

TALON MARKS

CERRITOS COLLEGE

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3 Deaths in 3 Weeks

Campus community mourns former coach, police chief and star athlete.

DENNY CRISTALES
Editor-in-Chief
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“Death come in threes.” Trustee John Paul Drayer recited that to me.

It is a phrase I had never heard before. Essentially, it means when death comes, it comes in bursts.

The whole topic came up during casual conversation when we were discussing the recent turn of events on campus; the deaths of the three individuals you see on this page.

These three individuals were a prominent part of the Cerritos College family. A staple of our community. So, it's only natural that when three individuals lose their lives in a matter of three weeks, it creates a mystical, eerie tension in the air. It is far too sudden; appropriate, even.

You have Jasmine Cornejo, a back-to-back soccer champion; Nancy Kelly, a legendary hall of fame coach; Richard Bukowiecki, the police chief who kept the campus secure.

The grim and blunt truth of it all is that these three are dead. But, to have died at all is to have lived in the first place.

And that's what it's about - Life.

There is news left and right; 24/7. This issue, it is not about that. Turn the page, and read about the individuals who impacted so many, in both life and death.

See page 5
Coach Kelly's
hall of fame life.

See page 6

Cornejo:
Champion in life
and death.

See page 2

Chief
Bukowiecki's
career.



Police Chief



mourned

Cerritos staff remember Chief Bukowiecki and his career

GUSTAVO LOPEZ
News Editor
@Gus_Lopez07

"In January there was a fire in the city of Glendora and the air quality was at its worst. I was running a 10k that weekend and Chief Bukowiecki pulled me aside and said, 'The air quality is not good. You're asthmatic, it's not going to be good, don't do it.'"

"He checked with me the following weekend and he was very disappointed because I did run the 10k. It just really stood out to me that the way he talked to me because he was so caring." That is how Student Activities Coordinator Amna Jara remembers Chief of Police Richard 'Buk' Bukowiecki.

Bukowiecki was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound at a Super 8 Motel by Westminster police on Sunday, Aug. 18 at 3 a.m., according to the Orange County Sheriffs Coroner's report.

"It was difficult, the officers and the staff here are a very small department and they've worked together for some as long as 25 years," said Campus Police Captain Thomas Gallivan.

Chief Bukowiecki's Career



PICTURE FROM CERRITOS COLLEGE WEBSITE
Lucinda Aborn, Marilyn Brock, and Rachel Mason presenting Police Chief Bukowiecki the award for Outstanding Classified Manager of the Year in 2012.

Bukowiecki joined the Cerritos family in 1988 when he was hired as a dispatcher. A year later, he would become a full-time officer, in which he served as lieutenant for 11 years.

Since 2006, he served as Interim Chief of Police until Aug. 15 2007 when he was hired as permanent Chief of Police here at Cerritos College. In 2012, he was named Outstanding Classified Manager.

"(Bukowiecki) spent 26 years here so he understood the dynamics of the college and understood that his first priority, which he always stressed to me and the officers, is (the) public

"*He always talked about his family with pride. The officers and the staff here were his family as well. That's the biggest thing I remember the most about him is the way he cared about his family and his staff.*"

— THOMAS GALLIVAN
Campus Police Captain

safety of the students and faculty and the protection of policy.

"(He) always had an answer and (was) just a very, very good man to work for," said Captain Gallivan.

He added, "Day to day, very reliable, hard working, very solid as far being able to handle it. You couldn't tell if there was a fire, an earthquake or if it was just a quiet day. He was very stoic and was able to, as a professional, maintain his composure. As a police officer and police manager, just an outstanding man to work for."

Besides handling campus safety, during his career Bukowiecki helped create the Community Service Officers program, which helps administration of justice majors gain hands on experience before entering the real world.

"That's a great program for students that are (administration of justice) majors, but, also, you see the cadets walking around with their uniforms, very professional," said President Linda Lacy.

Chief Bukowiecki was very passionate about the safety and well being of students and faculty, alike, according to Jara.

"I know he was a big part of the lighting of the parking lot, the new parking machines.

"He would always make sure that the students were reminded that they could call 911 from any phone on the campus or pick up those red phones we have in certain areas and let dispatch know that this individual was going to be walking by themselves and they would send an escort to walk them safely to their car," she said. "Honestly you could see that he truly cared. It all came from the heart rather than 'Oh, this is my job,'" Jara added.

The Man Behind the Badge

Bukowiecki is remembered as being well respected by students and faculty, alike, as well as being a calm individual who could defuse almost any situation.

Jara remembers one particular board meeting in which a student with visual impairment spoke to the senators about the carts the staff drove around campus.

"(The senator) said that they were parked where ever on the campus and the students with visual impairment didn't know they were there and they would run into them.

