



From LPC to minor leagues



College holds 3rd Film Fest



Hawks swim and dive pass the torch at state championships

JAKOB ARNARSSON/THE EXPRESS

Zach Zauhar-Kurr swims during the individual medley. He competed in three individual events at the state championships held at Orange Coast College, becoming the state champion in the 400-yard individual medley.

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COSTA MESA, Calif. — Logan Borrelli was in shock as he looked up at the electronic timing board following the preliminary round of the 200-yard individual medley.

It was Thursday, May 2, the first day of the 3C2A State Championships held in Orange Coast College Aquatics Pavilion. Borrelli had come into the championship with the 15th-best 200 IM time in the state. His expectation of himself was to qualify for the finals and then try to push his name up that list. An opportunity that never came.

The 1:59.00 he saw by his name on the board was good only for 19th, more than two seconds behind the time needed to qualify for the final round.

Borrelli had a shot at redemption during the 400-medley relay final later in the day. But the Hawks got disqualified for an early jump. On the first day of his first state championship, Borrelli failed to come up with any points.

It would have been easy for the freshman to simply let things unravel from there. But Borrelli wasn't alone. Just like for the whole season, he got the push he needed from sophomores Zach Zauhar-Kurr and Ryan Ridosko.

"Oh, they're everything," Borrelli said. "Zach and Ryan are great competitors ... Just racing those guys and having that constant clash and companionship during practice means everything."

Las Positas didn't have a dominant outing at the state meet. The Hawks men finished in eighth place.

They were led by sophomores Zauhar-Kurr, who won the team's lone state title in the 400-yard IM, and Ridosko, who placed in the top six in each of his three events. Sophomore diver Zachary Ulrich finished fifth in the 1 meter and sixth in the 3 meter.

But where the Hawks did excel was the passing of the torch. How the veterans groomed the freshmen not only keeps alive the program's standard but sets the freshmen up for success next season.

There was perhaps no better example than Borrelli, who Zauhar-Kurr and Ridosko helped lock in for the rest of the championship.

"They just told me I'm better than this," Borrelli said. "Just hit a reset button. We've rested, and we've done the work. It's time to go compete, and they just gave me the confidence to go out and do it"

Four of the eight Hawks men who made the state cham-

pionship were freshmen.

All four of the Hawks women at state were newcomers to the state championship stage.

Despite their lack of experience, several of the young Hawks put together impactful performances. Borrelli and Samantha Fehr were two of the standouts.

Despite the challenge of the opening day of the meet, Borrelli finished top ten in his next two individual events. His best finish was sixth in the 200-yard backstroke. He also performed in four of the five relay events for which the Hawks men qualified.

Fehr competed in two events. She won bronze in the 100-yard breaststroke, setting a new school record with her time of 1:05.93. Her time surprised her and coach Jason Craighead.

"I wasn't expecting 1:05, I'm not gonna lie," Craighead said. "That was a significant jump. She just continues to impress."

Borrelli and Fehr figure to be pillars for next year's team. They have gained valuable experience at the state level.

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LPC Rising Scholars program in limbo as hosting prison faces closure

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A women's prison local to LPC has been dubbed the "rape club" after years of rampant sexual abuse within the facility was uncovered by authorities. Of a prison population of 605, a handful of the incarcerated women were taught by LPC's own.

On April 15, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) announced that the Federal Correctional Institution in Dublin — a low-security federal prison for female inmates known as FCI Dublin — would be shut down for the foreseeable future.

LPC's Rising Scholars Program, which is part of a larger Rising Scholars Network across California, provides educational services and opportunities for incarcerated women. For the past several years, Las Positas professors have taught student-inmates at FCI Dublin.

In 2021, the FBI launched an investigation into the prison. Eight FCI employees were charged with sexually abusing inmates. In March of this year, the FBI raided the facility. After the prison was confronted with nearly 60 lawsuits from women incarcerated there and a class-action lawsuit alleging sexual assault and retaliation for reporting incidents from guards and other prison officials, the Federal Bureau of Prisons took further action.

According to the BOP, the closure of FCI Dublin would be temporary. For the 203 employees of FCI Dublin, BOP stated nobody would lose their jobs. However, for the 605 incarcerated women, this closure of FCI Dublin meant that a majority of them have since been transferred via bus to high security prisons across the country. With inmates being transferred away from their families and temporarily barred from video-visits, the life they knew at FCI Dublin was effectively upended.

