



Constantino smashes records

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PHOTO BY ALAN LEWIS GRAPHIC BY JUSTIN GOMES

Hawks soccer star excels on the field and on the job

Francis Kennedy and Noah Geiss

@NOAH_G__ @FRANCISK16571

Dedicated hard-working supervisor at night, college athlete by day, All-American every day.

Luis Castillo Guzman, a sophomore center back for the Hawks men's soccer team, was named second team All-American in the Junior College Division III by United Soccer Coaches.

Guzman, known affectionately as Luigi, started 20 games for the Hawks and was a key piece to the Hawks' defense that forced seven shutouts and allowed an average 1.43 goals per game. He was one of the leaders of a Hawks team that finished 13-8-2 overall. He was also named as a member of the First-Team Coast-South Conference for his standout season.

"It was really amazing," Guzman said. "Guiding some young guys with some of my experience. It was a wonderful experience because I got to share my knowledge and what I know about the game with them and a little bit

about my story and what I went through to make it to that point."

"I just want to say thank you to Coach Andy Cumbo and my other two assistant coaches," Guzman added. "Without them, this wouldn't be possible."

Guzman's national recognition is the product of working through adversity. His success on the field and in the classroom comes while he works two jobs. But grinding has always been in his DNA.

Guzman was born in Peru to his father, Luis Castillo and mother, Aydee Guzman, who immigrated here to the United States with their three boys, the youngest being six-year-old Guzman. The couple added a fourth son, Joao, a younger brother who sees Guzman as a role model.

Being a role model is something Guzman takes seriously.

"My parents helped me out, too, especially with me not being born here. The stuff they had to go through has always been in the back of my head and I want to be a role model to my younger brother and hopefully he gets motivated to do good in school," Guzman said.

Their dad worked tirelessly at a warehouse to provide for their family. Inspired by his father's work ethic, Guzman is motivated to become the first of his brothers to finish college. His sights are set on the University of California, Santa Barbara as one of his transfer options. Others are Sonoma State and California State University, East Bay if he's able to play soccer.

Guzman is currently working two jobs with one of those jobs being a supervisor at UPS, where he is working on the overnight shifts. After his shift at night, he would still manage to show up for practice and college classes. It being the off-season allows him to be able to manage a second job at Walmart which he recently started three weeks ago.

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In spite of the weather A2mend event shines

Olivia Fitts and Justin Gomes

@OLIVIAFITTS2

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The Black Cultural Resource Center was busy by proxy on Feb. 7, with two of the programs it houses, A2Mend and the Black Student Union, coordinating and sponsoring two events in recognition of Black History Month.

A2Mend, a student charter program established to support and assist in the personal and academic success of Black men and other men of color, is one of five programs and services that the BCRC (room 1726) accommodates.

A scene from the second event on the seventh, an open mic hosted by the BSU: Professor Erick O. Bell sang Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come." His rendition was first-rate, based on the audience's reaction to the performance.

Cooke was a virtuosic singer, songwriter, composer and entrepreneur whose songs have influenced the work of pop and soul artists for decades. At the peak of his fame in the late '50s and early '60s, Cooke's popularity was prodigious.

Cooke wrote "A Change Is Gonna Come" in 1963, the same year as the March on Washington. The song, recorded in 1964 just months before his premature, enigmatic death, was among the most significant of the Civil Rights era. Cooke is, as he is affectionately called, the "King of Soul."

Spoken word poetry, Erykah Badu and



JUSTIN GOMES/THE EXPRESS

Students wait in the rain for a Taste of Soul event food. While many events were canceled due to rain, the BCRC event still served up it's promised soul food on Feb. 7, 2024

John Legend covers, masterful piano playing, and original songs followed Bell's performance. It was a full house.

The day's earlier event, a soul-food buffet, was likewise successful.

"It's everything to see the students out there in line to have a 'Taste of Soul,' and for students (of other ethnicities) to be excited about it," said ConnectUp program director, Kimberly Burks, "to honor the contributions that Black Americans have made here."

Kenneth Cooper, Executive Director of the LPC Foundation, attended Taste of Soul too. A2Mend provided "delicious" (to quote Cooper), free food in the quad – to much gratitude.

"The LPC Foundation supports a wide number of activities and events across campus," Cooper said. "We're happy to be able to

support events like this."

Along with to A2Mend and the BSU, the Black Cultural Resource Center houses

ConnectUp, an academic support program for first-year Black students, Sista 2 Sista, a forum dedicated to the dialogue and empowerment of Black female students and other women of color, and Umoja, a learning community concentrated on fast-track Student Educational Plans.

