

THE Grauer Gazette

No. 15

ENCINITAS, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH, 2024

The Grauer School

Café Nights Actually Started in a Café

By Isabella M.

Have you ever wondered how Café Nights started? Well, surprisingly, they did actually start in a cafe. The theater teacher at the time worked at the Pannikin, which is where the first Café Night was performed. As the concerts became more popular, the location shifted to Meyer Hall. The music department started hosting several Café Nights with a variety of themes including originals, musical theater and classics of different genres. Students and staff would sell pastries, which is how these events received the name of 'Café Nights'.

These Café Nights were smaller than they are now. They started as an

open mic night, and since then, the music department grew and these nights of music have turned into more upscale productions.



Current Grauer School teacher, Tom Hopper, was a student performing in

the very first Café Night. He said that he "loved performing with [his] fellow musicians", and that these evenings really "helped him push through personal issues and challenges." He feels that they continue to do so for all the musicians performing.

These Café nights have helped build confidence for performers, and give parents and fellow students opportunity to enjoy live performances of music. They have added to the Grauer Community, and have become a way to encourage the arts programs what The Grauer School has to offer.

Is our Attention Span Getting Worse?

By Brandon D.

When you study, do you impulsively check your phone every five minutes? Do you ever find yourself zoning out, watching videos, or playing games during class? Teachers (and students themselves) have noticed that students' attention spans have seemed to diminish significantly in recent years. Why is this happening? Is it because we are constantly trying to multitask, trying to simultaneously complete math homework while drawing an art piece? Perhaps it's the endless cycle of notifications, with every ding taking our focus away from the task at hand. Maybe it's the influence of the modern internet landscape, where viral internet trends come and go in a matter of days, and twenty-minute videos have been set aside in favor of endlessly scrolling fifteen-second clips on TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. Is our attention span really getting worse? If it is, then why?

Psychologist Dr. Gloria Mark at UC Irvine was interested in answering this question and performed a study investigating people's attention spans spanning

several decades. In the study, participants were timed on how long they stayed on one task before switching to another one. In 2004, the average time was two and a half minutes. In 2012, it was 75 seconds. Now, it is around 47 seconds.

Other studies have found a striking correlation between the increase in technology dependence and decreased attention span in young children over time. Researchers believe that children and teenagers' overexposure to hyper-stimulating content has made it harder to focus on more mundane tasks such as homework or house chores. TikTok and other short-form content have been noted as particularly damaging. By constantly exposing new information to the viewer, these social media platforms provide a consistent dopamine release. This can create a dependency on short-form content as a "reward" system, making people impulsively check social media while doing other tasks. Furthermore, short-form content conditions young people to hold their attention for short periods of time, which translates into

other tasks. This shift in the consumption of media has shown potentially harmful long-term effects on the attention spans of young people.

The literature seems to agree that attention spans in students have decreased dramatically, with overstimulating short-form content potentially to blame. It is important to address this issue as early as possible before it becomes a deeply ingrained habit that negatively affects not only our academic performance but also our cognitive development. A variety of strategies can be used to combat the distractions drawing our attention away. During your study breaks, do something that relaxes your brain rather than stimulates it; instead of scrolling through TikTok or Instagram, go for a walk or meditate. Try turning off notifications on your social media platforms and do more physical exercise, which can also improve cognitive function. We all know this is a problem we are facing, but whether we choose to address it or not will determine the outcome of young minds.

When The Ballots Are Counted

By Adele F.

Every four years, American people brace themselves for what can feel like a national crisis: Election Day. Looking beyond the worrisome debates, divisive lies, and overwhelming campaigns, we see more personal stories—the emotional and psychological impact of the election on the American people. This year, when the ballots were counted, many people found themselves in an unbearable loop of emotions: hope, anxiety, and exhaustion.

With the extremely polarized political climate that we deem an election, psychologists notice a flood of election-related stress among patients. The reason being the overload of information, political ads, and toxic rhetoric that day-to-day people were witnessing at every turn. “The information is very heavy, it’s very emotional, and people care a lot about the issues,” says Dr. Jana Koretz in an NBC interview. She emphasizes the true mental



toll this election season has taken on those seeking therapy first hand. Social media, in particular, plays a large role. While these platforms can provide a reassuring sense of community within your beliefs, they can also push negativity and amplified polarized content. With that, we have a new-found term, “doom scrolling”—which essentially means an endless consumption of distressing news. As one can imagine, this has furthered the feelings of helplessness. Now, many mental health professionals are advising setting boundaries around media consumption, stating that doing this can be

a powerful tool for maintaining stability in these turbulent times. Looking past the individual distress levels we see an influx of families and friends finding themselves at odds over opposing political beliefs. When we have two presidential candidates refusing to shake hands on the debate stage, how does society expect day-to-day American citizens to forge relationships with those who disagree with our political views?