"I didn't look at Chief (Bukowiecki), I didn't talk about it, but the next day we got an email from him to the entire campus, explaining what the procedure was from then on to park those cars.

"The way he handled it; like he jumped on it so quickly, and it show he truly cared about the students," she said.

Remembering Chief Bukowiecki

President Lacy remembers his quirky smile and that he was a critical thinker, very intelligent.

"I think, also, he was very respectful in the way he dealt with people, he was not strong handed, he had a really calming demeanor and could defuse situations rather quickly.

He had a good relationship with students, he spoke with the student body and the faculty senate if he needed to explain certain things to faculty even address the Board of Trustees on certain things.

Lacy said, "The reason he's going to be missed is because he was a great professional."

She added, "(I feel) absolutely devastated, that's how I still feel. Shocked, sad, feeling of loss, all those things are coming into mind right now."

Lacy attributed the safety of the 25,000 student and faculty campus to Chief Bukowiecki.

Jara said, "Buk had a very big presence and he was very well respected. There were many times he would come to our meetings and speak on behalf of campus police and let us know what they were doing and the changes they were making."

She added, "When I found out about the news on Monday, I was very distraught and I still am. I think we need to take this opportunity and make sure the well being of our students, being OK mentally and emotionally."

Bukowiecki was always approachable, the students on campus had no problem going to him and telling him about their concerns.

"He always followed through," Jara said.

Captain Gallivan will remember Bukowiecki being a family man, a grandfather, a father, husband and a brother.

According to Captain Gallivan, Chief Bukowiecki's family are still working on memorial and funeral services.

Active Minds seeks suicide awareness

MARIA LOPEZ
Online Editor
m_lopeztweets

"We are people, we are forever evolving and if you don't allow yourself to evolve then you're going to be stuck in that rut. There's no other way to feel alive than to put yourself out there," President of Active Minds, Adrian Gomez said.

Active Minds is a club on campus that aims to raise awareness on mental health issues and change the way students perceive mental health and illness with National Suicide Prevention month coming in September.

"We're trying to basically break down the negative stigma behind (mental health issues) and we're trying to make it more known (and) more open. It's basically a taboo subject ... the less people speak about it the more people don't want to talk about it and the more foreign it is," Gomez said.

He says that for the first day of suicide prevention month, Active Minds is planning to have a booth on campus that will provide information and spread awareness.

"We're just going to cover a lot of the issues that we have that people actually don't know about or not even know that they can come to us," Tifarra Williams, Active Mind's publicity representative said.

"Sometimes (students) don't want to go to the health office or they don't even want their own friends to know so that's why Active Minds is student led, student run, you can actually just go to another student and it can just be a quick conversation. We're there, we're very much out there," Williams said.

Active Minds also hopes on continuing its PostSecretU campaign, which is an anonymous mental health exercise where students are asked to vent their frustrations on postcards that are displayed in the club's display case by the campus library. It also plans on going on its own time to the National Alliance on Mental Illness Walk, a walk that promotes awareness on mental illness.

Williams says that Active Minds has helped her through extremely tough times and hopes that students will be willing to attend the meetings.

She said that in the past she has attempted suicide several times. Getting support from the people around her, along with medication, has helped her get through that tough time. "Last semester I was homeless for the second half of the year, for the spring I was homeless I got kicked out of my house," she

said.

Depression is, according to Williams, a disabler. "Once you get stuck on it, you don't keep on moving and keep doing things you'll get stuck on; then self pity comes and when self pity comes not a lot of people are strong enough to actually fight it off."

Despite having lived through homelessness, Williams remains optimistic and hopes that others will look forward to tomorrow. "Just take it one day at a time and if it's overwhelming, call someone, make that call, don't keep it to yourself," she said.

Through her own experiences, Williams says that both interacting with people and having strong friendships with others are capable of helping those who are having a tough time.

Gomez stressed that mental illness can affect students indirectly, no matter if they have had a mental health issue in the past or not. He says sometimes family members or friends who are struggling with their mental health can affect the people around them.

Gomez added that students who are feeling stressed or depressed should try to be open to various activities that can help to take their mind off those feelings.

"Just being active is a way to forget about what weighs you down. It just keeps you moving and keeps your mind off of it and it's a way to ventilate the stress," he said.

Gomez talks to strangers to create a connection to help de-stress. "It's not a deep connection but it's a quick connection to talk to somebody to say what you feel like you need to say and they hear it and they acknowledge it.

"Active Minds is set in a lot of tradition, but we also like to bring new things. We love being open to new ideas and new activities."

According to Gomez, mental health is something everyone should maintain because if they don't, it can deteriorate and become a mental health issue.

Active Minds has not had its first meeting of the semester, but Williams encourages all students no matter what major, to attend the meetings. Their meeting will be every first and third Tuesday of the month in room SS-212.