"It feels great to share our culture," Kimberly Burks added, "To have a place on campus, a safe space for our students, is important for the success and retention of Black American students, and Black students in general."

MORE EVENTS ARE SCHEDULED THIS MONTH. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THE BCRC.

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3000 Campus Hill Drive, Livermore, CA 94551-9797
tel.: 925-424-1240 fax: 925-606-5317
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Jeff Bell and OCD: There's no such thing as normal

Camille Leduc

@CLEUDUC7603

Jeff Bell, at his annual seminar for the LPC Psychology Department, told the story of when he knew he needed to get help for his obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Every time his car went over a pothole, Bell would imagine a dead body under his tires. He'd come to a complete stop and hear his heart race. He would get out of the car, frantic, searching for the person he was sure he had run over.

What if I killed them? What if their body is on the side of the road?

Bell would spend hours on the side of the road checking and rechecking for a body. He'd get back into his car and drive in circles, trying, again, to find the body.

Once, he got a call to rush to the hospital. His daughter had a fever of 107 degrees. He was terrified. On his way to the hospital, the car clipped the curb. He stopped the car and got out. Bell started searching – for a body he was certain he hit but couldn't find – at that moment, the search mattered more to him than his sick daughter.

"After putting my disorder above my family," Bell said, "I went to my psychiatrist the next day and admitted to her I was ready to do the work."

Hollywood has portrayed OCD as people with anal personalities and strange quirks. Television shows and characters in movies can make this condition seem almost adorable. But Bell dispelled those myths at Las Positas College on Feb. 1. The way he laid it out, OCD sounded more excruciating than charming.

Before an audience of some 60 people in the Psychology Club room – 1060 – Bell used his personal journey to "becoming normal" in a discussion about the reality of OCD and those who suffer from it.

Bell — a nationally recognized author, mental health advocate and spokesperson for the International OCD Foundation — said over the years, people have misunderstood the diagnosis of OCD and given it a new definition. As a result, people think color-coded closets and stepping-on-cracks-related paranoia are the worst of OCD.

Bell defined OCD as "a combination of environmental and genetic behaviors that leaves you with an obsessive thought and a compulsive action." In simpler terms, he said all OCD cases have a common, simple what-if question that circles the mind over and over. It's like the feeling of needing to scrub your hands to get all the dirt off, then going back to wash again because, what if I didn't get it all?

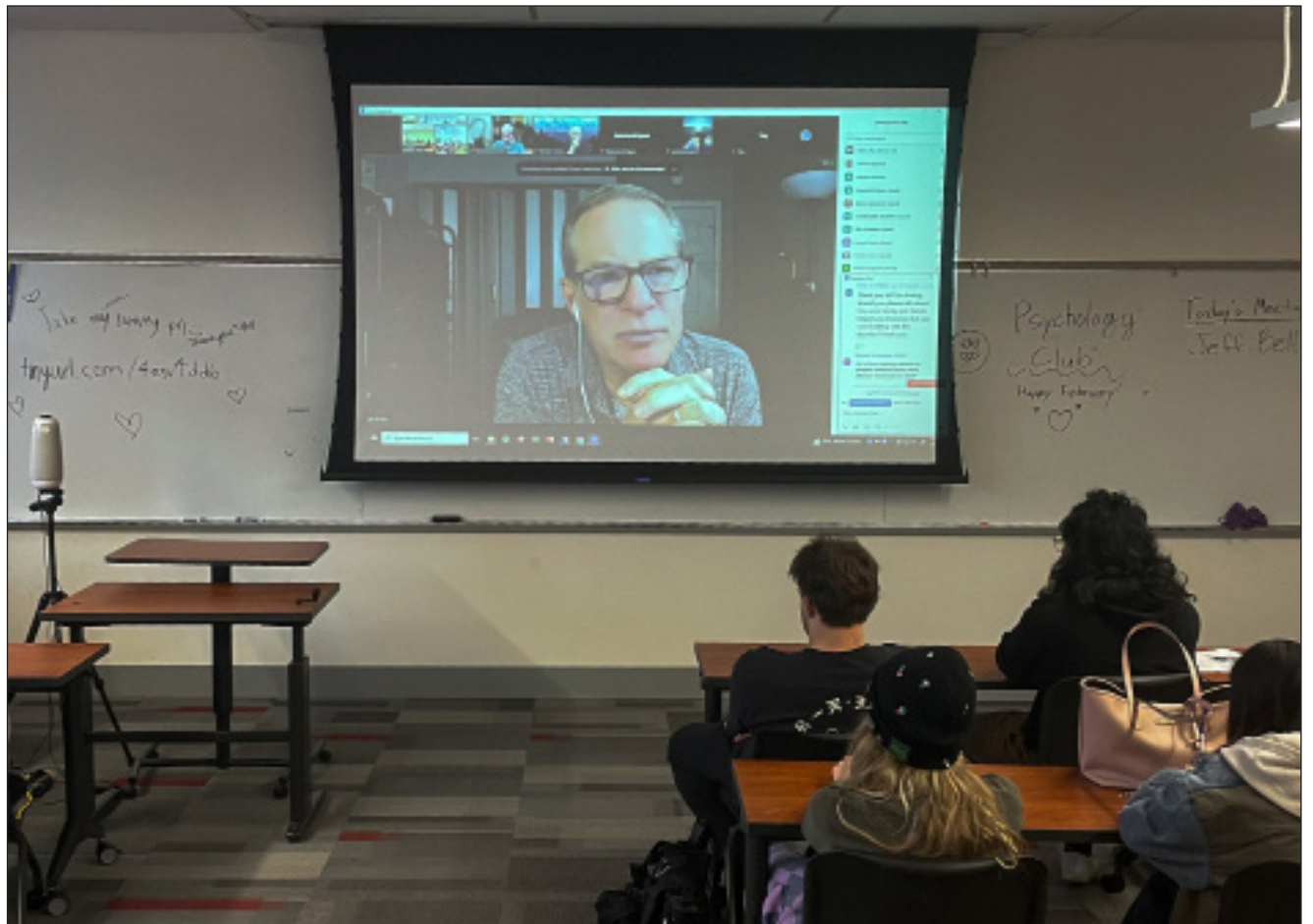
What if I didn't set my parking brake? What if I forgot to authorize the check, and my family becomes homeless? Things like that.