Ultimately, navigating the world of election season properly requires a balance between staying informed and prioritizing your mental health. Strategies to stay sane include unplugging from the constant stream of unbearable information, journaling, and seeking professional support if needed. As the ballots were counted, it’s clear that the impact of the 2024 election was vast and extends beyond politics. It has challenged us to seek resilience, practice empathy, and prioritize what you take in.

Gladiator II Movie Review (Spoiler-Free)

By Ezri R.

The long-awaited sequel to Ridley Scott’s 2000 masterpiece enters the silver screen with lofty promises of action-packed fights, political intrigue, and powerhouse performances. But does it conquer this legacy? Well... kind of.

The first half echoes the original so closely it feels like déjà vu—Hanno’s journey mimics Maximus’s but lacks clarity. Those unfamiliar with the first film lack a deeper connection to the characters, but returning fans may feel like they’re sitting through a worse-scripted retelling.

Part of what made *Gladiator I* so compelling was the turmoil and vengeance, Maximus’s quest to kill Commodus. It was a story of betrayal and love, searing with political critique. When Maximus bellows the iconic line “Are you not entertained?” He doesn’t just challenge the crowd, he looks straight down the camera at you. Replicating this intensity is difficult, and when the same line reappears in the sequel, it falls

short. The second half abandons this imitation, but is it enough to make up for it?

What the sequel lacks in narrative strength, it makes for with breathtaking cinematography and gorgeous visual direction. The sweeping aerial shots of The Colosseum bring the brutality of ancient Rome to life, rife with grandeur and grit. Ridley Scott delivers a beautiful and thoughtfully orchestrated movie, leaving you marveling at set pieces.

The acting capability of this cast brings much-needed vitality to this uneven script. From the moment Denzel Washington appeared on the screen, politician grin and swaggering gait, he had stolen the show. Pedro Pascal and Paul Mescal give captivating performances, raw with emotion and a fearlessness well suited for the battlefield, but Washington’s performance elevates the entire movie. Denzel Washington doesn’t just play the game of Roman politics—he owns it, oozing menace with

a mere smirk. It feels as if Washington was made to meld seamlessly into the world of dirty Roman politics and the bloody hedonism of *Gladiator II*.



Die-hard fans will revel in this movie’s nods to its predecessor, but for those of us seeking an original, rich, historical action movie, it misses the mark. However, these writing and plot follies are overshadowed by acting performances that leave you on the edge of your seat. *Gladiator II* may not dethrone the original, but it leaves its own distinct scar.

ENCINITAS, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH, 2024

The Grammys: An Overview

By Kate Z.

The 2025 Grammys are next year, and I've spent some time looking at the artists at the top of the list. They've all pretty much cemented their place as global phenomena. I thought for a moment about these "Song of the Year" contenders and did something that I would not have done a few years ago: I kept scrolling through the genres. I'm here to tell you about what doesn't usually get mentioned in headlines. It's pretty interesting what you'll find if you squint past the brightest stars.

For Best Rock Performance, I was surprised by the appearance of Pearl Jam, Green Day, and most shockingly, the Beatles, with their revived song "Now and Then" receiving a nomination. It has the vibe of their earlier music to it, but there is a tangible feeling of wrongness. I mean, a Beatles song coming out in 2024 is quite the anachronism. Considering what the

Best New Artist category has, I wouldn't be surprised to see the Beatles up there too. A familiar face present: Michael McDonald, is famous for his presence in Steely Dan, the Best Traditional R&B category. , a familiar face is present: Michael McDonald, famous for his presence in Steely Dan, is featured on one of the songs. This isn't the only feature he has on a nominated song. Jacob Collier, a candidate for Best Album Djesse 4, has a song "Wherever I Go" which includes McDonald's vocals as well.