Resources for help:

- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- Phone number for those in crisis: 1-800-273-8255
- Active Minds organization: <http://activeminds.org/>

"I need my space."



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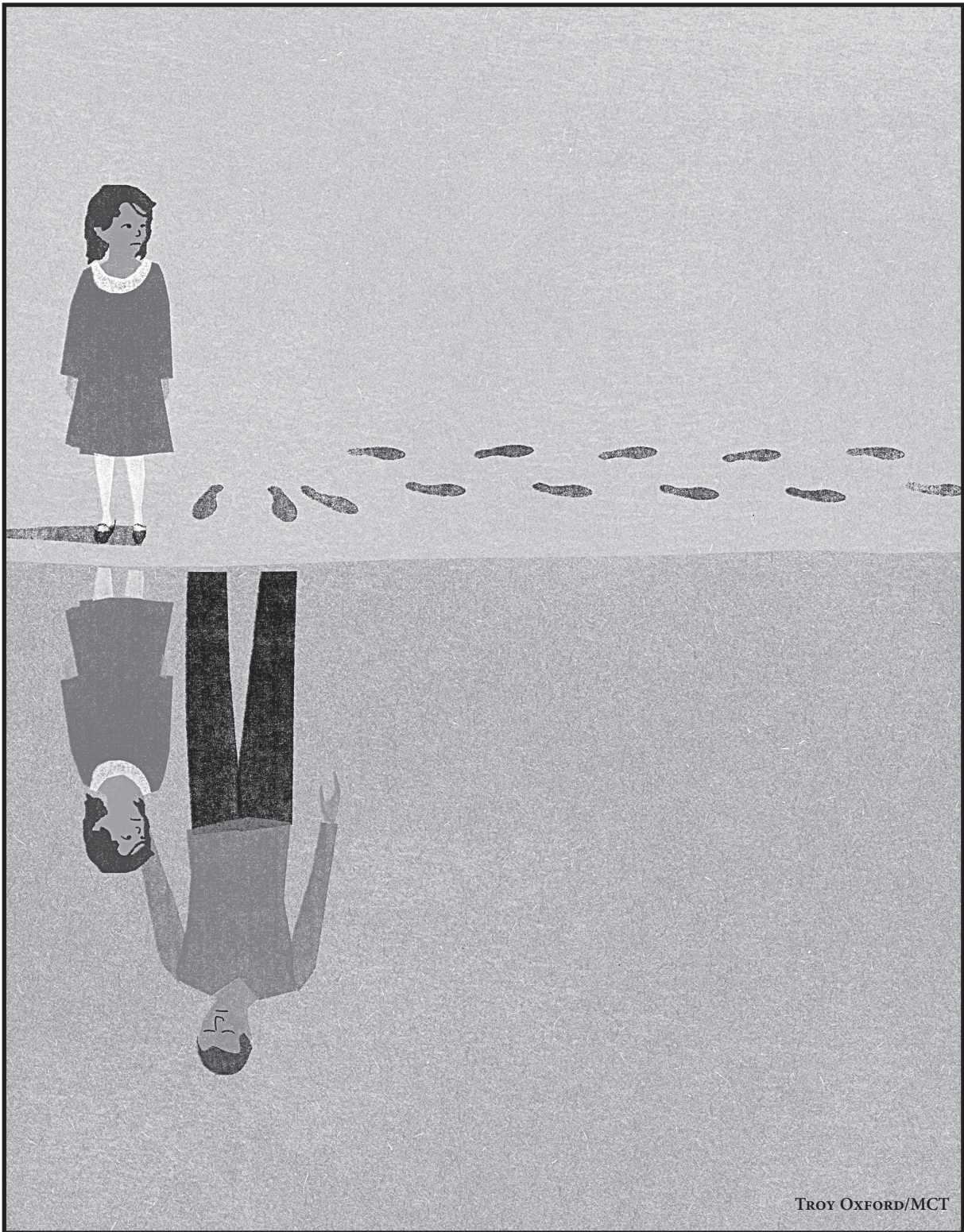
EDITORIAL

Death's fickle cycle, an insight on life

Death's a fickle thing. Certainly, it's always common knowledge that we're all going to die at some point. But, I mean, it's not always there - it's always in the back of your mind. It's almost cyclical. You forget about the inevitable fate that binds us all as mortals - we can die. There always seems to be something that sucks you back in. Something that makes it too close to home. The media is a prime example. You see the death of Robin Williams, widely regarded as "the funniest man alive," or, perhaps, you see the death of that journalist who was executed, beheaded by ISIS extremists. Death is always there. But when it gets to you personally; getting it too close to home really makes one start to reflect. Start to ponder.