One of the other issues of the "Hollywoodification" of OCD is that many people without OCD believe they have it. People who worry that if they can't remember if they turned the lights off downstairs, locked the car, or if they can't remember the word on the tip of their tongue...they have it. What's the threshold between normal overthinking and OCD? These days, people claim they have OCD almost proudly, not fully understanding the seriousness of the condition or the suffering of the people experiencing it.

"There are many different forms of OCD," Bell said, "but the most commonly known are perfectionism, losing control, skepticism, and germaphobes."

OCD can appear at any time, but according to the International OCD Foundation, it typically occurs during two age ranges: between 8 and 12 and between the late teen years and early adulthood.

Bell said he was about 8 years old in his earliest memories of having OCD. He was in downtown San Bruno when a boy called out to him from a moving car. For the



COURTESY OF BRANDON BYRNE

Jeff Bell speaks about obsessive-compulsive disorder during his Zoom appearance at Las Positas College on Feb. 1, 2024. Bell is a nationally recognized author, mental health advocate and spokesperson for the International OCD Foundation.

life of him, Bell couldn't figure out who was waving. He was fixated on why he couldn't remember who waved to him from a car window. Bell said that for weeks, he asked around school and his family members if they caught a glimpse of the boy from the car. Bell would come to be known by his family as "the boy who worries when there's nothing to worry about."

But Bell said his high school and college years were "OCD-free."

The International OCD Foundation estimates between 2 and 3 million adults currently have OCD, plus another approximately 500,000 children.

The pandemic seems to have made it worse for OCD sufferers, and it even created new ones. According to a 2021 study published in the National Library of Medicine by the National Center for Biotechnology Information, somewhere between 20 and 65 percent of cases reported their symptoms worsening during the pandemic. OCD sufferers with contamination fears were especially vulnerable.

The rise was particularly noticeable among young adults. The percentage of college students reporting an OCD diagnosis increased by 4 to 6 percent between 2019 and 2022 — basically, post-pandemic — according to the fall 2022 report from the National College Health Assessment. There's also been a 6.4 percent increase in the percentage of diagnosed college students who had seen a healthcare provider in the past 12 months. Nearly 15 percent of transgender or gender non-conforming college students (14.6 percent) have been diagnosed with OCD at some point. Among cisgender women in college, 7.4 percent have been diagnosed, with 2.8 percent for cisgender men.

Those are just the statistics of the diagnosed.

Students who have untreated OCD are likely to have a very difficult time concentrating in the classroom and completing homework assignments, according to "OCD at School," as published on the website of the Anxiety and Depression Association of America. They can't seem to focus on discussions or presentations because of their stubborn-urge behaviors.

