 54% of individuals ages 18 to 65 and up who have used dating sites and apps have said that meeting someone online is just as successful as meeting in person. This report includes straight men and women, as well as those who identify as gay, lesbian and bisexual.

'Frequent swiping, lack of matches and ghosting can really impact their self-esteem and create potentially a source of anxiety or build upon anxiety that is already rooted.'
–Alexis Jimenez, licensed mental health counselor

As the popularity of online dating grew and then with the introduction of smartphones and apps, popular dating apps such as Tinder, Hinge, Bumble and Grindr took the world by storm and created spaces for the new generations to explore their dating lives.

According to the same Pew report, online dating was more popular than meeting in person among individuals who were younger, gay, lesbian and bisexual.

Tinder, one of the most popular of the apps among Gen Z, is a place where swiping right, to show interest, and left, to make a profile disappear, became a common practice for viewing profiles. Tinder is known notoriously as the hook-up app. According to Tinder's about section, what differentiates them from other dating sites and apps is that they offer features that "make the impossible possible."

'It's so fake. I have friends who literally say 'I'm going to play my favorite game right now' and they will go on Hinge and I'm just not really about that'
–Ian Noriega, Cal State Fullerton student

Hinge is another popular app among the Gen Z community, where they can create a profile that is more personal, adding more intimate details that allow the user to show or reveal more about themselves. Among Gen Z-ers, Hinge is known as the place for those interested in a more serious connection. According to Hinge's about section, their mission is to "create a less lonely world by inspiring, in-person connections."

Bumble is the third most popular dating app according to Pew. Bumble is right behind Tinder, in first place, and Match.com in second. Bumble is different from other apps in that it fosters equality at the forefront, allowing only women to make the first move.

Grindr is popular in the LGBTQ+ community, specifically among gay men. This app allows users to view how close they are geographically to other users in their area. It is an app that promotes convenience and allows for quick access for connections. There are many different types of users on the app from men who are openly gay to men who may be exploring their sexuality to men who are closeted and "on the downlow," but want to look for anonymous hookups.

It is common for Grindr users to conceal their identities due to safety concerns and privacy. Faceless profiles with vague biographies are often seen on Grindr making it difficult for users to assess their interest for that person. However, trading face photos and more personal information is also a common practice on Grindr and oftentimes leads to more conversation and even meeting in-person.

Although these dating websites and apps have created convenient spaces for different generations to discover potential opportunities for love, their success rate for marriage or committed relationships is surprisingly low. According to the same Pew study, only 12% of relationships that started through dating apps progressed on to marriage or committed relationships.

With these odds, why is Gen Z banking on dating apps?

For some Gen Z-ers, there are many other factors that go into using dating apps beyond what these apps are apparently intended for. Prior to COVID, many Gen Z-ers used apps to make connections, hook up or get into relationships. Now, these apps are sometimes used for entertainment, ego boosts and of course still hooking up.

Still in some cases, dating apps can be extremely successful and lead to meaningful relationships, even lifelong commitments. The Hurs' relationship quickly blossomed into something more serious a few months in, and they started to create a life together. However, prior to the success of this relationship, Christina and Shawn, who now live in Upland, had their fair share of dating through dating apps in San Francisco, where they met. Both complained about how difficult it was to date in their early-to-mid-20s because of the different phases in life other people around their age were in during this time.

Some people are parents, some are still in school, some are at the beginning of their careers and some are still partying it up, they said. Trying to find someone who is in a similar place with similar interests is difficult, especially while trying to balance all of the adult things that come as a surprise. Fortunately, they were able to find someone who valued the same things in life and create a relationship that they always envisioned.

"It was super normalized," Christina said. " A lot of my friends who are now married connected through dating apps."

Breaking down barriers

Aidan Acosta and Zachary Meltvedt met and started a romantic relationship while living in Seattle. The couple met on Grindr and chatted back-and-forth on a more casual level, and did not hit it off initially. Two months later, Acosta revisited their conversation on Grindr and decided to get to know Meltvedt better. After chatting again, with intentions to form some sort of relationship, Acosta and Meltvedt decided to meet in-person for a walk and talk around Greenlake in Seattle. The couple quickly realized they had so much in common, such as their interest in music festivals and cars, and enjoyed each other's company. They then decided to hang out the next day and from then on saw each other almost every day.

"I think when I walked into his apartment and saw the Coachella box on his desk I was like 'this man knows," Meltvedt said.

A couple of months into hanging out, they were unsure of the status of their relationship because of the lack of communication of their feelings for each other. With how much time they spent together and the activities they enjoyed doing together they compared themselves to societal norms and realized they did not fit into a box. Were they a couple, were they best friends or were they in a situationship? They decided to create their own "box" and love each other the way they wanted to.

"I think meeting online has made it harder on our relationship and it would have felt more genuine if we met in real life," Acosta said.

Dating mental health tolls

Confusion about how to define a relationship is common among Gen Z-ers. And it often leads to couples naturally making things more casual or completely leaving a relationship because of the awkwardness and miscommunication that occurs.

According to the October 2022 report, "Does the Internet Bring People Closer Together or Further Apart? The Impact of Internet Usage on Interpersonal Communication" by the National Library of Medicine, the rise of the Internet and social media has diminished people's interpersonal skills. We have seen how this has greatly affected the younger generations, specifically Gen Z, due to their accessibility to technology.

With so much information and influence from the Internet, there is the question of how online dating has affected Gen Z in regards to their mental health. Licensed mental health counselor Alexis Jimenez, who focuses on anxiety, trauma, attachment and sex therapy, discussed the stress and mental health issues that arise among dating apps users.

Communicating through an online platform can be difficult enough, even with all of the resources these apps have provided to try to communicate more effectively. However, miscommunication can take conversations down very different roads. And having a vast potential dating pool at your fingertips can create anxiety, confusion and low self-esteem, Jimenez said.

Having a vast dating pool in front of them can also lead to addiction, as app users can continue swiping indefinitely in search of the perfect match the apps promise, Jimenez said.

The rejection users experience can be taxing to their mental health, she said. Even the an-

Continued on page 4

Faculty lecture focuses on alcohol, Alzheimer's



Camille C. Nan

Professor of Biology Jerome Garcia presents his recent study, "A Systematic Approach, Liver to Brain Axis, to Alcohol's Influence on Alzheimer's Disease Development" on Nov. 26 in the Lewis Center Classroom. Garcia's research looked at the influence of alcohol on the behavior of rats and how that might translate to humans.

Gen Z dating...

Continued from page 3

anticipation of rejection via these dating apps can cause users stress and anxiety, she added.

"Frequent swiping, lack of matches and ghosting can really impact their self-esteem and create potentially a source of anxiety or build upon anxiety that is already rooted," Jimenez said. "There aren't a lot of spaces where people are able to connect and they're focusing so much on dating apps."

Gen Z-ers in particular continue to use these apps for better or worse.

Jimenez recommends healthier ways for app users to proceed, or address dating challenges.

Anxious app users, she said, should take a break from dating apps, create communities outside of dating and give themselves grace to help mitigate anxiety, low self-esteem and cravings for dating apps.

Rejection is a difficult feeling to digest and according to the 2021 report "Common neural responses to romantic rejection and acceptance in healthy adults" also by the National Library of Medicine. Rejection can lead to sadness, anxiety, social withdrawal, impulsivity and aggression. Romantic rejection is one of the most stressful life events in adults, according to the same study.

Racism surfaces in dating apps

Dating online is difficult enough. However, specific demographic groups have a harder time dating online and are rejected, statistically, more often than others.

According to the 2022 report, "Online Dating and Mental Health among Young Sexual Minority Black Men: Is Ethnic Identity Protective in the Face of Sexual Racism?" by the National Library of Medicine on November 1, 2022 "Sexual racism has been described as the systemic ways in which individuals and society establish a racial hierarchy of desire."