This includes all of the women participating in LPC's Rising Scholars program. Inevitably, the situation at FCI Dublin would ultimately lead the program and the education of the inmates to an abrupt halt.

LPC partnered with FCI Dublin back in 2020 in a project called the Las Positas College's Adult Education Project — now titled Noncredit Business Academy — bringing seven college courses to inmates and the opportunity to complete two certificates in Small Business Management and Customer Service.

By the fall of 2021, LPC had launched

the Women's Business Initiative with the BOP. The initiative enlisted selected inmates and provided them the opportunity to pursue an Associate's degree in Business Administration. This allowed students in the facility to gain skills required for transfer — with credits pertaining specifically to business — to California's public university systems and other higher education institutions.

Both of these programs would be housed under the Rising Scholars program umbrella.

Kimberly Tomlinson is a professor of religious studies at LPC. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, she volunteered to teach the incarcerated students for a semester at FCI Dublin.

"It's a lot of unknowns," Tomlinson said. "I don't know how far along they were or if they were even in the middle of a semester when the shutdown happened."

Traci Peterson, LPC's current Education Partnerships Project Manager, now handles the Rising Scholars program at LPC. She took up the role of her predecessor Emerald Templeton in January of this year after Templeton's departure from LPC in September in 2023. Templeton had been the coordinator for the business program within the Rising Scholars program in partnership with FCI Dublin in 2020.

Peterson recalls what she observed while visiting Rising Scholar students in the Dublin facility.

"The students are amazing and so happy to be in the classes, and it was a really great experience," she said. "We had plans, so it was really a disappointment, especially for the faculty. And of course, the students in the program are the ones who lose out the most by the closure of FCI Dublin."

Before its closure almost a month ago, the program planned to have Kevin Harral, LPC's

Director of Financial Aid, as a guest speaker for the incarcerated students.

"He was going to talk to the students about financial aid opportunities and we were hoping that our students could apply for Pell grants so it could pay for tuition," Peterson said.

In July 2023, all incarcerated students in California and throughout the country became eligible for federal Pell Grants.

There were even talks about doing graduation ceremonies for the students within the Rising Scholars program.

In regards to finding another facility, there are no other women's federal prisons within the Bay Area. "There's only 122 federal prisons in the country," Peterson added. "I don't think there's one nearby, but we're going to do the work we're called to do wherever it is, we'll figure it out."

The program has the entire summer to prepare itself for the chance to support FCI Dublin upon its reinstatement or another facility, possibly within the next year.

On the program's future, Peterson said, "Right now we're really trying to focus on a couple areas so in the next year we can really build up a program that we're proud of that will still serve those people that need the services."

"Even though now FCI Dublin is closed, we're just getting started. We have a new Rising Scholars grant, we're excited and we're ready to go."

On May 1, BOP spokesman Scott Taylor said, "No women are remaining at FCI Dublin."

It is currently unknown when the facility will reopen, and if inmates — especially those who were on track to acquire their certificate or associate degree from LPC's Rising Scholars program — would ever return, if at all.



The minimum-security facility at FCI Dublin that currently holds no female offenders

SYDNEY BRECKENRIDGE/THE EXPRESS

Full circle: The homecoming of an alumna

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Students at Las Positas have busy lives. Many juggle the workload of school with the responsibility of a job on the side. It's easy to go home hoping to relax, saving that day's homework for the next day. And then the next day. And the next.

Soon, LPC students see themselves facing the main challenge in the lives of college students – trying to keep up with the ever-increasing pile of deadlines.

Having the proper skills and abilities to withstand and overcome these struggles is what makes Savannah Richardson, a Las Positas College and University of California, Riverside alumna, stand out from everyone else. Richardson returns to her first alma mater as a professional in higher education after graduating from LPC in 2018.

Leadership positions assumed by Richardson include becoming the Black Cultural Resource Center's (BCRC) first-ever program coordinator and taking on the role of its Umoja coordinator. Both positions encompass responsibilities like providing the academic support and resources students and scholars need, while simultaneously spreading cultural awareness to those eager to learn.

The BCRC is a place for any student who wants to be a part of their community. It provides students looking to learn more about Black culture relevant knowledge and expertise from educators like Richardson.