You look at a young 20-year-old woman, Jasmine Cornejo. You can go on and on and on about "back-to-back soccer champion" or this and that and the other thing. But what truly matters is that in death, you have individuals talking about her bubbly ways; her "smiley" attitude. That's what matters, the person, the heart that beats inside. When it's all said and done, you simply have a good person who died an early death at 20. Why? You have Police Chief Richard Bukowiecki commit suicide. Why? A man who kept this campus secure, safe for all of us as students; yet, it seems like he couldn't even save himself. Nancy Kelly, a legendary coach, who has this softball field here on campus named after her. Even the Los Angeles Sparks - yes, the WNBA team - has the court honored in

her memory. A woman who has her own scholarship for students; taken by illness. Just like that, you have three people, three lives and three deaths. And you ask that inevitable question to yourself - why? Why do these things happen all around one another. Who's responsibility is it? Who's given the right to be judge, jury and executioner in this little game of life. Why does one die, and another live? The theories pile - the idea of purpose; perhaps the idea that this truly is all for naught and we are just mere organisms inhabiting an existence that simply serves a simple function - which is to live. In either case, there are more questions raised than answers. Think about Cornejo - 20-years-old - how many of you are that age, right now? Imagine dying in an instant. How many of you think the end of the line for you is 47 - that's what it was for Bukowiecki. Not to be dark, but it's times like these with almost a literal death in the air; that one can't help, but think about one's mortality. As a Cerritos College community, it's important that we all understand that. It's important that we all recognize that at any moment, we can be gone. And, certainly, you hear that all the time, but there's a reason you do. That's because death's a fickle thing. It will always come in cycles to remind you of your mortality. And, one day, that cycle will reach your heart, and serve you as an example for someone else. Not to sound precious or sappy, but, damn, just be you, and appreciate and recognize the person, the life and the accomplishments you have in your life. Pay it forward and love one another. Live.



TROY OXFORD/MCT



"How have you coped with death?"

COMPILED BY:
ARMANDO JACOBO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY:
KRISTOPHER CARRASCO



EVELYN VERDUN
Undecided major

"Well, it was a death to an old member of my family, so I just got closer to my family. I cried a lot. I didn't hold back."



JUDY VELASQUEZ
Nursing major

"When it comes to death, I kind of shut down. I cry, but at the same time, it's not always negative. (I) kind of have to think they're in a better place and they're not suffering anymore."



JENNETTE ROBLES
Dentistry major

"I just need some time alone when you know someone passes away. I need some time for myself and get away from everyone."



JOSH LOPEZ
Engineering major

"Friends and family being together, you know; having each other's back(s). A lot of family reunions, we actually went to a couple bars, had a couple beers for him (and) pour one out for a fallen friend."

Therapy should be important for everyone



Maria Lopez

Online Editor

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It's easy to say that some people will never need to see a therapist. In the past, I, myself, felt that way, until I realized that what I was feeling my whole life was not what I should be feeling - unhealthy thoughts. To clarify, having depression and anxiety to the point of having panic attacks and thoughts of suicide was enough for me to seek help. Taking into account that the National Institute of Mental Health reported that in 2012 about 18 percent of the adult population of the United States had a mental illness, the chances are high that you currently have or will have a mental illness in your lifetime. Students should take into account that some people suffer in silence and appear to be happy on the outside while they are feeling unbearable pain on the inside. This silence doesn't have to be the case, making therapy and mental health a taboo should stop, period. Seeking help is not

something to be embarrassed about, it should be something that helps through the tough times you are going through. With the recent death of Chief of Police Richard Bukowiecki due to suicide, everyone should acknowledge that in tough times when death impacts you, it's important to seek grief counseling. And that's precisely what's happening. You look at the situation present - people like Bukowiecki, or coach Nancy Kelly - the people who have been impacted by the deaths of these individuals are undergoing grief counseling, per messages from president Linda Lacy when she sent out news of their deaths. Even if it may seem different, uncomfortable or strange to an individual, it's obviously necessary in situations like these to get these grief counseling sessions from counselors, because that's their job - they're grief counselors; who counsel your grief. It's obvious. It's straightforward. But, it's therapy. And that's precisely the thing that's been available for many in times like this, but the stigma associated for undergoing therapy is still very much attached with "crazy," that it gets antagonized. Being unsure of therapy's credibility is unfounded when considering how therapy works. It's not only going to see a therapist to talk about your life and how you feel, it also involves being proactive in doing some of the steps therapists encourage you to make that can help improve your emotional and mental health.