Licensed clinical social worker and therapist Jessica Perez discussed the difficulties for these specific groups and their risk of mental health issues from these circumstances. Black women as well as queer people have a harder time on dating apps due to sexual racism, systemic racism and discrimination, Perez said. This leaves these two demographics vulnerable to potentially more mental health risks from dating apps due to the consistent rejection and ghosting.

"Definitely a lower income black woman is going to have a harder time on the apps absolutely, because the odds are already against her," Perez said.

Perez recommends some mental health hacks for coping with rejection. App users should monitor their usage during the week, they should employ self-reflection regarding when and why they are using the apps, and they should take note of these trends, she said.

Instead of going to the apps, she recommends trying to connect with nature or loved ones. Replacing the swiping with new behaviors, such as simply taking a walk, can be very beneficial for app users' mental health, Perez said.

"The app culture is just so fast and by slowing your body down you can then understand what you really, fully need," Perez said.

Opting out of online dating

It is rare now to find someone who has not used dating apps, especially someone who is part of Gen Z. According to "Key Findings about online dating in the U.S." by Pew Research Center, three in 10 U.S. adults have used a dating site or app, with 53 percent of those who have used dating apps being under 30.

Ian Noriega, a 21-year-old student at Cal State Fullerton, has been able to abstain from dating app use. He takes a more traditional approach to dating. Noriega, who spends his free time lifting weights and works at Trader Joe's In Claremont, is an avid flirt at work and school.

He sometimes complains about how difficult it is to talk to women and get the courage to ask them out on dates, and he has contemplated joining dating apps, but he feels that it is unnatural to him to shop online for a significant other.

"I feel like you can't talk to anyone anymore," Noriega said. "It's so fake. I have friends who literally say 'I'm going to play my favorite game right now' and they will go on Hinge and I'm just not really about that."

Many of Noriega's peers use dating apps more like a video game. Noriega said many of his friends swipe through apps mindlessly and do not take them seriously at all. This has shown Noriega the shallow side of dating apps and how many Gen Z-ers use these apps to boost their ego. Noriega does not see the value in this practice and would rather put time into himself at the gym or school. The only dating practice that Noriega sees value in is making in-person connections that he is able to create at places where he invests his time, such as Trader Joe's, the gym and school. Although Noriega is aware of some potential success of dating apps, he feels no rush or pressure to indulge in the brain rot he considers the whole process to be.

April Cambero can be reached at ***april.cambero@laverne.edu.***

Speaker examines holistic education

The Pathways to Peace Bahá'í-inspired lecture last month featured Teresa Henkle Langness, the founder of Full Circle Learning, who talked about "Transformational Education: Making Learning a Tool for Community Transformation."

About 40 people attended the event, which was sponsored by the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, The Baha'is of Rancho Cucamonga and People for Peace and Prosperity.

Henkle Langness opened the event in the Ludwick Center Sacred Space with a prayer for civilization by Bahá'u'lláh, and a song titled "Consider This" by Kristin Barnes and Darrell Metcalf.

Henkle Langness introduced her topic with a slideshow presentation focused on community and unity.

Throughout the presentation Henkle Langness emphasized education as a pathway to peace. She began with a series of questions regarding youth and their education. She asked where peace begins and when it lays the groundwork for a harmonious society.

Henkle Langness shared her ideas of priorities for global education extending the boundaries of science, inspiring ethics and service.

Henkle Langess closed lecture by emphasizing the stakes are high. Classrooms breed societies tyrants and its peacemakers therefore educating peacemakers begins by honoring the innate desire to connect.

"I hope that everybody who hears this message will consider the unique role they can play as a catalyst for change." Langess said.

—Lillian Barocio



Students chill with friends, cookies

Emma Gonzalez
Staff Writer



Anthony Eramya

Students line up for fresh coffee and cookies at the Campus Activities Board's "Coffee, Cookies and Chill" event Nov. 21 in Sneaky Park. CAB organized the event to help students destress before finals. Coffee by Sergio offered unlimited toppings on ice coffees.

Around 215 students showed up for the Coffee, Cookies and Chill event sponsored by the Campus Activities Board event at 11 a.m. on Nov. 21 at Sneaky Park.

The event was created to relieve stress for students, as finals are approaching at the end of the semester. Christmas music played in the background as tan and pink crewnecks were handed to students.

There were aromatherapy bracelets, cookies and iced coffee from Coffee by Sergio. The iced coffee came with unlimited toppings that included whipped cream, cinnamon, chocolate syrup, caramel drizzle and condensed milk. Students were welcome to stop by the event in between classes to decompress from academic stress.

"I've been very stressed during finals, I currently have three exams this week so I'm trying to lock in," Cynthea Roque, junior biology student who attended the event, said. "I think this coffee will help for sure."

Not only are students focusing on finals, but they also have other outside responsibilities to contribute to, while also managing their mental health.

"Balancing everything with exams, I think finals would be pretty hard, especially being engaged in other organizations," Roque said.

The cookie options at the event were either cookies 'n cream or peach cobbler.

"At first I wanted to do Crumbl Cookies, but then I remembered there's a small black-owned business in Fontana - and they're called The Cookie Jar," Jlyn Bituin, a senior kinesiology major who coordinated the event, said.

Sweet treats can be often related to a specific memory or tradition an individual carries with them.

"I associate cookies with either Christmas or, like, Valentine's Day," Roque said. "I always give out cookies as if it was a Valentine's Day gift. It was the thumbprint cookies with the jam in it with a heart."

The process of preparing for this event consisted of reaching out to vendors through emailing and working through budget. Once everything was coordinated and set, the vendors sent paperwork, an invoice and the set date.

"I know a lot of people have different religions as well, so I didn't want to do something that was too Christmas or too holiday," Bituin said. "So I thought, 'what's the next best thing?' It was something related to finals."

CAB events like these are centered towards bringing a sense of community engagement to the campus.

"It just brings everyone who's on campus together here and then now I get to talk to people I probably wouldn't talk to," Bituin said.

Socializing and taking a break from school to relax is important during stressful times. It can be a reset button that students need to center themselves from school.

"I get to engage in anything other than my coursework," Ashley Ingle, athletic training program graduate student who attended the event, said.

This event served as a convenience to students in passing that are navigating through the day.

"This CAB event was just kind of more laid back to me," Esteban Rivera, freshman physics major who attended the event said. "It's just nice to come and grab coffee and a cookie and then you can be on your way out."

Emma Gonzalez can be reached at ***emma.gonzalez@laverne.edu.***

ULV housing event freshens up lives

Housing hosted an air freshener night for which students got to make their own air fresheners on Nov. 26, using essential oils smelling like lavender, coconut, vanilla and pumpkin spice.

About 30 students showed up to the event, which took place in Citrus Hall, including a station where participants could combine different essential oils to create custom scents to hang in their dorm rooms or take home.

"It was cool to see how we can make our own air fresheners," said Benjamin Alvarado, freshman criminology major.

In addition to encouraging creativity and well being, the event was social.

"Making an air freshener made my room smell better," Marquese Boone, freshman computer science major, said. "Being a college athlete, my room smells, so making an air freshener helped out a lot."

—Bryce Anthony Edwards

Digital textbooks beat out hard copies due to pricing

Emma Gonzalez
Staff Writer

A recent informal survey on campus found that 13 out of 20 college students prefer digital textbooks over hard copy for a variety of reasons.

While some surveyed said they like hard copy textbooks for retaining information and they feel they may be better for learning and retaining information.

Things such as physical space, convenience, and retention all impacted their preferences.

But the main consideration driving their preference for digital was the lower price tag.