Bell recommends Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. It's a treatment that requires sufferers to sit with their fears and not act on them. For someone with OCD, it's as simple as looking at a messy desk and not organizing. Or worrying about if the garage was left open but not driving back

home to check.

Bell saw many psychiatrists and pleaded for their answer on how to fix him, how to make his life "normal."

"I stopped talking about those "normal years," but there is no such thing as normal," Bell said, referring to his "OCD-free" high school and college years.

At the end of his lecture, Bell reminded his audience that, actually, there is no such thing as normal — no such thing as a typical OCD story.



Jeff Bell

COURTESY OF JEFF BELL

Five quiet study spots at Las Positas



Gabriel Carver

@CUP1DCO

With so many people on campus, it can be tough to find a nice area to get some peace and quiet. In the middle of the 4000 building stands a large bamboo enclosure that provides a serene environment.

Inside of the new 2100 building is the newly reopened Tutorial Center with access to tutors who are able to help students, even by drop-in.

Just outside of the 4000 building is the outdoor auditorium, a giant space where students can sit and relax. For students it is a quick walk to countless of the school's classrooms.

Near the gym, concrete bleachers tower around the soccer field. One can unwind and relax as they listen to the wind graze the green grass.

Lastly, giant green hills roll next to the track, providing a background that is reminiscent of the default Windows XP background.

Away from student traffic, you can chill and unwind from the stress of your classes. Next time you need some time to yourself, these five spots will be waiting for you.

GABRIEL CARVER/THE EXPRESS

Constantino soars above the competition

Justin Gomes

@JLGPHTOG

When lacing up her sneakers, Kierstin Constantino did not know it would be a game unlike any other before.

It was Jan. 19, the Las Positas women's basketball team was set to take on Cabrillo College. For Constantino, it was the game of a lifetime. In a stunning 100-54 victory over Cabrillo, Constantino scored 52 points.

Not only did she shatter her previous career high of 43 points in a game but also she surpassed the previous scoring record of 50 points set by Carlie Bonderer in February 2013. Constantino put up impressive numbers throughout preseason play, scoring double-digits in many outings. This included her previous career high of 43 points set on Nov. 7 versus Cosumnes River.

"When I hit the first couple of shots, I felt like I could keep going," Constantino said.

But Constantino was not done yet.

In the same game, she broke another school record. Constantino made her 108th three-point shot of the season, 15 of those coming in that game as well. Breaking previous the record of 107, held by Cayla Nava during the 2015-2016 season. Not only is Constantino breaking records, she is leading the nation in three-pointers in every

level of collegiate play.

"Records are meant to be broken and I think Kierstin has done a great job of leaving a legacy here," Coach Caleb Theodore said.

Constantino narrowly missed setting two other records for three-pointers. She was one basket from a state record and two from setting a national record for three-pointers in a single game.

Constantino owes her performance to her training schedule. Every day she has taken 500 field goal attempts, something she completes in about two hours. Theodore has also drilled Constantino, timing her attempts to make 35 field goals, helping improve her accuracy and shot percentage.

Her breakout season also comes after questioning her future playing basketball. In her freshman year Constantino played for Wenatchee Valley College in Washington state, where she averaged just 18.5 minutes per game and a low 3.9 points per game average. Even though it helped develop her as a player, Wenatchee Valley wasn't the best fit for Constantino.

At the beginning of her sophomore year, Constantino was looking for somewhere she fit in. Being a Central California native with roots in the East Bay, she looked at Las Positas. Theodore had previously reached out to Constantino during her senior year in high school in attempts to recruit her to play for Las Positas.

A social media post led Constantino to reach out to Theodore once again. Since joining the program, Constantino has been experiencing a breakout year, averaging 39.8 minutes per game and second in the state with 26.8 points per game. She also leads the North Coast Conference in points per game.

"It was like I was meant to be here," Constantino said.

Constantino is currently in her sophomore year at Las Positas. With the season Constantino is having, she has garnered a



GABRIEL CARVER/THE EXPRESS

Kierstin Constantino shooting a three pointer versus San Francisco, one game after her record breaking game Jan. 26, 2024.

lot of attention from four-year schools.

"It feels great. Knowing that people are actually looking at my game," Constantino said.

This is a far cry from the previous season, in which she was mostly overlooked. Constantino is hopeful that after her

breakout season, she can move forward in her career. She is not concerned about where she may finish her college career, but that it remains competitive and a great environment for her.