The good thing about therapists and therapy itself is the numerous choices given. Just looking up therapists on the internet gives thousands of options and the types of therapies available vary from feminist therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, family oriented therapy, psychotherapy and even grief counseling. Therapy is flexible in that if it doesn't feel right for you, you can talk to your therapist to look for better options and can give you the chance to change it. This is why it works, its options allow someone who is seeking help different opportunities to seek help. Nothing is worse than feeling helpless and having no one to speak to. Therapists are strangers that listen and help with objective reflection of one's personal ways of thinking and acting. Speaking about one's problems may seem counterintuitive to some, but when considering that it's good to let out personal frustrations in a healthy way (especially through therapy) the benefits of talking to that stranger far outweigh the embarrassment one might feel when talking. Trained therapists are professionals that are there to help their patients and there is no shame in seeing a therapist. Therapy is only one stepping stone in being mentally healthy. Going to a therapist and making an appointment takes a lot of courage, but keep in mind that taking that first step might be enough to save your life or make life feel like it is worth living again.



PHOTO COURTESY OF REED BROWN

New Acting Professor: Reed Brown during a photoshoot at his former theatre group, the Freed-Yorick Theatre Ensemble in the University of Missouri-Rolla.

A new face joins the theatre

KATHERINE GRIJALVA
Arts Editor
@KatG_arts

The Cerritos College Theatre Department has selected Professor Reed Brown as the latest addition to the acting and directing disciplines of the arts program.

Aside from being an acting professor, he is also an actor, director, choreographer and artistic director.

Destined for Acting

Born in Tampa, Florida, Brown never imagined a future in Theatre. As a former lacrosse player in college, he had to make a decision whether he would continue playing for the team or take the opportunity to take the casting for the play “Rhymers of Elridch” by Lanford Wilson, one of his favorite playwrights.

Acting had become his passion, he chose theatre as a major and never looked back; he decided he was destined to be an actor.

Reed refers to himself as being a “nontraditional student” for his spontaneity and liking of new things.

Traveling was one of the great perks of being an actor. He started to network with people in New York City for over nine years and began the start of his promising future.

Born to Teach

Teaching was not out of the ordinary for Brown. He was always getting hired as a guest director or adjunct professor, and realized he

had a lot to teach. This decision sparked desire and ambition for Brown to receive his Master of Fine Arts in directing from Illinois State University at such a late point in his acting career.

Brown felt he had to work many years in Theatre in order for him to be able to teach to students. He had to learn and be involved to pass his knowledge on to his scholars.

Coming to Cerritos College

As an applicant for the position, Brown went through the interview process while being on a family trip in Kentucky. He received a phone call from the Department Chair of Theatre, Susan Watanabe, to receive the news of his position.

“He’s very nice and he really wants the department to thrive. He’s been great so far, the students like his class and are excited to have him,” Watanabe said.

Watanabe acknowledged that Reed Brown is the first full-time professor in over a year in their department.

Growing up, Brown traveled from place to place. Although he was born in Florida, he was raised in New Jersey, so the change from the east coast to the west coast is not a surprise.

Before taking the position, Brown was involved in various theatre groups such as the Freed-Yorick Theatre Ensemble, and he also co-founded the Ozark Actors Theatre in Missouri 14 years ago.

Brown is credited with having over 80 productions in his career as an artistic director and actor.

A Crave for Diversity

He revealed one of the main reasons he found theatre exciting was the opportunity to be versatile in his characters.

Living in the east coast deprived Brown from meeting all kinds of people from every nationality. It also did not allow him to try out for roles of Latino, African-American, or any ethnicity besides Caucasian.

When he heard of Cerritos College, where the majority of the population is almost equally divided from every ethnic group, Brown believed he would enjoy working in this culturally diverse area. “I am very impressed with the talent of the professors, they’re very knowledgeable and amazing in theatre and film,” he said.

Movement and Combat

This semester, Brown will be teaching two courses in his department. The courses are Intermediate Acting and Stage Movement and Combat. Intermediate Acting teaches students to build realistic characters and learn to perform good storytelling on stage.

Movement and combat on the other hand, is an art form that teaches safe violence on stage; this make the audience believe something on stage is violent but in reality it is quite safe.

He is certified by the Society of American Fight Directors, which is a great asset and useful for his movement and combat course.

Reed is thrilled about his new position, and open to new projects to see where his career might go outside of academics in Los Angeles.

‘Lefty’ play auditions bring a variety of actors

SAMANTHA VASQUEZ
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Auditions

The Cerritos College Theatre Department held auditions for its upcoming show “Waiting for Lefty” last Wednesday at 6 p.m. inside the Studio Theater (BC 31).

The show, which is directed by Kevin Slay, is about six people who each have different backgrounds but have one thing in common – they’re each a cab driver and experiencing economic indigence. The play is split up into six vignettes that explains how each character has the choice to determine their destinies to a certain extent.

Students were able to rehearse their lines outside of the theatre before auditioning.

Business major, Andrew M. Rogers, who auditioned for the role of Miller (lab assistant) said, “My audition was amazing. I knocked it out of the park with a really good monologue from the play “Dust.”

Auditioning for the role of Joe, theatre major Mark Martinez explained why he chose that role, “He’s my age, and in the character description it said he’s a union leader. I’m not a union leader but I’m a minority.”