"They are usually easier to access and nine times out of 10, I don't have to pay for them," Maya Coles, a sophomore English major said.

"I think that works out for me better for my budget as a college student."

College is already expensive with the cost of tuition, housing, meal plans and more. Digital textbooks are almost always cheaper than hard copy.

According to the National Student Services Inc., digital textbooks can cost up to 50% less than traditional physical textbooks. There are also renting and subscription options online that are more financially convenient.

Textbook prices for various subjects differ substantially, so some students feel they don't have a choice if there is a digital option.

"Especially for chemistry," Elian Trejo, a junior chemistry major, said.

"It's not accessible to first generation station students who are in STEM."

Digital textbooks take up virtually no space as they are stored on a computer.

It's also much harder to lose a digital book.

"I prefer digital over hardcopy only because they are easier to access and I don't have to look for them necessarily," Julian Cedeno, a sophomore kinesiology major said.

"I can always have them on my laptop, I don't have to have them taking up space on my desk."

Still, some students find hard copy textbooks easier to use.

They say they focus and retain information better just having the physical book in front of them.

"I have always (preferred) hard copy because I feel as if it is easier to remember the content when you are reading from pages than from a screen," Andrew Ruiz, senior political science major, said.

"I find it similar to how when you write notes instead of typing notes, you remember it easier."

"Hardcopy makes me feel like I'm actually doing something and makes me feel like I'm learning more with the material," added Anexi Ruiz, freshman computer science major.

Emma Gonzalez can be reached at ***emma.gonzalez@laverne.edu.***

Students seek deals in person, online

Margaret Contreras
LV Life Editor

When asked if they'd shop online or in person this holiday season, 12 out of 20 University of La Verne students said they'd do a hybrid of the two, five said they'd shop in person only, and three said they'd do it all online.

For this informal survey conducted recently on campus, most students said they'd compare online and in-person shopping sales and deals and assess their best strategies depending on the products, stores and more.

"Sometimes they don't have it in stores," sophomore business administration major Valencia Dixon said. "So I would look online. And then if you want to try clothes on, it's better to do that in person so you can try them on."

With Thanksgiving and the Black Friday weekend over, the deals for the holiday are starting to grab the attention of shoppers.

"I haven't even started holiday shopping yet," senior history and political science major Anthony Correra said.

According to the website BusinessDasher, over 2.64 billion people shopped online in 2023 globally. The website also finds that 40% make at least one in-store purchase once a week, while 73% of Generation Z do their shopping online.

The CapitalOne Shopping Research page finds that in the beginning of the year, particularly the first five months of 2024, people spent a monthly average of $687 billion in retail and only 15% in the online shopping market.

"One of the reasons I choose one or the other is because of the deals," freshman Kenya Carrillo said. "Sometimes it's just cheaper to get it online, or they have better deals in person."

Online shopping boomed during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the 2020 Annual Retail Trade Survey, online sales increased by $244.2 billion in 2020, rising from $571.2 billion in 2019 to $815.4 billion in 2020.

When shopping online in specific stores, if you are not able to find the item in store, you have the option to purchase it online. When shopping in the store, you can choose to order the item online, where sometimes prices are lower.

"I'm going to do both," said freshman political science major Olivia Montoya-Lopez. "It honestly depends if they have what I want."

Buying online and pickup in store is another option encouraged by the retailers. RETAILTODAY gives a list of reasons why you should choose this over shipping to your home, including reliability, security, efficiency and cost. Consumers concerned about having their packages stolen from their porch may find this the best option. Also having an item delivered to the store, vs. home, avoids shipping costs.

"There are times I am looking for something specific," Correra said.

"Sometimes it's just better or cheaper either in store or online. Sometimes I just try to research which has the best deals. It's all about the deals."

When shopping online, depending on where you live, taxes may be higher from one state or county to another.

Margaret Contreras can be reached at ***margaret.contreras@laverne.edu****.*

Cruisin' La Verne classic car show returns to downtown











Top: *A 1940s Ford Deluxe casually cruises down Third Street for the Cruisin' La Verne car show on Nov. 23 in downtown La Verne. From the Deluxe to the popular Mustang, plenty of Ford vehicles were featured in the show for viewers to look at during the drive.*

Middle Left: *The 1960s were a dominant time for American vehicles, like the Chevrolet C10 and Ford Mustang, which were shown off during the Cruisin' La Verne car show held on the morning of Nov. 23 in downtown La Verne. Several other iconic makes and models were proudly displayed during the show.*

Middle Right: *The second generation Chevrolet Camaro was a popular 1970s muscle car that was on display at the Cruisin' La Verne classic car show Nov. 23 in downtown La Verne. Chevrolet, along with Ford and Pontiac, were some of the most popular car brands that participants cruised in during the event.*

Bottom Left: *This classic vehicle was one of many proudly shown off at Cruisin' La Verne, held in the morning of Nov. 23 in downtown La Verne. Owners could park their prized possessions downtown to entrance visitors and help raise money for the California Highway Patrol's Kids Toy Drive.*

Bottom Right: *Many classic tow trucks were put on display during the Cruisin' La Verne classic car show Nov. 23 in downtown La Verne. Many other different classic vehicles also participated, including hot rods, muscle cars and utility vehicles.*

Photography by Stephen Gilson Jr.

HAPPENINGS

Guitar Ensemble

The music department will present a guitar ensemble concert at 3 p.m. on Sunday in Morgan Auditorium. The concert will feature a variety of songs from television and movies. For more information, contact **music@laverne.edu**.

'Holly Jolly' Concert

Join the music department for "A Holly Jolly, Holy Night" at 3 p.m. Saturday in Morgan Auditorium. The holiday concert will feature the University Chorale and Chamber Singers. Tickets are $20 for the public and free for ULV students. For more information, email Ariel Pisturino at **apisturino@laverne.edu**.

Jazz Night

At 6 p.m. Thursday the music department will present "Jazz Night," featuring the ULV Jazz Ensemble. For more information email **music@laverne.edu**.

Brethren Choir

The La Verne Church of the Brethren Sanctuary Choir presents John Rutler's "Gloria" and Shawn Kirchner's "Behold New Joy," along with other Christmas favorites directed by Niké St. Clair. They will take place at 4 p.m. on Dec. 14 and Dec. 21 at the La Verne Church of Brethren at 2425 E Street in La Verne.

For more information, visit **lavernecob.org/monthly-calendar**.

'Crescendo Christmas'

Crescendo Theatrical Productions presents "A Crescendo Christmas 2024" featuring a night of holiday music and cheer. The show will be from 7:30 p.m to 10 p.m. on Dec. 13, and from 2 pm. to 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 14 and 15 in Dailey Theatre. General admission is $23.18.

For more information, visit Eventbrite.

—Jordan Alcasas, Thatianna Gibbs

Orchestra shines light on Diverse composers

by Thatiana Gibbs

photography by Mia Byington



The La Verne Symphony Orchestra, led by conductor Sylvia Lee Mann, takes a bow at the end of the first act of their winter concert Nov. 24 at the Morgan Auditorium.

The auditorium is home for the symphony, as they use it for all practices and most performances. The show was considered a full house.

The La Verne Symphony Orchestra presented an evening of musical classics Nov. 24 in Morgan Auditorium.

The orchestra performed a program featuring a variety of great works of classical music. The performance began at 4 p.m., and the auditorium was full. The orchestra was composed of students and seasoned musicians.

The concert featured a selection of pieces that spanned genres, moods, and centuries. It started with an uplifting selection of Antonín Dvořák's Symphony No. 9, known as the "New World Symphony."

This piece, with its sweeping melodies, reflects Dvořák's impressions of American landscapes. The spirit of its people during his time in the United States.