A vital part of her and the BCRC's mission on campus is that of ongoing outreach to students with hopes of gaining a better understanding of their professional ambitions, allowing for a better support system



JAKOB ARNARSSON/THE EXPRESS

Savannah working on her desk at the Black Cultural Resource Center. She has been a part of the center since March, 2024.

“She’s a forward thinker and most importantly, a people person. She gives her heart and 100%.”

RAYMOND RICHARDSON, SAVANNAH RICHARDSON’S FATHER

for students and scholars.

Having grown up in a low-income household, Richardson understands just how important a strong support system is. The adversity she went through in her youth made her want to become a supportive figure in the lives of students. Now, she actively provides stable academic and professional support.

Raymond Richardson, Savannah Richardson’s dad, described her as a trailblazer, saying, “She’s a forward thinker and, most importantly, a people person. She gives her heart and 100%.”

Growing up in the Tri-Valley, prior to transferring from LPC to UC Riverside – where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology – Richardson recalls being one among a few Black students in the majority of her classes from kindergarten through 12th grade. This experience inspired Richardson to learn more about the African diaspora through the Black Student Union (BSU) during her time at LPC. Through her engagement with the program, as well as her involvement with Umoja, Richardson decided to further pursue an education in the matter at UC Riverside.

Post-graduating, she took on a plethora of roles at UC Riverside, such as Admissions Counselor with a focus on Black and African American recruitment, secretary for the Black Alumni Chapter and Umoja student ambassador. Her experience at Riverside prepared Richardson for the role she now has full-time at LPC.

Her positions at LPC require Richardson to interact with students on a daily basis and make sure they are given the proper support they need.

The programs she is in charge of through her roles as the Black Cultural Resource Center and Umoja Coordinator focus on implementing a platform where students can be more engaged with one another to foster a stronger communal connection.

“Talking to the students and seeing exactly what it is that they want to do in their future to make them happy is very important,” Richardson said.

“I think that’s a crucial part of being in

this type of position.”

When Richardson was still a student at Las Positas, the BSU adviser was Celestine Wright, who is now the senior Counselor Assistant. Wright recalls how Richardson was highly engaged with the BSU and its events going on at the time on campus. Wright was one of a few people that Richardson mentions having a huge impact on her, in terms of staying in the right direction and making sure she was involved within the community.

“She’s very supportive,” Wright says about Richardson. “She’s very helpful and very inviting with a beautiful smile. Always.”

The Vice President of Student Services at LPC, Jeanne Wilson, also expressed excitement on learning of Richardson’s return to campus.

“What we’re so excited about is that it really is like she’s coming full circle because she used to be a student here at Las Positas,” Wilson said.

Richardson, in addition to her responsibilities at LPC, is the host of the “Blue, Gold, & BLACK Podcast,” which is a media program affiliated with UC Riverside and is

currently in its second season. Its initiative is to center conversations with Black voices at UC Riverside encompassing everyone from present students to alumni and professors. Their discussions focus mainly on the experiences they’ve had throughout their lives and how these experiences have had an influence in their personal and professional journeys. It’s a platform that is dedicated to amplifying the voices of Black students on its campus and exploring the intersection of being a UCR Highlander fostering a more inclusive campus environment for all. The podcast is available on the UCR website.

The Black Cultural Resource Center is located in building 1700 and is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Richardson invites all students to visit whenever they get a chance. She encourages them to see for themselves what community-centering events the BCRC has planned next.

“Stop by in the center and check out the events calendar,” Richardson said. “See what different programs we’re going to have coordinated in the fall because we hope to have it more bustling and livelier.”



JAKOB ARNARSSON/THE EXPRESS

Savannah Richardson posing outside the Black Cultural Resource center. The center is located in Building 1700, Room 1726.

Zach Zauhar-Kurr cements a winning legacy at LPC

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Zach Zauhar-Kurr made his final turn, digging his feet into the wall of the pool and launching into his last sprint. His legs kicked in rhythm, his arms swinging one after another, aggressively puncturing the water. Despite having a comfortable lead, Zauhar-Kurr pursued this last leg with a passion. A purpose. A hunger.

This time, Zauhar-Kurr wasn't going to be beat out.