Main character, Joe, is a working-class taxi driver who eventually becomes one of the union strike leaders.

If Martinez gets chosen to play Joe, it will be his first lead out of the four shows he has been in.

The show is set to open Oct. 10 at 8 p.m., along with additional show dates on Oct. 11, 16, 17 and 18. The final show is set for Oct. 19 at 2 p.m.

Callbacks

CARLOS HOLGUIN
Staff Writer
@ch_woodstock

The second round of auditions concluded around 9 p.m. last Thursday, as Slay thanked those that auditioned. Callbacks regarding the first auditions happened, as well.

Actors sat and read over newly printed lines in the Studio Theater,

as Director Kevin Slay informed them of the atmosphere he wished to create in the scene that was handed out. The scene and characters involved were from the upcoming fall play “Waiting For Lefty” by Clifford Odets.

“Times are tough, there isn’t a penny in the bank or a cookie in the cookie jar,” Slay explained to the actors. “These characters have a reason to be nervous.”

That nervousness spread outside the audition room, as those called back grouped together to practice scenes before being called in.

“This was my first time auditioning for a play,” explained Christopher Webb, an undecided major. “I had taken theater classes before, but never auditioned for anything. It put a lot on my mind.”

Webb was among the students who auditioned not with a particular character in mind, but rather a goal to make the cast.

“I just wanted to audition for experience,” stated theater major Jose Erickson. “It never hurts to have some experience. I auditioned for the musical last semester and had a great time, so I thought ‘Why not do it again?’”

Those that auditioned received additional copies of the lines and had questions answered by stage manager Hilary Baca.

“I’m kind (of) like the glue between the crew and the actors. I answer question(s) for them and help the director, Baca said. “Once they’re cast, I make sure they’re on time to rehearsal and set up appointments to get costume fittings.”

Among those looking answers was history major Samuel Green, who had just started his first semester.

“I’ve been acting for years, and loved acting since elementary school. I wanted to try it out on a college level,” Green said.

“I thought it’d be great chance to make friends,” Green continued. “We work on this together, and that creates a bond you can’t really break.”

The cast list was posted Friday, both online (cms.cerritos.edu/theater) and on the theater door.

“Waiting for Lefty” opens Oct. 10, with tickets starting at \$17 for general admission.



JENNIFER MEDINA/TM

Ready. Set. Audition! Students anxiously wait for their turn to impress the judges during the Fall Dance concert auditions that were held this past weekend.

80 dancers show off talent for dance concert auditions

JENNIFER MEDINA
Staff Writer
@TalonMarks

“Every single one of the staff has been getting ready for the auditions. The choreographers and faculty members are participating to bring their own style of dance as choreographies for all of the returning and new students auditioning,” said Janet Sanderson, the chair of dance department.

Last Saturday, the Fall 2014 Dance Concert auditions took place in the morning, with more than 80 new and returning students showed

up to make the best out of every move.

The atmosphere was like no other, every one of the students auditioning was thrilled to go on the dance floor to show off their natural-born dance skills.

Anisa Diaz, a dance major and returning student who has auditioned for four semesters, describes what dance means to her with such a passion.

“Dance, for me, is more than just a word. To me, dancing is an outlet of freedom. It is where I can express everything I have and everything I want to be.”

She added, “It is where I can let my most hidden feelings flow free while performing. I have been dancing for 15 years now and I don’t recall not getting excited when I do it.”

Although most of the students felt extremely secure and confident at the beginning of the auditions, by the end, some students weren’t fully content with their performance.

Jeyo Ramos, a dance major student, feels as if he could have done better.

“I’ve auditioned three times already and it is extremely fun, but overall, I feel like if my performance

could’ve been way better this time.”

The Chair of Dance Department, Janet Sanderson, and every one of the dance judges ranked each participant like in any other regular dance audition - based on basic skills, performance ability and technique level.

The final results of the auditions was posted up in the dance studio FA-55, around 9 a.m. last Tuesday.

The results will remain there for the rest of the week.

The students that make it will be able to be seen performing in the Dance Concert on Nov. 6, 7 and 8 at 8 p.m.



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PHOTO BY: DANIEL GREEN/TM

Hall of fame coach, Hall of fame life



PHOTO FROM CERRITOS FALCONS

Nancy Kelly Academic Scholarship: Kayla Klein (L) and Lily Cornejo (R) pose with Nancy Kelly after receiving the Nancy Kelly Academic Scholarship at the Foundation Golf Tournament. According to softball Head Coach Kodee Murray, not one athlete has failed to graduate upon being awarded the scholarship.

Nancy Kelly: A true pioneer of Cerritos College athletics.