Best Jazz Performance has both new and old nominees: Samara Joy, Chick Corea (another deceased artist), and Troy Roberts are just a few of the names featured. Joy's vocals on covers of popular jazz standards have earned her two nominations this year, the other for Best Jazz Album. She has already won three previous Grammys for her performance.

For Musical Performance, I was honestly not expecting to see *The Outsiders*' soundtrack on the list. I saw the musical before it went to Broadway and was only mildly impressed by its originality. The content of the lyrics was more impactful than the instrumentals. Alongside *Suffs*, *Merrily we Roll Along* (which I absolutely loved), and *The Wiz*, the lineup for this year's Musical winners are all powerhouses in their own right.



The NOAA's Prediction for the 2024/25 Ski Season

By Luke W.

Winter 2024/25 has been announced to be a La Niña. The last La Niña weather pattern occurred in Winter 2022/23, the record season. The 2022/23 season delivered unusually high snow across the United States. With almost all mountains breaking records. The famous Mammoth Mountain got twice their average, with over 900 inches recorded. The United States could experience similar weather patterns this year.

As of November 18th, 2024, mountains are beginning to reopen for the 2024/25 season. Many are curious about what to expect, though. La Niña weather patterns can be unpredictable. Occasionally, they deliver consistent storms through atmospheric rivers. Then, sometimes, there are increased temperatures and fewer storms. To predict precisely what La Niña will do is almost impossible.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is re-

sponsible for predictions for the upcoming seasons. They predict that the La Niña will bring wetter conditions across the northern regions of the United States. However, the lower parts of the country will experience heightened temperatures and dry weather.



With this information, it is safe to assume that resorts that line the vast Rocky Mountains will have increased snowfall. Snow sports athletes who travel north to reap the benefits of the Rockies are incredibly excited to hear this news. For the southern part of the country, this is

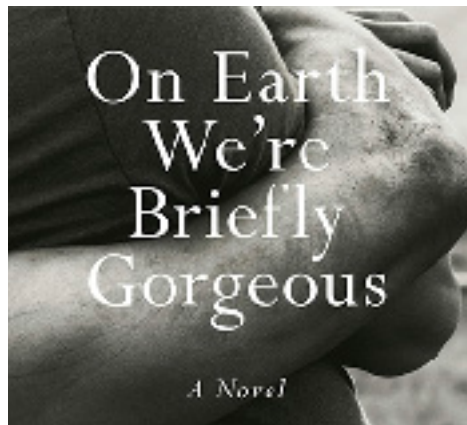
concerning. For those who like to stay local in California, finding fresh snow could be a struggle this season. It is forecasted that the Californian mountains will experience average or below-average snowfall due to this weather pattern. It is important to remember that storms are still unpredictable, and the forecast could be wrong. Although it is widely agreed upon that the northern states will receive higher amounts of snowfall. This is exciting to hear for snow sports enthusiasts.

Last season's weather patterns were very abnormal. A dry December and January left many people worried about the future of snow sports and climate change. Many notable resorts had to close early last year due to the lack of snowfall at the beginning of the season. Notable events like Jackson Hole's King and Queens of Corbets were canceled entirely, leaving freestyle athletes disappointed and praying for snow. If the predictions are correct, the northern parts of the United States will be in store for a legendary season.

ENCINITAS, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH, 2024

Shelf Talk: *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*

By MJ C.



On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous, by Ocean Vuong, is an autobiography that

hits the heart with raw, intimate honesty. Written as a letter from a Vietnamese son to his illiterate mother, the book dives into themes of identity, self-discovery, and survival in a world that sees them as “other.” Vuong’s poetic words delve into trauma and tenderness with equal care, allowing the reader to experience both the weight of the pain and beauty that life offers.

Vuong has a love of paradoxes, showing how beauty and suffering are deeply connected. For example he writes, “A monster is not such a terrible thing to be,” referring to how society labels and secludes those that are different. “To be a monster is to be a hybrid signal, a lighthouse: both shelter and warning at once.” In this quote,

Vuong struggles with being seen as both monstrous yet divine; stating that humans have complexity and are neither wholly one thing or another. This book thrives on his love of contradictions. The son loves his mother fiercely, yet feels the burden of her trauma. He despises the violence in his lineage yet finds strength in his heritage.

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous is a must read. It is a tender story, one that will amount to many tears, leaving readers with a bittersweet understanding and recognition of the beauty in the passage of time. This novel is a testimony that the act of surviving is an act of love. It does not offer any easy answers, but invites all to enjoy the contradictions that make us human.