A day after failing to win the state championship in the 200-yard individual medley (IM), Zauhar-Kurr was out for revenge. So when he looked up to see a number one next to his time of 3:56.31, Zauhar-Kurr let out all of his emotions, slamming his arm through the water and exclaiming in joy. He had earned his redemption. He was a state champion.

Zauhar-Kurr's time saw him finish an emphatic three seconds ahead of second place Greyson Davies from Grossmont College, earning him the state title in the 400-yard IM. The event was held on May 3, the second day of the 3C2A State Swimming and Diving Championships at the Orange Coast College Aquatics Pavilion. It was the first and only state title the Hawks earned in this year's competition.

But just 24 hours before this moment of

jubilant, Zauhar-Kurr faced disappointment.

Zauhar-Kurr came into day one of the finals with the top state time of 1:50.64 in the 200-yard IM. He then finished first in the preliminary round,

locking himself as the favorite for the state title. But the finals told a different story.

Despite setting a new school record time of 1:50.05, Zauhar-Kurr was bested by Davies and Cayden Pitzer of American River College, losing out on the state title by less than a second. The result left Zauhar-Kurr devastated. He had difficulties sleeping, managing only five and a half hours, plagued with the hunger for redemption.

It was a similar story for the 400 IM. Again Zauhar-Kurr came in with the top time from the season, and managed to win the preliminary rounds. But in Friday's final, Zauhar-Kurr refocused and steadied himself, leading to a dominant performance to complete his redemption. At the end of which, he failed to contain his emotions.

"It feels awesome," Zauhar-Kurr exclaimed. "Especially after yesterday, how I feel like I underperformed from what I should have done. I knew this was my opportunity, so I knew I had to just rip it."

Zauhar-Kurr, with the help of head coach Jason Craighead, had a more relaxed strategy for the 400 IM. The two agreed that he needed to focus on himself and his own race, while also getting back to doing what he had been the whole season – having fun.



JAKOB ARNARSSON/THE EXPRESS

(From left to right) Ethan Santiago, Zach Zauhar-Kurr, Logan Borrelli and Ryan Ridosko cheering on their teammate Jay Jani during the 800-yard freestyle relay. The group finished in sixth place, the highest relay finish for the Hawks at the state championship.



JAKOB ARNARSSON/THE EXPRESS

Zach Zauhar-Kurr celebrates after becoming the state champion in the 400-yard individual medley. The state championships were held in the Orange Coast College Aquatics Pavilion from May 2-4.

"I was a lot more focused, and I was more tense," Zauhar-Kurr said of his mindset in the 200 IM. "I was just way too tense. So I just told myself, 'Let's just have fun.'"

Despite making a larger effort to enjoy himself more, Zauhar-Kurr was still hungry to send a message.

"He just made a point," Craighead said. "I'm here, I'm fast. This is my race. No one's touching me, and whatever happened the day before is done. We talked about it last night, about our mentality coming in and taking it as motivation and he's like 'Yeah, I am winning this one, without question.'"

After earning his title and letting out all the pent up emotions in the pool, Zauhar-Kurr looked up to his right into the crowd and pumped out his fist. But he wasn't simply acknowledging the crowd. Rather he was celebrating with the two people who have been there from the very beginning – his parents. In particular, Zauhar-Kurr was celebrating with his dad, David, who has made it to every swimming event since he was nine years old. All while dealing with paralysis in his leg.

"It means a lot," Zauhar-Kurr said. "It's really hard for him to get around, but he just does it. I know him, he wouldn't miss it for the world. And so it was cool seeing his reaction to it as well."

Zauhar-Kurr showcased his ability to

deal with adversity, something he has seen his father do countless times. While his third place finish left him disappointed, he never let it waver his mindset. He instead employed a strategy he learned from one of his older coaches – give yourself 20 minutes to be upset, and then following those 20 minutes, refocus on how to perform better in the next event.

"His work ethic, his mentality is what got him where he is," Craighead said. "He's extremely coachable, he wants to learn and he's ready for feedback and information."

Zauhar-Kurr also helped the team finish 10th in the 200-yard medley relay and sixth in the 800-yard freestyle relay. His efforts led to the men's team finishing day two of the three day competition in eighth place, just five points behind Golden West.

Then, on Saturday, May 4, Zauhar-Kurr added another solid performance to complete his championship resume, finishing fourth in the 200-yard breastroke. The result officially brought Zauhar Kurr's impressive LPC swimming career to an end. He hopes he will leave a lasting impact.