George Osorio was guest conductor of the night. A graduate of California State University, Dominguez Hills, Osorio honed his conducting style by actively participating in various ensembles.

Including the wind ensemble, symphony orchestra, chamber singers, jazz band and chamber brass ensemble. Through these experiences, he gained valuable insights into diverse teaching and conducting approaches that influenced his own technique.

"It's kind of like making soup," Osorio said. "You have your ingredients, and you're just going to find a good balance between spices and how you're going to cook your vegetables and meats. And then it will all just come together. All the music is different, I can't pinpoint what to watch out for, but just enjoy the music."

Johann Sebastian Bach's "Little" Fugue in G Minor, built upon a single theme, is a testament to the timeless appeal of Bach's music.

> 'Like featuring a woman composer, that shouldn't be a special concert. It should be that way all the time.'
> *—Sylvia Lee Mann, conductor*

The evening also featured the works of Amy Beach, a composer who made history as one of the first American women to achieve recognition in classical music.

Mann is committed to showcasing a diverse array of composers and styles ensures that every concert is both educational and moving.

"I work hard to make sure that I am selecting a wide variety of music," Mann said. "I try to feature composers and conductors who might not have normally been in a standard program."

"Like featuring a woman composer, that shouldn't be a special concert. It should be that way all the time."

No program led by Mann would be complete without including contemporary music. Karl Jenkins' "Palladio" is a modern classic with harmonic elements inspired by the architecture of the Renaissance.

To round out the evening, the orchestra performed "Dance of the Tumblers" from "The Snow Maiden" by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, known for its energy and demands on the orchestra.

Following the performance, a reception offered a chance for attendees to mingle with the musicians and Mann. Posing an opportunity for guests to share ideas of the performance and connect with others who appreciate live orchestra.

"I think they take on challenging pieces and they perform well," guest Ken Higbee said. It's a positive thing that the symphony has grown and it's having a positive impact on the community."

Thatiana Gibbs can be reached at ***thatiana.gibbs@laverne.edu.***

Music Review

Hip-hop album embraces West Coast

'GNX' is 45 minutes of pure fun

Stephen Gilson Jr.
Arts Editor

Compton based hip-hop superstar Kendrick Lamar recently released a surprise album titled "GNX," debuting with a staggering 319,000 units sold in its first week of release with very little promotion.

This album comes off the heels of a vicious and scandalous competition between Lamar and Aubrey "Drake" Graham that took place earlier this spring, where they both accused each other of partaking in heinous and illegal activities, including domestic violence and pedophilia.

GNX can be seen as a love letter to the West Coast, with Lamar hailing from Compton, California. Several songs of the 12 track album are either directly influenced by the classic West Coast bounce, or have a name correlating to Los Angeles itself, including tracks like "dodger blue."

Lamar uses his platform to recruit much smaller artists from California, including fellow Compton native Dody6, and Mexican-American rapper Peysoh to infuse a deeper hint of the West Coast sound. Lamar also recruits former Top Dawg Entertainment labelmate SZA on tracks like "luther" and "gloria" to showcase his versatility and ability to stretch his vocals to a more RnB dominant track.

Some of the most notable tracks on the album include tracks like "hey now" featuring the aforementioned Dody6, "squabble up," and "heart pt. 6."

On the track "hey now," Lamar handles a sinister, yet extremely bouncy beat reminiscent of production from Bay Area rappers such as E-40 and Too $hort.

One of the few times Lamar potentially references his altercation with Drake on this album can be inferred with the line "the black know it, I just strangled me a G.O.A.T," alluding to his self-proclaimed victory over an artist who many fans can consider to be one of the greatest hip-hop artists of all time.

Then, he exchanges bars back and forth with Dody6, who does a phenomenal job in continuing the sinister and grimy vibe of the track, making it a well-rounded and excellent addition to the album.

The track most fans found themselves ecstatic to find included on the album was "squabble up," the fully realized track that Lamar teased in the intro to a music video for his hit record "Not Like Us" in July.

Tackling a sample from famous disco artist Debbie Deb, Lamar's vocals float around the retro funky synthesizers and head-rattling bass, giving homage to the disco culture that was popular in 1980s Los Angeles.

Onomatopoeia was also used in a very creative way on the track, with Lamar mimicking the bassline after exiting the bridge of the song, and the bassline keeping up with Lamar's flow.

The title of the song is also popular slang used in cities like Compton, with "squabbling" being another term for engaging in a fight with someone, adding an additional layer of Lamar's love for the west coast and its culture.

But, the most influential track on this album is "heart pt. 6," a continuation of his iconic "The Heart" series of tracks.

A track titled in this way is often seen as a prelude to an album release, so many fans speculate that this album was meant as a mixtape to tease an even bigger upcoming studio album. GNX is technically the first album to be released under Lamar's new self-created music label, pgLang.

On the track, Lamar reminisces on his early experiences in the music industry with former Top Dawg Entertainment labelmates Ab-Soul, Jay Rock, and ScHoolboy Q. The four artists would eventually come together to form the hip-hop collective Black Hippy, a group focused on making music with substance.

He pays homage and credits all of the members for inspiring him to become a better artist, but pins himself as the reason the group never came out with its own project, citing creative differences and the need for independence.

He credits his manager and co-founder of pgLang, Dave Free, for assuming several roles in Lamar's team and helping to bolster his music career.

The track provides a much needed break from the potential club hits, and allows the audience to peer into the mind of Lamar and his feelings towards being a music executive and artist.

With lowkey and dreamy production, Lamar taps into his usual motive when creating his music: opening his heart for his audience to experience themselves.

Overall, GNX is an excellently produced and written album, creating an overall fun and introspective listening experience for hip-hop lovers to repeat and dissect for hours.

Stephen Gilson Jr. can be reached at ***stephen.gilson@laverne.edu.***

Fiber fair features grist and yarn for the mill

Stephanie Amaya
Staff Writer

The second annual SoCal Fiber Fair was held on Nov. 23-24 at the Fairplex in Pomona and featured a variety of fiber arts including crochet, knitting, weaving, embroidery and yarn suppliers.

Vendors from local and distant communities, showed their artwork, creations, inventions and products for enthusiasts to purchase the products or to elevate their craft skills.

Over 200 people received complimentary raffle tickets for the opportunity to win prizes such as gift baskets for all levels of crafters to enhance their expertise.

Beanie patterns and raffle tickets were given to all entrants with their admission ticket before they entered the venue.

Workshops at allotted times were offered to people to learn various skills to create pieces of art.

Food stands were located outside the venue where patrons were able to purchase breakfast burritos, french fries, burgers, funnel cakes and other fair foods.

Many families, groups of friends and individuals of the fiber arts community were happy to share their stories, favorite booths and the materials they prefer to work with.

"We love to crochet, so we saw it and I told her let's go," Gina Botelo, mother and crochet enthusiast, said.

"So we decided to come together and look at everything they have."

Rows of tables displayed racks of colorful yarn, sweaters, earrings, hats, handmade pottery and platters, flowers and holiday decorations were also available for purchase.

"It's very laid back, and I love that everybody is passionate," Botelo said.

Many vendors were gladly willing to help individuals with questions, regarding materials, types of dyes used in yarns, services they provide and prices for merchandise.

"My favorite projects to work on are sweaters and preferred material to use is superwash wool," Christina Aguilar-Budig said.

Budig, owner of Teal Torch Knits from Portland, showcased her ultraviolet reactive yarn and explained the process of what it takes to create the special dyed yarn with a variety of different colors.

Jennifer Rose is a weaving teacher in Claremont for Phoebe's Needle Art.

"My favorite part about teaching is watching their creativity develop, and giving them the tools for it to happen or working with them to achieve it," Rose said.

"Working at Phoebe's Needle Art in Claremont and shopping at all the yarn stores and one thing leads to another to the Fairplex, where the whole community meets."