Tackling adversity

Continued from Page 1

Guzman said it was difficult, but his love of the game kept him going. He did not start playing soccer until he joined a soccer club at the age of 13 but was familiar with the sport as a kid. He couldn't come across a soccer ball without kicking it.

In the 2019-20 season during his game at Copa Alianza, which was held in Los Angeles, Guzman suffered a near career-ending foot injury. He had to have surgery, and the doctors told him that he was never going to be able to play again.

After the surgery, he was never put on the proper rehab program he needed to recover correctly. He gained weight from the loss of activity resulting from the surgery.

Guzman refused to let the injury end his dream, taking matters into his own hands by getting back in shape, showing the

resilience he learned from his upbringing.

"Out of the many years of not playing," Guzman said. "I still performed well."

An inspiration that Guzman looks up to is Thiago Silva, a Brazilian professional soccer player, who plays center-back—the same as Guzman—for Chelsea FC of the English Premier League. Both Guzman and Silva know what it means to take the leadership role on the pitch. He also mimics Silvas' strategic approach to defense, having the right strategy to defend the ball correctly and intercept it from opponents when given the perfect opportunity.

Guzman described his love for the sport of soccer in one word "passion." Just make sure to keep that passion burning, Guzman, and remember that we're always here to support you through the ups and downs in your journey.



Luis Castillo Guzman, #6, carrying the ball up the field during Sophomore night on Nov. 10, 2023

COURTESY OF ALAN LEWIS

O'Donnell makes Hawks history for work on and off the pitch

Jakob Arnarsson

@JAKOBA2004

Irie O'Donnell, a sophomore midfielder for the Hawks who started all 21 games this past season, proved to be reliable on the pitch. That was also true in the classroom as demonstrated by her 4.0 grade point average. This is why O'Donnell likely found herself standing on a stage at the Anaheim Convention Center as LPC women's soccer first ever Scholar All-American.

O'Donnell was one of 11 players from across the nation named to the first team of the 2023 Junior College Women's Scholar All-Americans, as selected by the United Soccer Coaches.

"The moment when I walked across the stage and got acknowledged for my award was so surreal," O'Donnell said, referencing the Jan. 13 All-America ceremony and reception. "I kept thinking, 'How could I be here?' I was in line with some of the best junior college players in the country, some of whom I'd played against in the fall. It was definitely a moment I will never forget."

Athletic achievements seem to be a

part of the O'Donnell family. Her younger sister Miri is a standout soccer player at Dougherty Valley High and for her club team FC Bay Area Surf. Miri has been called up for both the under 17s and as an alternative for the under 19 U.S. Women's National Team and has committed to play for Wake Forest in college. Their mother Mari is a former high school track and field athlete in Japan who got first place in the youth women's 200 meter national championship.

O'Donnell, who scored two goals with five assists this season, was named first-team All-Coast Conference. She finished her Las Positas career with five goals and nine assists.

She also flourished as a kinesiology major, which captured her attention at Dougherty Valley High School, where she studied sports medicine for two years.

"The work ethic she has academically and on the field is incredible," Hawks sophomore midfielder Judith Orozco said. Hawks coach Andrew Cumbo described O'Donnell's work ethic as "constant, and constantly positive. She never missed any training sessions, and obviously didn't miss any games, and she's just super consistent."

That consistent work ethic helped shape the Hawks' successful season. Cumbo said a pivotal moment in O'Donnell's development came at the end of her freshman season. She started the final 15 games of the 2022 season, when she scored three goals. Las Positas earned a spot in the 2022 post-season. They made the second round of the NorCal Regional playoffs before losing 3-0 to Sierra College.

Coach Cumbo checked in with O'Donnell to see how she was feeling about the following season. After their chat, he got a message from his starting midfielder that he feels defined her sopho-

more year: "I'm just getting started."

O'Donnell backed this up by becoming a leading figure for an improved Hawks team. The Hawks went from nine victories in 2022 to 13 wins this past season. They went from 3-3-3 in conference play her freshman year to 8-1-3 in conference this season.

The Hawks entered the postseason as a No. 10 seed and suffered a heart-breaking defeat to No. 7 Santa Rosa in the first round. But progress was made, and O'Donnell was at the center of it.

Balancing academics and athletics proved to be a unique challenge. Her schedule consisted of games every Tuesday and Friday, with night classes every Monday and Wednesday.

"Every day," O'Donnell said, "I was waking up at 9 a.m. and going to bed at 11 or 12 (at night)."