"I just want to leave a positive impact on Las Positas Swimming and everyone that's with me," Zauhar-Kurr said.

One thing's for sure — Zauhar-Kurr will forever be etched into LPC swim and dive history as a state champion.

Fan turns love of baseball into a career

Justin Gomes

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A lifelong East Bay Area native has been turning his dream into reality. Armed with a Mass Communications degree from Las Positas College, Will MacNeil has converted his love for baseball and the Oakland A's into a paid gig.

Born in San Lorenzo, but calling Dublin home, MacNeil is a Bay Area sports fan through and through. He found his calling in radio broadcasting. Until the day he's able to answer that call, he has found work in the hotel industry. But his favorite Bay Area baseball team has given MacNeil the opportunity to combine his love for sports and dream of being on the radio.

In 1988, a 5-year-old MacNeil began his love for baseball and the Oakland A's. In those days the Bash Brothers ruled the MLB. Jose Canseco and Mark McGwire were smashing home runs like no one else in the league. The duo was often compared to Mickey Mantle/Roger Maris, Willie Mays/Willie McCovey and Hank Aaron/Eddie Mathews. It was an exciting time to be an A's fan.

Watching a game on TV with his uncle, MacNeil caught his first glimpse of the A's and his favorite player of the time, McGwire. But it was more than just a future baseball superstar that drew a young MacNeil to the team from Oakland. It was the flashy green and gold.

"I just loved their colors," MacNeil said.

MacNeil's love for the A's has sparked a friendly family rivalry with his uncle. As a lifelong Giants fan, he was upset MacNeil didn't follow the fandom, but MacNeil's love for the A's has led him to the career path he has always dreamed of.

A lifelong goal of MacNeil's was a career in radio. This is what led MacNeil to Las Positas College in 2004. The first years didn't go as planned with MacNeil struggling with homework. Coming from a high school that didn't assign homework, MacNeil had to adjust to college and relearn student skills. MacNeil spent nearly six years at Las Positas, studying a range of subjects, his favorite being classes involving radio. This fell in line with his dream of being a radio broadcaster.

"I loved every minute of it," MacNeil said.

With a Mass Communications degree earned, MacNeil went to work in the hotel industry, a far cry from where he wanted to be. Working with the hotel has afforded MacNeil many opportunities to attend sporting events throughout the Bay Area. He has often interacted with players and fans at baseball and hockey games. It also allowed him to hone his P.A. announcer skills with various organizations around the Bay Area. One of the first was with the Neptune Beach Pearl, a youth baseball organization in Alameda. Another was for the Women's Premier Basketball Association.

State Championships

Continued from page 1

"Always gives us something to look forward to next year," Craighead said. "They are both (Borrelli and Fehr) really good competitors and they're not content with where they are. They understand they swam well and they're really pleased with their performance but at the same time, they already have the mindset of 'ok, what can I do to be better?' And that's exciting for me as a coach."

The two weren't the only freshman Hawks to get experience. Makenzie Duffin finished 15th in the 500 yard freestyle and ninth in the 1650 yard freestyle. All five of the Hawks relay teams included at least one freshman in



JUSTIN GOMES/THE EXPRESS

Will MacNeil Filling in as P.A. Announcer for the Stockton Ports on April 16, 2024. MacNeil holds a Mass Communications degree from Las Positas College.

MacNeil's big break came in 2019 with a promotion for April Fool's Day by the Oakland A's. In the April No Fools promotion by the Oakland A's, fans were encouraged to reply to a social media post with their "wildest to tamest" dreams for the April 1, 2019 game versus the Boston Red Sox. Without hesitation, MacNeil contacted the A's about being a P.A. announcer for a game. To his surprise, he was chosen to fulfill his dream.

MacNeil was invited to the press box to announce a half inning with longtime A's announcer Dick Callahan, who served as Oakland's P.A. voice from 2005 to 2019 before retiring due to illness. Finally, all the hard work paid off. The first batter MacNeil announced was Ramon Laureano. Laureano hit a home run off David Price in the 7-0 victory over Boston.

"That was pretty awesome," MacNeil said.