Another vendor who crossed the country to be at the Fair was Samantha Beach, owner of Clockwork Fiber Company, from Connecticut who noted her inspiration for starting her small business.

"After college, I needed something to do with my hands that wasn't playing on my phone, so I got into knitting," Beach said. "I am allergic to acrylic yarn, so the big box stores weren't working for me, and I quickly found Indie-dyed yarn and it just bloomed from there."

Beach also said her decision to travel to the SoCal Fiber Fair was about destination first.

"I have never been to California before," Beach said. "I have always visited Seattle and Portland, so I wanted that experience and I heard great things about this event last year and I said two birds with one stone and went for it."

Kitty Negate, a patron from the event, showed off her vibrant pink colored sweater, showing the merchandise she had bought from other local artists.

"I have been fiber crafting since I was about 8 years old. I'm now 28," Negate, a guest of the event, said. "I have really only gotten my yarn from Joann's, that's been my staple my whole life, so to come to something like this and see specialty yarn, it's pretty incredible."

For more information, visit **socalfiberfair.com**.

Stephanie Amaya can be reached at ***stephanie.amaya@laverne.edu.***

Pop-up features local artists



Vicente Rodriguez

Fiber artist Madeline Arnault offers her work for sale at the San Dimas holiday pop-up event Nov. 24. She specializes in stuffed animal artwork, including bears, ducks and giraffes. The event showcased local vendors who create handmade gifts.

More Than an Athlete

Stories by Jonas Holt

The people behind the players: Stories of resilience, identity and triumph

Kaitlyn Patterson

In a packed gym in the SuperTents, Kaitlyn Patterson crouches low, her eyes scanning the opposing team's hitters.

As a libero—a defensive specialist in volleyball—Patterson is the team's anchor, diving for digs and turning impossible saves into opportunities.

Her instincts and relentless work ethic make her indispensable, but her path to this moment has been anything but smooth.

Growing up in Ewa Beach, Hawaii, Patterson, a 22-year-old education graduate student at ULV, discovered her love for volleyball early.

Attending games at the Stan Sheriff Center with her family, she was captivated by the energy and camaraderie of the sport.

"I knew from a young age that I wanted to play volleyball at the highest level," Patterson said.

But despite a standout high school career at Moanalua High School, including an OIA championship and MVP honors, she didn't receive any college offers.

"It felt like maybe I wasn't good enough," she said.

Determined to prove herself, Patterson worked tirelessly during her senior club season.

Late in the recruiting cycle, she landed a spot at Cal Poly Humboldt, a Division II school, as an outside hitter.

It was an opportunity she embraced wholeheartedly, but challenges awaited her.

At Humboldt, Patterson was asked to switch from outside hitter to libero, a position that requires exceptional defensive skills and quick decision-making.

"The adjustment was tough," she said. "I had no experience playing libero, and the girls I was competing against had been doing it for years."

"I felt like I was constantly playing catch-up," Patterson said.

The pressure to perform was compounded by Humboldt's athletic scholarship structure, which was tied to her performance.

"If I didn't hit certain metrics during games, I was told my scholarship might be reduced," Patterson said.

"Every mistake felt like it had financial consequences."

These conditions sparked feelings of imposter syndrome.

"I started to feel like I didn't belong," she said.

"Every time I made an error, it felt like proof I wasn't good enough to be there."

A coaching change during her sophomore year brought an even harsher environment, with little support for athletes' mental health.

"It was all about toughening up, and I felt like there was no space to admit I was struggling," Patterson said.

"Mental health wasn't even a conversation," Patterson said.

Her growing self-doubt due to the relentless pressure, spiraled into a full-blown mental health crisis.

Panic attacks became common, and Patterson found herself battling feelings of isolation and despair.

"I was scared to speak up. I didn't want to seem weak," Patterson said.

Patterson's struggles at Humboldt mirrored a larger issue faced by student-athletes nationwide.

According to the NCAA's "Current Findings on Student-Athlete Mental Health" report, published on Dec. 13, 2023, by Chris Radford, 17% of male and 44% of female athletes reported feeling overwhelmed, with 16% of male and 35% of female athletes experiencing mental exhaustion.

Despite these challenges, many athletes hesitate to seek help due to stigma and fear of appearing weak.

According to a 2022 article by Ace Van Atta in The Johns Hopkins Newsletter, approximately 30% of female and 25% of male student-athletes report having anxiety, yet only about 10% of all student-athletes with known mental health conditions seek help from a mental health professional.

This contrasts with the general college student population, where a higher percentage of those with mental health concerns pursue professional help.

The disparity highlights the significant barriers athletes face in accessing support.

"Mental health challenges among student-athletes are exacerbated by the pressure to perform and the fear of losing their spot on the team or scholarship," said Dr. Caroline Silby, a sports psychologist who has worked with collegiate athletes.

Silby emphasized the importance of creating supportive environments where athletes feel safe to express vulnerability.

For Patterson, those very fears kept her silent.

"I tied my identity to volleyball, and when things didn't go well, I felt like I wasn't enough," Patterson said.

Her experience underscores the critical need for accessible mental health resources and a culture that prioritizes well-being alongside performance.

After her junior year, Patterson made the difficult decision to step away from volleyball.

She entered the transfer portal, unsure if she would ever return to the sport.

The transfer portal is a system in college athletics that allows student-athletes to publicly declare their intent to transfer to another school.

It provides athletes the opportunity to explore new academic and athletic opportunities while allowing programs to recruit talent openly.

This step back allowed her to focus on healing, both mentally and emotionally.

"It was the first time I realized I'm more than a volleyball player," Patterson said.

"I needed to find out who I was outside of the sport."

Faith, and family became her anchors during this time.

Raised in a Christian household, Patterson reconnected with her spiritual roots, finding solace and strength in prayer, scripture, and her church community.

"I started to see myself as more than my performance," Patterson said.

"I'm a child of God first, and that gave me a foundation to rebuild my confidence."

This period of reflection also allowed her to redefine her relationship with volleyball.

When University of La Verne volleyball coaches reached out to recruit her, Patterson saw an opportunity not just to play again but to start fresh in a supportive environment.

From her first visit to La Verne, Patterson knew she had found the right place.

The coaches emphasized her value as a person, not just as a player.

"It was a breath of fresh air," she says. "They trusted me and believed in me from day one."

At La Verne, Patterson flourished both on and off the court.

She helped lead the team to a regional championship, a moment she describes as one of the proudest of her career.

But more importantly, she found joy in the game again.

"For the first time in years, I wasn't scared to make mistakes," Patterson said. "I felt free."

Teammates have noticed Patterson's influence.

"Kaitlyn has brought so much confidence and energy to the team," junior outside hitter Mya Ray said.

"She always knows how to lift us up, no matter the situation."

Patterson also began to open up about her mental health journey, finding strength in vulnerability.

She connected with teammates who shared similar struggles, creating a supportive environment that allowed her to thrive.

"KP's openness has helped all of us feel more comfortable being honest about what we're going through," junior setter Vanessa Marquez said.

"It's changed the way we support each other."

"We talk about everything, our fears, our faith, our goals," Patterson said.

"It's made all the difference." The shadow of imposter syndrome hasn't completely disappeared.

"There are still moments where I doubt myself," Patterson said.

"But now I have the tools to push through those feelings." One of those tools is positive self-talk, a practice she developed through therapy.

"Whenever I have a negative thought, I try to counter it with something positive," Patterson said.

"It's about reminding myself that I belong and that I've earned my place."

"KP has shown us all how to be resilient," senior outside hitter Allison Whiteman said.

"Her example reminds us that we're more than just athletes." Patterson's faith also remains a guiding force.