O'Donnell thought her soccer career was done after high school. It took her dad finding out about LPC's program and convincing her to try-out to change her mind. Despite her initial uncertainty, she

said playing for the Hawks was her best decision ever.

"I'm really sensitive when it comes to teams," O'Donnell said. "If I don't find the right team, I just won't play at all."

As her teammate Orozco explained, "When Irie and I first met, she was very shy and reserved. It took a while to get her out of her shell. But once we started connecting, our bond became incredibly strong. I felt like she was my lost cousin."

That feeling seems to be mutual.

"This team," O'Donnell said, "is like a family to me."

O'Donnell believes this was her last season playing soccer at the collegiate level, as she understands how difficult it is to find a team as special as the Hawks.

"I would rather end my soccer career here, at the place I enjoyed soccer the most," said O'Donnell.

If this is the end of her athletic career, O'Donnell is happy that she is leaving on a high note and hopes that her athletic and academic accomplishments will serve as a foundation for her future success.



COURTESY OF JAMES O'DONNELL

Irie O'Donnell was awarded Scholar All-American by United Soccer Coaches at the All-America ceremony at the Anaheim Convention Center on Jan. 13, 2024



COURTESY OF ALAN LEWIS

Irie O'Donnell plays against City College of San Francisco on Oct. 31, 2023. O'Donnell started every game of the 2023 season and finished the season with two goals and five assists.

LPC takes cult-classic musical ‘She Loves Me’ to the stage

Olivia Fitts

@OLIVIAFITTS2

Three times a year, the theater arts department puts script to stage – two musicals and a play – their first production of 2024 is a stab at the former: cult-classic, “She Loves Me.” Originally a 1937 play, “Parfumerie,” by Hungarian playwright Miklós László, its 1963 musical adaptation and 2016 musical revival (both on Broadway) have amassed a combined 13 Tony nominations and two wins.

In its musical form, the anti-love story features composition by Jerry Bock and lyrics from Sheldon Harnick, the mastermind duo behind the music for “Fiddler on the Roof.” Its book was authored by “Cabaret” writer Joe Masteroff. As cast member and freshman math major William Burgess, alternatively, middle-aged Parfumerie employee Ladislav Sipos makes clear, “She Loves Me” is musical theater “at its finest.”

“It’s a great book,” Burgess adds. “It’s a great score. It’s a great time.”

His quote is punctuated by a shriek. Full stop.

It’s that rotten interruption – mouse darts greenroom, terrifying unsuspecting theater major – all too frequent at LPC. The theatrics are a given.

Disgust subsides. We teleport: greenroom to rehearsal.

The mind stirs suddenly on practice’s commencing. Actors mentally shapeshift black wood boxes to detailed set pieces. Wooden cubes become perfume counters -- empty space becomes shampoo shipments and front doors. Students turn to 1930s shop employees.

The practiced dialogue is so brisk, you’d think it possible to dance to. And they do. Bodies proceed like crazy sparks. Never has a learning environment felt so ignited.

In the rehearsal room: (mice, likely) – teachers, stagehands, actors – a collage of hyper-individualized egos and wills, never clashing. Jubilation, in abundance, with a radiating reverence for the work. An outpour of words, spoken at impossible speed. Refined, understudy jealousy – only slightly and never obvious. Laughter, at times, at nothing in particular. It is a creative nucleus firestorm.

One is forced to furnish full attention, half by artistic pull and half out of pure desire.

And this is just practice. There’s still a month to go before the first show.

“She Loves Me” debuts Friday, March 15 at 8 p.m. The six performances in



OLIVIA FITTS/THE EXPRESS

Actors take a note-taking break mid-rehearsal. Dyan McBride (black beanie) revises lines.

total, spanning two weekends, conclude on Sunday, March 24, with a 2 p.m. finale. Students can purchase tickets on showtix4u.com (located in the Performing Arts section of the Las-Po website). General admission is \$20. Staff, seniors, and students pay \$15.

Given rehearsal’s preliminary exhilaration, the show’s success is near doubtless.

It doesn’t hurt that the brilliant Dyan McBride is directing it. She’s an esteemed actor, director, and educator, mainly local to the bay. McBride has taught at UC Davis, the Academy of Art, San Jose State,

and Solano Community College.

“Going to the theater has always been a place where people can get together to think about and discuss complicated topics, or emotional topics – or anything that feels like it wants to explore the human experience,” said McBride.

On her upcoming show: “...you’re gonna get a great, quality production coming to see ‘She Loves Me.’”