The April No Fools promotional night was just the start. MacNeil's P.A. performance was heard by the management of the Stockton Ports. The Ports are the Low-A minor league affiliate of the Oakland A's. MacNeil was invited to join the press box team as a P.A. announcer on a fill-in basis when longtime voice of Ports baseball Mike Conway had the night off. MacNeil jumped at the opportunity to follow the dream of being a broadcaster.

"It's an adrenaline rush. It's cool to be able to say I'm one of the few people in the country that get to say I do this professionally," MacNeil said.

Even with just a few games a month MacNeil serves as P.A. announcer, he never takes this opportunity for granted. In his downtime, he spends time learning the

proper pronunciation of player names. After five years MacNeil, who still loves his role with the Ports, remarked how amazing it is to come to the ballpark watch a game with a bird's eye view and get paid for it.

"There's nothing better than that. If I only stay at this level, so be it. I'm happy as heck doing it, I'll do it as long as they want me," MacNeil said.

When not in the pressbox, MacNeil can be found in the stands interacting with players and fans. Clad in a different jersey every game and showing his support for the team, MacNeil has become a staple in Bay Area sports; he can often be found at the glass near the players' tunnel at Barracuda and Sharks hockey games. As a season ticket holder, MacNeil attends nearly every Oakland A's home game. That time will soon be coming to an end with the A's planned relocation to Las Vegas, a controversial move that has nearly every fan up in arms.

The projected move sparked the #Sell protests around the Bay Area and Major League Baseball, citing bad ownership like many fans have since the announcement. MacNeil still plans to support the team he has loved for the past 35 years, but is adamant that he will never step foot in the Vegas ballpark to see the A's.

"It would just be ripping out my soul. My heart," MacNeil said.

MacNeil still remains uncertain about attending games next year in Sacramento, but it isn't out of the question yet. For now, he is content to be a fan in Oakland and continue to do what he loves, attending Bay Area sports supporting his teams and being a part-time P.A. Announcer.

Ethan Santiago, Jay Jani or Lawrence Tolentino. Diver Sara Dorn also made a big splash for the Hawks, placing second in the 1 meter and fifth on the 3 meter. Her teammate, Annie Holm, added a seventh place in the 1 meter, but an incorrect dive held her to 14th in the 3. Men's sophomore Ilya Krasnyy added a 14th place in the 1 meter.

But the young Hawks roles will need to shift. The leadership roles need to be filled. A responsibility that falls on their shoulders. In a team dinner held before the final day of the meet, Craighead and the team discussed the inevitable transition.

"That is the expectation," Craighead said. "Maybe it's Sam, maybe it's Logan, maybe it's Makenzie. My hope is that they are able to provide the same leadership, whether

that's verbal leadership or leading by example, and kind of keeping the momentum going."

It's a role that Borrelli and Fehr are not only aware of, but ready to take on with the same confident mentality they have had the entire season.

"As a sophomore," Borrelli said, "I know I gotta step up and help guys who maybe have not been to state champs, who maybe have the first day that I did. These guys (Zauhar Kurr and Ridosko) had experience from last year, passed it down to me so I gotta do the same."

Fehr said, "I definitely think I'll have to step up to take their spot and set an example. Because a lot of them set great examples of how to lead and swim, and I think I'll have to step up and take over that role."

The third annual LasPO Film Festival returns to campus

Justin Gomes

@JLGPOTOG

Las Positas College is host to many events throughout the school year. There is one the film students look forward to the most. The Las Po Film Festival has returned to Las Positas.

For the third consecutive year Las Positas College held the LAS PO Film Festival on April 20 2024. An annual film festival showcasing student films by Las Positas College Film Studies program and local filmmakers. A student run production supported by the Film Studies and Photography programs looks to continue its run for years to come. Each year it has grown. This year it was held in the Mertes Center for the Arts main stage. Now attracting over 150 attendees, room 2420 could no longer support the size of the festival.

This year's festival featured 26 student films drawing from over 40 submissions from across the East Bay and Central Valley. Student submissions were open to Las Positas students and Alumni as well as Chabot, Delta, DVC, Laney colleges and local highschools.

The films were sorted into four categories; experimental, documentary, narrative feature and music video. A panel of five judges with various backgrounds in the film industry select winners in various categories with awards in 19 categories including the Audience Choice Award for the favorite film of the show.