"Whenever I feel anxious, I turn to scripture or prayer," Patterson said.

"It helps me refocus and remember that my worth isn't tied to my performance."

Patterson's experiences have shaped not only her perspective but also her future aspirations.

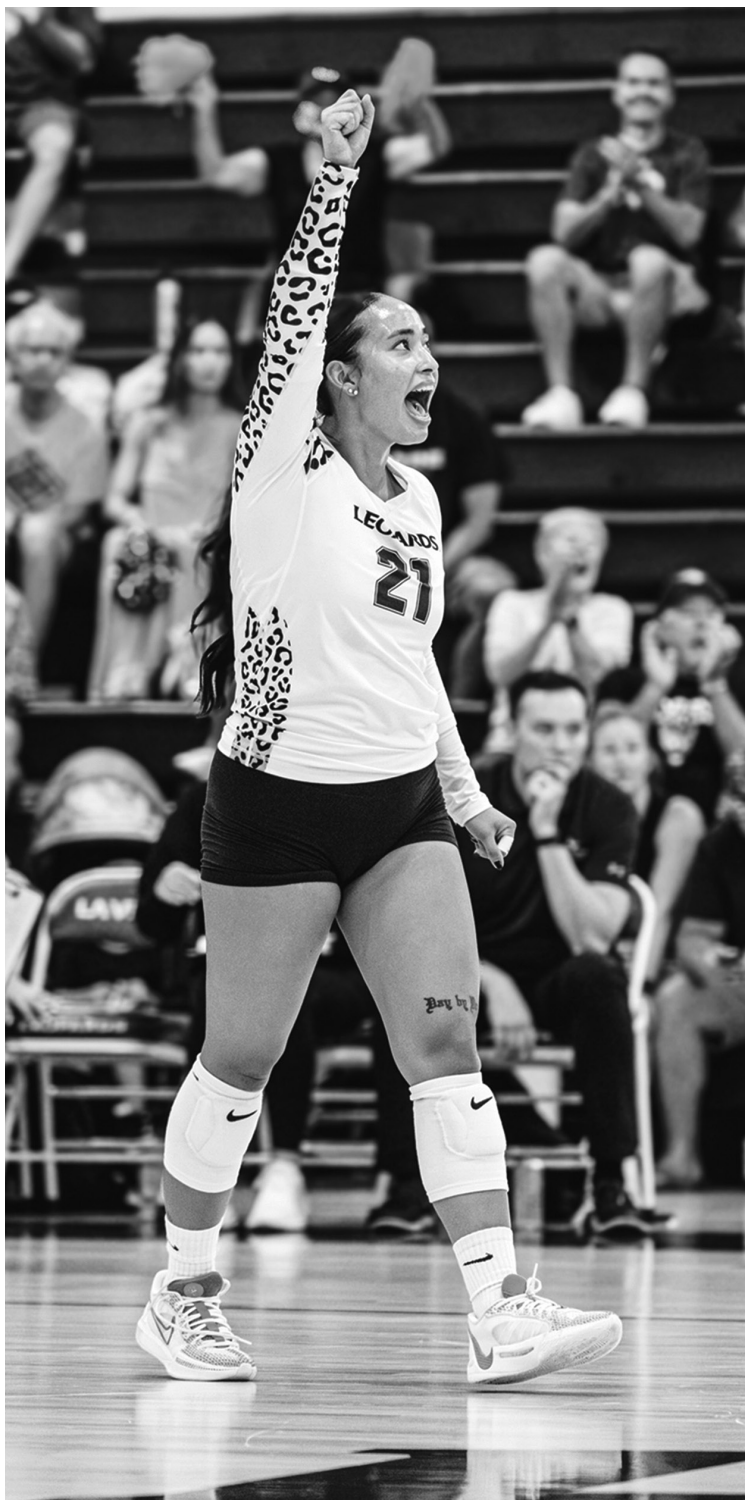
As she pursues a Master of Arts in Teaching, she hopes to create nurturing environments for young children and athletes alike.

"I want to teach kids the importance of resilience and self-worth from an early age," Patterson said

"As a coach, I want to be the kind of mentor I needed when I was struggling." Patterson also aims to be an advocate for mental health in sports, working to end the stigma that kept her silent for so long.

"Athletes need to know it's okay to ask for help," Patterson said. "We're human first, and that's something we can't forget."

Jonas Holt can be reached at ***jonas.holt@laverne.edu.***



Emily Casillas

Kaitlyn Patterson, graduate student libero for the La Verne volleyball team, celebrates a point for the Leopards in a match at Frantz Athletic Court. Patterson said rediscovering joy in volleyball helped her overcome mental health challenges.

Elijah Akande



Jonas Holt

Elijah Akande, computer science major and sophomore guard for the Leopards men's basketball team, is often found in the gym working on his game and clearing his mind. Akande credits the game as his main anchor through years of moving and adapting as a child in a military family.

For Elijah Akande, a sophomore majoring in computer science at the University of La Verne, basketball has always been more than just a game, it's been a lifeline.

Growing up in a military family, Akande's childhood was marked by frequent moves across the country.

By the time he turned 18, he had lived in four states and attended six schools.

For many, such instability might breed resentment or exhaustion, but for Akande, it created an unshakable connection to basketball, the one thing that never changed no matter where he went.

"To me, home was a place where I could be myself and where I had individuals that loved and cared for me as I did for them," Akande said.

"Moving around so much, I didn't get to make lasting friendships. But basketball was always there for me. It became my escape, something I could rely on."

Born in Moore, Oklahoma, Akande demonstrated early on that he was both a dedicated student and a skilled athlete.

At Desert High School in Edwards, he balanced his love for basketball with a strong commitment to academics, earning a 4.0 GPA and a place on the honor roll.

His hard work on the court also paid off, as he was recognized with Third Team All-Conference honors during his high school career.

When it came time to choose a college, Akande was drawn to the University of La Verne for its welcoming environment and the close-knit dynamic of the basketball team.

"I chose La Verne because of the location and the family feel of the team," he said.

Beyond the court, Akande faced other challenges.

As a young Black man in predominantly white communities, he often encountered subtle and overt forms of discrimination.

"I've had people make assumptions about me because of my skin color," Akande said.

"It's something you get used to, but it's never easy."

Despite the challenges of adapting to new schools and communities, Akande found solace in the rhythm of the game.

Each practice, pick-up game, and team meeting offered a source of stability and a sense of belonging.

By the time he enrolled at the University of La Verne at the age 18, Akande knew he wanted to stay close to basketball, even if that meant starting out as a team manager.

His first year at La Verne didn't involve game time or the recognition of wearing a jersey, as he was a walk-on to the team and not a traditional recruit, because he did not come here with the intention of playing basketball.

Instead Akande worked behind the scenes as the men's basketball team manager.

He took on tasks like organizing practices, managing equipment, and keeping spirits high during difficult practices and tough losses.

What could have been a thankless role instead became a platform for Akande to showcase his work ethic and commitment to the team and the sport.

"I just wanted to be part of the team, no matter what," Akande said.

"Even if that meant getting water for the guys or rebounding shots in practice or before games, I wanted to prove that I belonged and that I would do anything for anyone."

His dedication didn't go unnoticed.

By his sophomore year, Akande's effort earned him a spot on the roster.

The transition from manager to player wasn't just about talent.

Coaches praised his positive attitude and willingness to go the extra mile, qualities that continue to inspire his teammates.

The American Psychological Association supports the idea that sports help build resilience and emotional regulation.

"Sports provide young people with tools to manage stress, cope with challenges, and develop a growth mindset," as outlined in their 2020 article, "Working out boosts brain health."

"Elijah's heart and work ethic are unmatched," said Saafir Moore, a 2024 ULV graduate and former teammate, who mentored Akande during his first year.