Trump and Cohn: A Bond of Power, Loyalty, and Controversy

By Leyton G.

The 1980s were a time of consumerism, entrepreneurship, and power. The 1980s are often referred to as “The decade of decadence”, New York City was hands down the place to be in the 1980s. Many of the celebrities, politicians, and artists that we know to this day have all originated from New York.

Among this vast majority of people was a young man who was working under his father’s company that focussed on real estate. This man was none other than Donald J. Trump. The Trumps focused on middle-class rental housing. Everything was going well for the Trumps, until they were hit with a discrimination lawsuit. The Trumps had been refusing to rent to black tenants, causing backlash for their discriminatory ways. In the midst of this lawsuit, Donald Trump would stumble across a man who would forever change his life and future forever. This man was none other than Roy Cohn.

Roy Cohn was an extremely well known American lawyer and prosecutor. He was known for assisting Senator Joseph McCarthy. During the 1950s, Roy Cohn

helped Joseph McCarthy with the hearings of many suspected communists during what was known as the “Red Scare”. Cohn was notorious for his “immoral” tactics that he would use within the courtroom. He would often blackmail his political opponents and has often been referred to as a “Political Hitman”.

When Donald Trump met Roy Cohn, they instantly had a connection. Cohn took a particular interest in the young Donald Trump and took him under his wing in a way. As well as being his friend, Roy also represented Trump in the courtroom. Cohn would go on to help Donald Trump further his connections into the political and real estate world. Roy Cohn saw something in Trump that not many people saw. He wanted to turn Trump into a global figure, a reflection of himself in a way. He guided Trump to the top and pushed him to do more. However, it was not in the most upstanding way.

In the midst of Trump’s conquest for fame and power, Roy Cohn contracted HIV. Cohn never admitted to having Aids and claimed that he had gotten liver cancer. Cohn was too ashamed of his homosex-

uality to fully come out and admit that he had contracted aids. However, in his autopsy, medical officials confirmed that 59 year-old Roy Cohn did in fact have aids. Luckily for Donald Trump, Roy Cohn had already built him an outstanding foundation within the world of real estate, business, and politics.



Thanks to Roy Cohn, Donald Trump has been successful in the world of politics. Donald Trump has successfully taken the title as the 45th president, as well as the 47th president. Trump can credit a majority of his success to none other than Roy Cohn.

Evolution of Friendships in the Digital Age

By Zoe Ba.

When the phrase “the evolution of friendships in the digital age” is used, people assume that it is in reference to our newfound ability to create relationships with strangers on the internet. Although this is true, the rise in technology doesn’t always have to correlate with our communication with people we do not know. The usage of technology is now yet another means to communicate with our friends and family, whether that be through messages, FaceTime calls, or social media itself.



That is not to say that social media has not opened a variety of doors for people to step out of their comfort zones and get to know each other. In an age where there is constant pressure to “find your pack” and have a constant support network, social media is a wonderful place where teens and adults alike can find people with sim-

ilar interests to support or inspire them. A number of long-lasting friendships have started this way and it is quite refreshing to see strangers on the internet being compassionate to each other.

However, as is the way of the world, the internet can become a negative place for some. Bullying isn’t constrained to in-person conversations anymore, and there is a correlation between the rise in technology and cyberbullying. Cyberbullying occurs when a person uses technology to harass or embarrass another person (the severity can vary). The impact of cyberbullying can often be more harmful than physical bullying due to its permanent place on the internet. Although some may argue that cyberbullying causes less harm, there is a reason they say, “The pen is mightier than the sword.” Therefore it is important to be mindful of what you say on the internet and the impact it can have on others.

The usage of social media has significantly increased since 2005, rising a whopping 72%. Of the 8.2 billion people in the world, there are 4.8 billion active social media users (University of Maine), which is 59.9% of the world’s population. A significant amount of time is spent on these digital platforms, averaging around 2 hours and 24 minutes, or 10% of our day. Whether you

believe that the time is well spent or not is up to you.

According to a Pew Research Study, from the “64% of teens who have made a friend online”, only around 20% of these teens have met their online friend in person. Teens are not the only ones who use social media platforms. According to the Beau Biden Foundation, there are around 500,000 predators online every day. These predators tend to target children under 15 years old, and statistics show that 51% of 13 to 14 year olds have online friendships. These predators will generally lie about their age in order to gain trust and establish a trustworthy relationship. The Foundation states that 46% of children on the internet will accidentally reveal sensitive information about themselves online. It is important that we attempt to make the internet a safe place; if you suspect anything, make sure to report it to the platform.