The aim of the festival is to recognize the hard work of local filmmakers and to promote the Film Studies program at Las Positas. Another goal is to bring together the community on and around campus. It is for this reason that the festival is free. Entry and snacks included. Students bring their friends and family to show their hard work.

"The Film Festival was very thrilling, there were so many people who showed up to support their families and friends which created an environment that's going to keep me supporting the festival for years," Archer Pann said

Pann is in his last year at Las Positas and a film major and also participated in the festival winning two awards, the award for Best Music Video and I runner up for the Creativity and Innovation in a Film without Dialogue Award.

Pann dressed in a fancy suit and attended the festival with fellow filmmakers and friends. Continuing the sense of community, Pann plans to attend and support the festival after his time at Las Positas is over.

"Parents come with their kids, family members and friends. I have had many parents say to me with tears in their eyes, you don't know how much this means to my kid," Elizabeth Wing Brooks said.

Wing Brooks is not alone in the planning and running of the film festival. Tony Alfaro and Deanna Horvath of the Photography department are co-organizers of the event.

The film department hopes to continue the festival for years to come but funding is needed. Currently some of the costs of the festival are paid for through submission fees and donations from event t-shirts. In order to grow the festival and keep the event free, sponsors are needed to help with expenses.

Since joining Las Positas in 2016 Wing Brooks has worked with other departments to create a collection of classes involving a variety of disciplines to offer an Associate of Arts and a Certificate of Achievement in Film Studies program which began in 2020.

Just like any major film festival, the LasPo Film Festival was not without its awards. Winners and runners up were judged in 19 categories including People's Choice. An award voted onsite by attendees of the festival. In those 19 categories 36 awards were given out with "Leviathan" by Jose Luis Peralta being the big winner of the night. The list of winners is as follows:

Cinematography:

Runner up: "She Knows," Haley Luz Lucero

Runner up: "Misplaced Notes," Elijah Avila

First place: "Leviathan," Jose Luis Peralta

Sound Design:

Runner up: "...Is Worth a Thousand Words," Zac Furber-Dobson

First place: "Hide," Alexis Garcia

Original Score / Music:

Runner up: "Leviathan," Charlie Heimsoth

First place: "Bathrobe Man Goes on a Date," Ryan Calhoon

Editing:

Runner up: "Bathrobe Man Goes on a Date,"

Alexander Calhoon

First place: "...Is Worth a Thousand Words," Zac Furber-Dobson

Production Design:

Runner up: "Leviathan," Blake Killion

First place: "The Quiet Banshee," Patricio Gabriel Salgado

Story / Screenplay:

Runner up: "Misplaced Notes," Elijah Avila

Runner up: "No, You Can't Come to the Benefit," Susan Bradley

First place: "Face Box," Austin Slayton, Madison Goard, Drew Howard

Dramatic Performance:

Runner up: "...Is Worth a Thousand Words," Zac Furber-Dobson and Hazel

Furber-Dobson

First place: "She Knows," Haley Luz Lucero

Comedic Performance:

Runner up: "Bathrobe Man Goes on a Date," Ryan Calhoon

Runner up: "Three Wishes," Eric Jefferson

First place: "Face Box," Madison Goard

Movie Poster:

Runner up: "Bathroom Man Goes on a Date," Alex Calhoon and Ryan Calhoon

First place: "Scorn," Sammy Jimenez

Documentary:

First place: "Central Coffee," Jose Luis Chavez

Music Video:

Runner up: "Staring at the Stars," Mason Smith

First place: "Acid Rain," Archer Pann, Dom Weathers, Jasen Soares, Linder Aponte

Experimental Film:

First place: "Nausea," David Reed Cease

Local High School Narrative Film:

First place: "My Emily," Jasmine Esquivel and Sofia Lembo

Local Middle or High School Documentary Film:

First place: "Guiding Light," India Anne Mitchell Creativity and Innovation: Best Film Without Dialogue

Runner up: "The Hedge," Archer Pann

First place: "Goodbye," Caydence Johnson

Special Filmmaker Award:

Blake Killion

Director:

Runner up: Haley Luz Lucero for "She Knows"

First place: Jose Luis Peralta for "Leviathan"

Best in Festival: Jose Luis Peralta for "Leviathan"

Audience Choice:

Runner up: "My Emily"

Runner up: "Pizza Mania"

First place: "Leviathan"



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELIZABETH WING BROOKS

Award winners line the stage at Las Po Film Festival, April 20, 2024. Held in the Mertes Center for the Arts, main stage.