"You could see his love for the game in everything he did, even when he wasn't playing. That kind of determination is rare and inspiring."

Amare Holmes, a former teammate and former student at ULV, reflected on Akande's ability to stay positive despite the obstacles he has faced.

"Elijah doesn't let anything stop him," Holmes said.

"Whether it's moving to a new city or dealing with tough situations, he always finds a way to move forward.

"He's a role model for anyone who feels like the odds are against them."

Studies by the NCAA and the Aspen Institute find that sports can help individuals combat systemic challenges, such as economic inequality, racial discrimination, and limited access to resources, by fostering a sense of identity and community.

Participation in team sports boosts self-esteem, reduces stress, and creates mentorship opportunities, according to the Aspen Institute's 2018 Project Play report "The Role of Sports in Youth Development," authored by Dr. Michael Fisher.

According to the report, "Sports can act as a lifeline for young people, fostering resilience, teaching social and emotional skills, and building a sense of community and identity."

The Research from Dr. Fisher also indicates that participation in team sports can boost self-esteem, reduce stress, and create opportunities for mentorship, all factors that have played pivotal roles in Akande's development.

"Moving around taught me adaptability and flexibility," Akande said.

"I always had the opportunity to start fresh, but in doing so, I had to adjust to the new environment, culture, and community around me.

It showed me that life can shift on you very unexpectedly and that you just have to handle what is tossed at you."

Josh Rook, now a senior and the captain of the men's basketball team, spoke about Akande's impact on their squad.

"Elijah's journey has been incredible to watch. He started as our manager, and now he's one of the hardest-working guys on the court," Rook said.

"His story shows what's possible when you don't give up."

Now a full-fledged player, and a month into the basketball season, Akande is determined to use his platform to inspire others.

He's launched his own YouTube channel, **@Ak3nde**, where he shares vlogs about his experiences as both a basketball player and a student.

His videos include "day in the life" segments, providing an inside look at the balancing act of being a college athlete.

One standout vlog showcases the men's basketball team bonding during a bowling night.

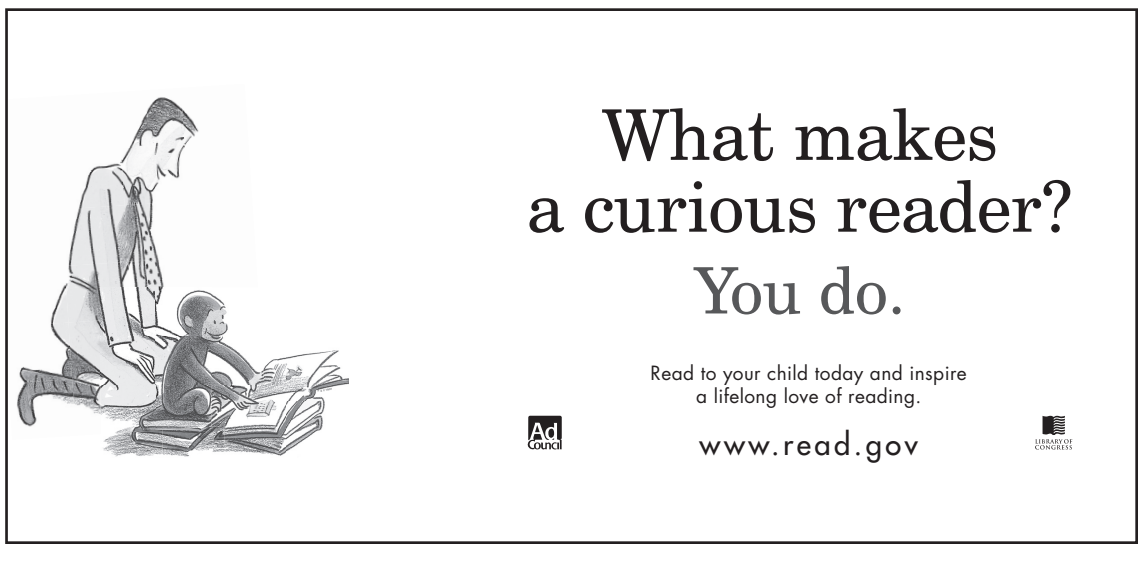
Akande's resilience shines in how he tackles obstacles.

"I usually just create a mental escape," Akande said.

"With obstacles and setbacks, negative emotions and feelings will arise.

"To counter those, I reset and gather myself through activities that bring me joy, such as playing basketball, making content, or just going out on the road and driving to clear my mind."

Jonas Holt can be reached at ***jonas.holt@laverne.edu.***



Jared Barnes

When Jared Barnes took to the court for the first time it wasn't just a game, it was an escape from the struggles he faced. Growing up in San Diego, Barnes faced adversity from an early age.

A 2024 graduate of the University of La Verne with a degree in Kinesiology, Barnes has risen from hardship to represent Team USA at the 2024 World Games in Romania.

Barnes found refuge on the basketball court.

He remembered the first time he dribbled the ball, the sharp sound of rubber hitting wood, and the satisfying swish of the net. "It was like I had finally found a place where I belonged," Barnes said. That spark would ignite a journey of resilience and perseverance.

Barnes' mother, who raised him alongside his two older sisters, battled scleroderma, an autoimmune disease that causes chronic hardening and tightening of the skin and connective tissues, often leading to death.

She died when Barnes was just 13 years old, leaving him and his 24-year-old brother and 17-year-old sister to navigate life without parental guidance, as there was no father around when he grew up.

While his siblings stepped in to provide stability, the family struggled financially, and Barnes experienced periods of homelessness.

"Losing my mom was the hardest thing I've ever been through," Barnes said.

"It felt like my world fell apart. But basketball gave me a sense of purpose when everything else seemed so out of control."

The first time Barnes stepped onto a basketball court, he felt a spark of hope.

"I remember the sound of the ball hitting the court and the swish of the net," Barnes said. "It was like I had finally found a place where I belonged."

Basketball became more than a game; it was a sanctuary. It provided an outlet for his grief and a framework for discipline and structure that he desperately needed.

Barnes began attending open gyms and local leagues, honing his skills wherever he could.

He took odd jobs starting at the age of 15 including refereeing youth games and working at fast food restaurants, to support himself and fund his participation in sports.

"Jared has always been the type of guy who refuses to let circumstances define him," said Darien Guyton, a former teammate from ULV and close friend. "Even when things got tough, he kept pushing, and that's something I've always admired about him."While basketball offered solace, Barnes faced significant challenges as a young Black athlete. He recalls one incident during a high school game when an opponent's parent yelled a racial slur from the stands.

"It was one of those moments where you either let it break you or use it to fuel you," Barnes said. He chose the latter, delivering a career-high performance of 30 points and 12 rebounds that night. "People see you and think they know your story," he said. "It's tough, but it's also motivating. I wanted to prove that I'm more than what people expect."

Barnes's passion for sports extended beyond basketball. Seeking new challenges, he immersed himself in mixed martial arts, where he found another outlet for growth. The discipline of MMA training pushed him to new physical and mental heights. His hard work culminated in 2024 when he was selected to represent Team USA at the World Games in Romania.

"Being chosen for Team USA was surreal," Barnes said. "It reminded me that hard work really does pay off, no matter where you start."

Barnes's journey reflects not only his personal resilience but also the broader struggles faced by many athletes of color. According to the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, systemic barriers such as implicit biases and limited access to resources disproportionately affect Black athletes.

Yet, sports also provide a platform for empowerment and healing.

According to the study "Sporting Mind: The Interplay of Physical Activity and Psychological Health" by Andrew M Lane and Selenia Di Fronso, athletics serve as a powerful tool for fostering resilience, helping individuals navigate loss, and rebuilding a sense of purpose and belonging.