DENNY CRISTALES
Editor-in-Chief
@Den_Crist

“She lived and then she died.”
At least that’s how softball Head Coach Kodee Murray puts it. It’s an obvious observation, but the more you look at it, the more appropriate and enlightening that statement becomes.
And enlightening is one of many ways one would use to describe legendary coach Nancy Kelly.
Kelly died Sunday, Aug. 17 after combined complications from pneumonia and breast cancer.
She was 78 years old. Her contributions to Cerritos College athletics yields more than one-fourth of her life. Kelly could easily be called the mother of coaching on campus; being the first women’s basketball coach and logging in 22 years as the softball coach, per Cerritos Falcons.

Kelly coached the Falcons to a State Championship in 1978, going undefeated in the conference that same year and earning a multitude of playoff victories in her tenure; she’s the winningest softball coach in the history of Cerritos College.
“She really built the softball program from the ground-up,” Athletic Director Dan Clauss said.
It takes a single trip to the softball field on campus to see her mark on the sport - literally, as the field is named in her honor, an honor bestowed upon her back in 2001.
She was later inducted into the Cerritos College Hall of Fame last March.
In lieu of athletic accolades, she set up the Nancy Kelly Scholarship - it pays for a student-athlete’s textbook costs upon transfer, with, typically, about a couple of students selected a year; and not one of those selectees in the history of the scholarship has failed to graduate, as Murray notes.
“There’s pressure to it. You don’t want to be the first not to get your degree.”

On the field, Kelly was making noise, in spite of retirement.
She attended roughly 10 games a season, according to Murray. Her support went beyond just simple presence, as she would donate about \$10,000 a year to help maintain the field; and, throughout the years, was beneficial to adding the luxuries, such as seats for bleachers and a snack bar.
This made Kelly into an icon of sorts amongst the players.
“I think what happens is when you have people that continually support your program, they become a big deal; every single kid that has gone through our program knows Nancy Kelly and visited with her and have their own personal relationship with her,” Murray said.
A long standing memory for Murray was in 2008 - 30 years apart from Kelly leading her team to the State Championship, Murray was doing the same. Kelly was there to witness it. The touching moment came when one of the center-fielders went out of their way to grab the game ball and run out to Kelly to hand it over to her.
Murray said, “I think that moment kind of exemplifies her whole presence to the program, and that she meant something to those kids. She didn’t have to be there everyday to do that, but she had an impact wherever she went.”
That impact followed all the way to the classroom. Coach Debbie Jensen said, “As successful as she

was for softball, she was just as successful in the classroom and touched the lives of thousands of students. They loved her as a health teacher.”
Janice Cole, foundation treasurer, added, “She absolutely loved her students. Not only the students that she personally coached or taught in health classes, but students after she retired. Because she kept up on the program with Kodee Murray, she kept up with the kids; they e-mailed her, they maintained contact with her and shared all their great successes.
“She was absolutely an advocate for education.”

Battle

Kelly battled breast cancer. An insight shared with players at the beginning of a softball season.
As a response, all season, the team switched out removable Nike logos from their shoes, and changed the coloring to that of pink - a color that supports and shows awareness of breast cancer.
The breast cancer, however, served as a complication. Kelly was eventually hospitalized for another reason - pneumonia.

“With that news, I thought, ‘Well, maybe we can battle.’ You know. You’re not thinking that’s a death sentence by any means,” Murray said. “And, then, they told me that there were more complications than that. That her body was compromised because of the cancer and all the chemotherapy and radiation. And that she wasn’t going to make it.”

“When I heard that news, it was shocking. I still didn’t believe it. I was told she had three or four days. And within 24 hours, I got another phone call from one of her former players letting me know that she passed.”

The relationship remains firmly ingrained in Murray’s heart.
“The relationship was pretty special to me. I can’t speak about her, but I know the opportunity to get to hear her stories and listen and her energy and her smile; she was so happy every time she walked out onto that field. She was so happy to see her legacy and what she built was continuing. I think we had the same mindset to help the kids; that they are our priority over winning ... when we saw each other we were on the same page.”

Legacy

A ubiquitous lifestyle now simmers into calmness with Kelly’s death; yet the result ends up being appropriate.
Murray went on to rave about Kelly’s final year being as “special” as it could have been, highlighting the hall of fame induction earlier this year. Murray was there, along with former coaches and players who were alongside Kelly throughout her 78 years of life.
“She was a person who wanted to be up and alive and living,” Murray said. “And if she couldn’t be that, I think she died the best death that you could die. I only wish I could do that. I hope that’s the way it is for me.”
It’s almost as if the hall of fame coach went out on her terms.
“She got to do it. She got, to me, the greatest gift in the world,” Murray concluded.
Her life will now be celebrated with a memorial service Saturday at 10 a.m. at Nancy Kelly field.
A donation can be made to the Nancy Kelly Scholarship at the Cerritos College foundation website (<http://cms.cerritos.edu/foundation/>).