WHAT'S YOUR PASSION?

WRITING PHOTOGRAPHY EDITING
ART & DESIGN VIDEOGRAPHY
STORY TELLING
PODCASTING SOCIAL MEDIA



YOU CAN MAKE IT YOUR LIFE





The Tortured Fans Department

Paul George

@PAUL.GEORGEPIO

It's been about a fortnight since Taylor Swift released her latest album, "The Tortured Poets Department." It's been almost three months since the album was announced, and I began to call it her "Dead Poets Society." I did this as it felt both more natural to say and, being brutally honest, it annoyed Teen Girl just a teeny bit.

Just as Cinderella's coach again became a pumpkin, Swift graced her fans' evenings with the release of "TTPD" on April 19. With barely enough time to consume the 16 songs on the initial release, a 2 a.m. surprise: It's a double album, and 15 more songs dropped.

All of this happened outside of my awareness. My backpack patch reads, "I'm Ride or Die — Until about 9 p.m." The album drop was past my bedtime, er, the album drop(s).

Instead, I awoke to the living corpse of Teen Girl, whom I later learned went to bed after 4 a.m. because she simply

HAD to listen to the additional album. (Her resurrection was before 12 noon and just in time for lunch, no alchemy required.)

Beyond the magic of teenage sleep patterns, what struck me more is just how uniting music can be generally, and with Swift's music in particular. We were miles from home, yet Teen Girl managed to find a random Chloe or Sam or Sophia or Marcus with whom to discuss the new album. Izzy's from England, Sarah from France and non-nametag (Peter? Cassandra? Robin?), all became complicit in these impromptu interpretative conversations. None were casual small talk but instead went all-in from the get-go.

"Florida!!!" seemed to be a popular tune, either for the catchy beats or subtle message that Teen Girl assured me made zero sense to her. (Specifically, the line of all her friends smelling of weed or little babies won't likely resonate until at least she's in her late 20s and is living this truth.)

It was odd, seeing these near-strang-

ers talk at 100 miles an hour speed as though they were fresh out of the slammer and hadn't spoken to another person in years.

"What's your favorite song? Why? What about the 2 a.m. bonus drop? How does this compare to 'Red' or 'Fortnight' or the other albums? Do you think ___ was the prophecy easter egg from her Instagram post? Did you even sleep last night?"

I've long since given up trying to fight the Swiftie tides. Rather, I've even picked up enough of the lore to blend in with all but the most devoted. (Perhaps that's more a testament to Teen Girl's pledge of "I can fix him (no really, I can)" as though my not knowing the nuance of Taylor tunes was a fundamental defect.)

So yes, when told, I'll wear the friendship bracelets like the albatross that they are, don my cozy "Folklore" sweatshirt and TS dad hat and face the world. There's far worse ad-hoc communities of fans out there, and at least in this one I can usually hold my own — and wearing the Swiftie uniform, rarely do I fret about who's afraid of little old me.

In another era, I may have dubbed the album The Tortured Parents Department. If not for all the crack-of-dawn chatter, then for the continued discourse on the vinyl varieties and nuances of the album. I also remain aware that the days are numbered before Teen Girl moves out with a "so long, London," and it's just me and my bride discussing how it did end, and (hopefully) well before the first "But Daddy I love him."

And when asked, I've now learned that "Florida!!!" is the right answer for my favorite song ... unless we're being honest, then I'll admit that "Fortnight" was rightly placed as the first track.

EXPRESS YOURSELF

What are your thoughts on the pro-Palestinian, student-led protests taking place across the U.S.?



“I feel like the police response isn't great. The students are protesting something that is really, really sad. From what I've seen, I find the police response (just as) sad.”

– Sofia Pena-Olea, Business Economics Major



“It's hard to generalize all of (the protests), but I think they're a little over the top. I'm not sure the divestment calls in the pro-Palestinian protests would really amount to much. It's pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel, which can be interpreted as antisemitism.”

– Robert Pino, High School Teacher



“I feel like as long as it's safe and in a controlled environment, I see no problem with it. It is a great way for people to express themselves and their opinions to get their point across.”

– Nayveon Reed, Journalism and Communications Major

what it means to hold each other