Jonas Holt

Jared Barnes, former team manager for the men's basketball team and a recent graduate from the University of La Verne, trains diligently in mixed martial arts, emphasizing the discipline and perseverance that have defined his journey and that has shaped him into the man that he is today.

This insight aligns with Barnes's journey, as sports became his refuge during his darkest moments.

Similarly, the National Alliance on Mental Illness states, "Sports can significantly improve mental health by reducing stress, building community, and offering a sense of accomplishment."

The report highlights how structured physical activity helps individuals cope with challenges and build emotional strength.

For Barnes, basketball and MMA were not just activities but lifelines that helped him develop emotional strength and a sense of identity.

"Sports gave me more than just a way out," Barnes said. "They gave me a voice and a sense of community."

Beyond his achievements on the court and in the octagon, Barnes has dedicated himself to mentoring young athletes in underserved communities. He often visits local gyms and schools, sharing his story to inspire others to persevere.

"Jared is one of the most determined people I've ever met," said Josiah Wimberly, a former teammate at ULV. "He's always been about lifting others up, whether it's on the court or in life. That's what sets him apart."

One of Barnes's mentees, Jaden Rahmaan, a sophomore basketball player at Saddleback Community College, credits Barnes for his development.

"Jared taught me that discipline and heart matter more than talent," Rahmaan said. "He showed me how to push through adversity and focus on the bigger picture."

As Barnes prepares to compete on the international stage, his focus remains steadfast on his goals. Beyond his achievements in MMA and basketball, he is committed to breaking barriers and creating opportunities for others.

Whether mentoring young athletes or honing his craft in the gym, his mission is clear: to show that challenges can be stepping stones to greatness.

"Life is hard, but it's also full of possibilities," Barnes said. "Find something you're passionate about, work for it, and don't let anything stop you."

From a boy grappling with the loss of his mother to a man representing his country, Jared Barnes exemplifies the transformative power of resilience.

Jonas Holt can be reached at ***jonas.holt@laverne.edu***



Leopards drop fifth straight game

Justin Ries
Staff Writer

The men's basketball team could not get into gear against Chapman on Wednesday evening at Frantz Athletic Court, losing 71-55. La Verne was coming off a loss to Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference rival Claremont-Mudd-Scripps.

Chapman scored the first points of the game by getting in the paint and hitting a midrange jumper for two points. While attempting a three-pointer, senior guard Dahmaj Warren was fouled. Unfortunately, Warren would miss all three free throws.

This would set the tone early for the Leopards at the free throw line, where they started out 1-7.

Senior forward Ryan Lin grabbed two offensive rebounds and went to the foul line to shoot two free throws. He made one out of two to get the first points for La Verne.

Graduate student forward Paul Antonis scored on a corner three and hustled back on defense to get a block. He blocked another shot later in the first half, which would lead to a transition bucket by senior guard Josh Rook.

"From the beginning of the season, I feel like I started slow, but we're putting in more work for that," Antonis said. "Just being able to hit those shots, and kind of knock those down when I need to is what I have been working on during practice times."

Antonis was feeling the corner three as he went on to hit another one. Antonis quickly got back on defense after making the shot to grab the defensive rebound.

With La Verne struggling to pass the ball around and having to go one-on-one, Chapman was able to build on their lead.

The first half ended with Chapman leading, 31-23.

The second half started with another three-pointer from Antonis. Chapman responded with a layup in the paint.

La Verne tried to get Warren going in the second half after a slow start to the game. Chapman tried to slow him down by not letting him drive into the paint. Warren scored a three-pointer off an Antonis' offensive rebound, which led to an on-the-floor foul to set up the three-pointer.

"Being No. 1 on most teams' scouts, they are going to try to take me away," Warren said.

La Verne took an offensive charge. Along with good ball movement, this led to a three-pointer by senior guard Logan Howard to cut the lead down to one.

A defensive rebound by sophomore forward Kailen Green led to a one-on-one opportunity for Antonis. He would go on to hit both free throws for La Verne to take the lead, 42-40.

Off of some turnovers and fouls by La Verne, Chapman retook the lead and went on an 11-0 run, never looking back.

"One possession shouldn't carry over to the next and I thought that some of our shots that we missed, we carried that over to the defensive end," head coach Richard Reed said. "We had some silly fouls and some silly things that we hadn't done that got us the lead or got us back into the game."

Back-to-back layups from Rook would cut the lead to six. This was not enough for La Verne, as they would lose the game 71-55.

"I was taking what the defense gave me and trying to work hard to get inside," Rook said. "I wanted to get some rebounds for us and be there when my teammates needed to drop it off to me and ultimately get us back into the game," Rook said.

La Verne will play California Miramar at 2 p.m. Saturday at Frantz Athletic Court in the Super Tents.

Justin Ries can be reached at ***justin.ries@laverne.edu***.



Liberty B. Garcia

Senior forward Josh Rook tries to maneuver around a Chapman defender Wednesday at the Frantz Athletic Court. The Leopards lost, 71-55, and look to snap their losing streak in Saturday's game against California Miramar.

Volleyball ends season in NCAA Quarterfinals

The incredible Leopards' volleyball season ended Wednesday night in the NCAA Division III Volleyball Championship Quarterfinals, where the Leopards fell in four sets to No. 1 seed and two-time defending national champions Juniata.

Trailing 24-19 in the decisive fourth set, La Verne rallied off five straight points to tie the game before the Eagles' victory.

The Leopards had a historic season, advancing a round further than last year and finishing with their best campaign since 2009.

La Verne completed the season 26-6, claiming an NCAA Regional Championship, their first in 16 years, and their first Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Tournament Championship.

Individual accolades poured in for the Leopards this season, with junior outside hitter Mya Ray earning her second career First Team All-American honor from the AVCA. Fellow senior outside hitter Allison Whiteman, was named an Honorable Mention All-American.

Additionally, the Leopards celebrated three All-Region selections and four All-SCIAC awards, further cementing their dominance on the court.

The Leopards' season featured standout performances, including Ray's dominance at the Massachusetts Regional, where she delivered 19 kills at a .457 clip and was named the Regional Most Outstanding Player. Sophomore outside hitter Lauren Gott, sophomore setter Malia Capistrano and junior setter Vanessa Marquez also shone throughout the postseason. Senior libero Madison Smith anchored the back row with consistent defensive efforts, including a 20-dig performance against MIT..

This season marked La Verne's 10th in program history with 25 or more wins, highlighting their consistency as a national powerhouse. With the foundation laid this year, the Leopards will aim to build on their success once again as they look ahead to 2025.

— Jonas Holt

Leopard Scoreboard

At the Buzzer

Women's Basketball, Nov. 29
Whitman - 94
La Verne - 61

Men's Basketball, Nov. 30
UC San Diego - 109
La Verne - 33

Women's Basketball, Dec. 1
La Verne - 68
Chapman - 56

Volleyball, Dec. 4
Juniata - 3
La Verne - 1

Men's Basketball, Dec. 4
Chapman - 71
La Verne - 55

Schedule

Saturday
Men's basketball vs. California Miramar, 2 p.m.

Dec. 14
Women's basketball vs. Claremont-Mudd-Scripps, 2 p.m.

Dec. 16
Men's basketball vs. Westminster, TBD
Women's basketball vs. Whitworth, 3 p.m.

Dec. 30
Women's basketball vs. Emmanuel, 5 p.m.

Women's Basketball Standings

	Overall	SCIAC
Pomona-Pitzer	6-2	2-0
Occidental	3-2	1-0
Chapman	2-5	1-0
Redlands	4-5	1-1
Whittier	4-1	0-0
Cal Lutheran	3-2	0-1
Caltech	3-2	0-1
Claremont M.S.	3-4	0-0
La Verne	**1-6**	**0-2**