And you will. March 15 through the 24.

Classics, Independent Films, and Playoff Games Oh My!

Luke Vavuris

@LUKEV002

Many community members over the years have shown their massive support for Livermore’s finest movie theater experience through displays of classic and independent films, film festivals, and Oscar parties. The very well-known Vine Cinema has been open since December 1956.

In 2007, when faced with the challenge of needing to compete with the new large theater in town, many business owners would’ve given up, but this wasn’t an option for Kenny Way, the longtime and current owner of the Vine.

“We realized that we needed to adapt to the changes or we were going to go out of business, and that’s when we introduced beer, wine and food, independent films, classics and later on adding couches in the theaters to differentiate ourselves from the competition,”

Way said. With the transition from film to digital, Vine has been fortunate enough to put on many live sporting events. The Vine has had the most success screening the 49ers playoff games.

“We have been traditionally showing sports events for over ten years, we haven’t shown that many games but more than any other fanbase, the Niners fans do a great job of coming out and showing to

support their team,” Way said.

With their two most impressive and toughest comeback wins of the season, the Niners have punched their way back into the Super Bowl vs the defending champions, Kansas City Chiefs—a familiar rematch of the Big Game from 2020. A year that brought the world to a full halt and unfortunately made a negative impact on a lot of businesses that were forced to close their doors for good. We were forced to social distance till it was deemed safe. Many of those places couldn’t pay their rent or find ways to stay open or reopen after the forced closures. This wasn’t the first time the Vine had pushed through adversity. Week after week, many familiar faces throughout the community showed their incredible support by showing love for the Cinema. After incredible help from GoFundMe donations, weekend sales of Popcorn, cotton candy, snow cones, and more, Kenny was able to keep the Livermore landmark open after 14 straight months of closure.

“Movie theaters are a tough business right now because they haven’t fully rebounded from Covid and the writers’ strike didn’t help much at all either. So it is tough. “We were worried about not coming back, after Covid but in general terms, just follow your passion and just do what you love and something good may come out of it,” Way said.

The Vine Theater has always been a unique and personal experience, showing a variety of movies for the diverse society we have.

“It has been nice to get different groups of people in here and not just the same



LUKE VAVURIS/THE EXPRESS

Livermore’s very own Vine Theater premiering 49ers playoff games building up to the Super Bowl.

people that like to see our independent films, you know classic nights bring in a separate genre of people as well as many of the sporting events that we show that bring in a whole nother different type of people,” says Way. “My hope is that they might see a flyer on the wall and that they may come back for another film or event, to come to watch Dirty Dancing or the new Bob Marley film or whatever that is coming up.”

“We have shown a lot of games a long time ago, not have been able to do as many as we’re used to because of strict film contracts but have been very lucky to be able to show all the playoff games this month and now the Super Bowl this

upcoming weekend,” said Way.

“As the games ramp up more and more people come out to these playoff games, with their team’s incredible success, it was about 90% full the previous week vs the Packers and it seemed like it was full for the NFC championship game.” As we go into the Super Bowl, the more the word gets put out there that the big game is approaching us.

The Vine Cinema will be showing Super Bowl LVIII on Feb.11, 2024, between the Kansas City Chiefs and the Bay’s very own, San Francisco 49ers. Tickets are on sale now, \$10 each. Way invites everyone to come out and support your team and get your tickets before they’re all gone!



The simple power of 'no, thank you'

Paul George

@PAUL.GEORGEPIO

In a few weeks, the Bay Area's streets and storefronts again will be beset with card tables guarded by vested

purveyors of one the most addictive of substances known to humanity: Girl Scout Cookies.

As a "girl dad," I'm an accomplice, box carrier and money-launderer for this racket. I am also grateful that I was born a century too late for the era when girls baked their own cookies to sell. Talk about doing double the work. This was long before they became commercially made in Kentucky and South Dakota and shipped to girls nationwide.

For many, Girl Scout Cookies are a siren's song for snacking. They are the most reliable fundraising vehicle for everything from troop trips to supporting their favorite charitable organizations. Despite the price creeping up to \$6 a package in 2022, sales continue at a healthy pace.

Healthy also brings me to a crossroads of observations. The Girl Scout organization heralds the program as one "filled with leadership and life lessons." Plenty of life lessons are here for girls, like the courage to speak to people, step out of one's comfort zone to try their hand at selling, managing inventory and money and caring for your customer.

There are also lessons in being rejected. A great many booths are outside the grocery store, where folks can get cookies for less than the \$6 cost. Like the girls, I understand that household budgets often means the answer is going to be "no."