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Scan for a Storify of
Jasmine Cornejo's
life and death.



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Cornejo through social media

Loved ones share their emotions on Jasmine Cornejo's passing, as friends offer words and pictures to remember her legacy through Twitter. As a soccer player, but more importantly, as the enthusiastic and high-spirited person she was.

With Storify, social media outlets convey information about Cornejo's relationship with family and friends, along with the athletic camaraderie she built with her teammates during her back-to-back National Championship run.

Reactions about Cornejo's passing and her funeral capture the emotional atmosphere tied to the soccer champion.

A soccer champion remembered

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"(Jasmine) had this dance that she would do before every game, just this crazy little hands up in the air, shaking her hips around," Clara Gomez said as she recalls her friend Jasmine Cornejo's pre-game ritual.

Gomez named it, "The Cornejo dance."

Known for her enthusiasm and hard-working nature both on and off the field, Cornejo never failed to display her smile and influence onto others.

"We would be at practice at five in the morning and she would still like be awake, like wide awake," said Malia Tilton, defender.

After being accustomed to lining up and playing next to Cornejo during every game, Tilton now feels the void of not playing next to, who teammates nicknamed her, "Smiley" anymore.

Cornejo, a local soccer standout and the bubbly, emotional leader of the Cerritos College women's soccer team, passed away on Aug. 4. She had recently turned 20 in July.

Cornejo was reportedly not feeling well on July 31, she was then admitted to the Anaheim Western Memorial Hospital, where she slipped into a coma. After several days of absent brain activity, she was taken off life support.

The Torrance native was a key fixture throughout the Cerritos College women's soccer team run toward two consecutive back-to-back California Community College Athletic Association (CCCCAA) State championships and two National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) national titles.

Cornejo first made her imprint on a game at Artesia High School, immediately notching stellar stats and accolades. In her junior season, she scored a school record 29 goals and was recognized as the Suburban League's Offensive Most Valuable Player, in addition to being the Lee Central Coast Newspaper (LCCN) Co-Player of the Year.

The two-time California Interscholastic Federation player helped elevate the Pioneers to their best record in school history, a 18-5-1 season; and the team posted a 10-2-0 league mark, earning her the LCCN Player of the Year her senior season.

She seemed to have it all as a player - speed, strength, agility and dedication - all this despite her small frame. Cornejo would capitalize from her size.

"Her speed, especially because she was so small," reminisces Demi Lomeli about Cornejo's playstyle. "Any ball you'd give her, she would get to it and (was) always hustling on the field, no matter what, whether we were losing or anything she would always want to score and make something happen."

"I loved her quick feet, she had the quickest feet and like she was so skillful, said Nayeli Requejo. "She played like a guy, she

was so skillful with her feet, she could juke anybody out and she always worked really really hard."

Cornejo was preparing to continue her education in physical therapy by transferring to California Polytechnic Pomona this Fall semester.

She was set to start for the Broncos women's soccer team, as well.

"Just great work ethic always a happy kid, always had a smile on her face, every time you saw her she was very enthusiastic worked hard, very competitive," recalls Assistant Coach Octavio Marquez.

Marquez grew close to Cornejo, coaching her throughout her time at Artesia High school and influencing her to enroll at Cerritos College to continue her success on the field for the Falcons.

"You know, it's just very unfortunate this happened," continues Marquez. "These girls build a bond together pretty much year-round and they were really close with Jasmine. Some of these girls were really affected."

Grief counseling was highly encouraged to players of the women's soccer team and anyone affected by the sudden tragedy.

"As a team, we had a group session with grief counselors and now we're dedicating the season to Jasmine," said head coach Ruben Gonzalez.

The Falcons are setting aside Cornejo's jersey number (20) for the time being and are having her jersey accompany the team to every women's soccer game the team plays in this season.

Carolina Ornelas, close friend of Cornejo, will be honoring her friend this season, whom she's known since they were 12 years old, by wearing her high school jersey number (9).

"I was really really close with Jasmine, we were practically sisters," said Ornelas. "I'm going to wear her number that she always wanted to wear here."

As the Falcons look forward to defending their title, they are dedicating this season to her.

The women's soccer team has their eyes set on their first home game on Sept. 9 as it faces Los Angeles Pierce College. The game will pay tribute to Cornejo.

All proceeds at the gate will go to Cornejo's mother, Rosario Vazquez, and she will also be receiving a framed jersey in her honor.

Cornejo's sister will serve as an honorary captain throughout the game.

A few fundraising campaigns have been established to help Cornejo's family with funeral expenses.

A GoFundMe account has been set up. Cerritos College soccer program and Cornejo's Norwalk FC club team is selling t-shirts.

"I think Jasmine was always just really happy, being a part of our little group, La Familia," said Kassie Olivas, defender.

NIGHTS WEEKEND

Are you going with us?

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