As a five-year veteran of hearing that word, I'm fine with it, and even applaud getting the courtesy of a response. Some walk by as though the girls are invisible figments of the imagination. A polite "no" or "no, thank you" goes a long way, even a smile and a nod can buoy their spirits during their two- to three-hour shifts at a cookie booth.

My one wish for my fellow adults would be this: Never apologize for saying no, and don't offer excuses. You're an

adult, and we each try to teach our youngins to respect adults. Rejection is part of the process, and there are lessons in being told no. Every interaction can be a teachable moment, but not every interaction needs to be one

To that end, my second wish is to not offer excuses, particularly if they contradict observable evidence. There is no need to tell a Girl Scout more than a no, like you are a diabetic or counting calories. Both are a personal health matter, but far too often, it's problematic.

These freckled ninjas are the same children who find Christmas gifts hidden in the tool shed. If you're diabetic or watching what you eat, rest assured they're asking their caregiver why a diabetic or diet-aware person has a half gallon of ice cream and case of regular Coca-Cola in your basket. It is none of their business what you're buying any more than it's any of their business why you chose to say no. No is enough.

The broader issue is what girls are hearing in your words of cutting carbs, or can't fit into your favorite dress, or any number of other excuses offered beyond the polite no, thank you. From an early age, girls begin to associate looking thin or self-control issues around food to be a worry that they don't need to worry about.

On the sidelines, there's conditioning that goes into that as well. Girls and women often find themselves apologizing when it's neither necessary nor there is cause for apology. The less-is-more of your polite "no, thank you" also teaches the girls that they can make a decision and stand by it, without needing to justify or explain themselves further.

"No, thank you," will serve the girls best in the immediate moment and long-term, that is, unless you find yourself ready to support them by purchasing a box or two. (They'll never say no, thank you to those whom choose to support their sale instead.)

Swift lives lyrics 'datin' the boy on the football team'

Paul George

@PAUL.GEORGEPIO

She didn't know it at 15, but today's Queen of Pop Taylor Swift is doing just as she wrote in her 2008 song "Fifteen." She is literally dating the boy on the football team, just as she wrote in her lyrics 15 years ago.

Swift, 34, went public this past fall as dating 34-year-old Kansas Chief's tight end Travis Kelce after first appearing in Kelce's box at the Sept. 24 Chiefs game.

Overnight, Kelce's name became a household name in homes of Swift's fans, the Swifties.

A 2023 survey from Morning Consult estimated 180 million in the U.S. considered themselves fans, including

54.4 million that considered themselves "avid fans," members of the Swiftie army.

And overnight (she had a long night), throngs of Swift fans of all stripes and ages began tuning into football games. The intrigue wasn't a sudden fascination with football.

That is a HUGE new market of viewers turning into football who may otherwise have little interest in touchdowns and tight ends of any variety.

Fans began watching football games for any quick peeks at Swift on the bleachers to see whom she brought to the game with her to cheer on Kelce and the Chiefs.

The ripple effect of that new interest in the game is also benefiting of NFL football as an industry.

In accepting Kelce's invitation to watch his game last September, Swift provided a boost to the sport by bringing an under-represented demographic to the game's audience: women. SponsorPulse.com pegs the typical fans engaging on a weekly basis to males over 50, and those older men represent about 73% of the audience.

Converting at least a fraction of Swift's estimated 180 million occasional-to-avid fan base results in a younger, female audience for the football viewership.

In some circles, Swift's appearance at games has the increased interest in football, the Kansas Chiefs and the National Football League (NFL) is being dubbed the "(Taylor) Swift Effect."

Continued online at LPCExpress.com "Datin".

EXPRESS YOURSELF

Do you consider Valentine's Day a real holiday?



“Yes, it is a holiday in our world of love. Doesn't have to be a significant partner. It could be your friends or mother.”

– Dalpreet Kaur,
Business Administration



“I don't think so, but if people like it, so be it. Free chocolate the day after for me.”

– Alan Key,
Film Studies



“No. I believe it is a Hallmark holiday that gets people to buy into capitalism. I don't care to celebrate it or not.”

– Isabel Watson,
Marine Biology



“Yes. It is a holiday that was celebrated in Ancient Rome, from our History of Western Civilization.”

– Michael Brodsky,
Engineering



“Sure. I don't know what defines a real holiday, but it gives you a chance to spend time with those who have meaning in your life.”

– Dylan Rogers,
Mechanical Engineering