The internet has evolved into a place just as worthy of caution as the physical world. As long as you stay cautious and true to yourself, it can be a wonderful resource for making friends, learning more about a topic, or spreading advocacy about an issue. Now it is up to you, the reader, to use these platforms in a positive manner and decide if you believe the digital evolu-

Stanley Cups, are they worth it?

By Chiara C.

I’m sure we have all seen the trending Stanley water bottles everywhere now. We have seen them at school, at the gym, in Tiktok videos and other social media platforms. Although Stanley water bottles may look aesthetically pleasing and will keep your water cold, I’m not sure if they are worth the hype or price that they currently have. I myself own an orange Stanley and the only reason why I bring it to school everyday is because I need to work on drinking more water throughout the day. For this purpose, these water bottles are great! They can hold 30 ounces of water and the straw makes it easy to take a sip at any time. How-

ever, besides the very few pros this cup has to offer, it also has a number of cons. The first con is that when filled up to the top, or even filled



a quarter of the way down, the chances of your Stanley leaking all over yourself, your car, or your wooden table, are extremely high. This is my least favorite quality of my Stanley because I notice stains of water on myself at least three times a day. Another reason why you should reconsider buying a Stanley cup is that once they are filled up with water and ice, they become extremely heavy! It’s almost as if I am doing an arm workout everyday by carrying my Stanley around campus. Overall, buying a Stanley is not worth it and there are much better options out there that are high quality, cheaper, and do not leak.

Community Service Student Spotlight

By Zoe Br.

The Grauer School has long included community service in its identity as a school. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the total number of school hours logged was averaging around 4,400 hours. Post pandemic this number dropped significantly, though, it is steadily climbing back up. The total number of community service hours logged by Grauer students last year was 3,362, up 36% from the year before. It is requested that each student log twelve hours and thirty minutes minimum of community service per year: this will total to a neat 75 hours (or hopefully more) after six years at Grauer.

While any time spent improving your community is great, the best kind of service is dedication to a certain cause or organization. I asked three students: Blu Ingoglia (Class of 2025), Isabella Monacelli (Class of 2027), and Lucy Bachrack (Class of 2027) about the committed service they have done with various organizations throughout their time at Grauer.

Blu Ingoglia

What organization do you volunteer with the most?

"I volunteer the most with San Diego Pride."

What do they do?

"It's a community organization (that) hosts events for youth and hosts community events. They do fundraising and other kinds of organization, and they host the yearly San Diego pride festival."

How did you get involved with them?

"I started going to their events as a freshman and then I got involved more by applying to be a youth ambassador."

Why do you enjoy it?

"I enjoy volunteering with San Diego Pride because offering my time to provide space is something that I personally really enjoy."

How can others get involved?

"You can get involved by going to any of

the events, helping with the fundraising, getting involved with the school GSA helps with San Diego Pride because we do send all of our proceeds there."



Isabella Monacelli

What organization do you volunteer with the most?

"I volunteer with (the) National Charity League and I'm in the Del Sol Chapter."

What do they do?

"They bring together a bunch of different organizations and they fundraise and volunteer for them."

How did you get involved with them?

"A friend of mine (has) participated in the organization since seventh grade and she invited me to join her while I was in ninth grade."

Why do you enjoy it?

"I enjoy the sense of community it brings together with the other girls who volunteer and the environments and the communities that we help."



Lucy Bachrack

What organization do you volunteer with the most?

"I volunteer with Breakthrough T1D."

What do they do?

"They help fund research for Type 1 Diabetes and also bring awareness to the disease."

How did you get involved with them?

"Well, my sister has Type 1 Diabetes and she started fundraising for this organization in the eighth grade, and so when she graduated, I took over."

Why do you enjoy it?

"I enjoy it because I know it will help people like my sister in the future."

How can others get involved?

"Others can get involved, well, by donating :

or, also, in November of each year there is a Breakthrough T1D annual walk which is held normally at Liberty Station and they can participate in that."



Please, get involved in organizations; do your part to help our community.

ENCINITAS, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH, 2024

Breathing Microplastics

By Anthony B.

Microplastics have recently entered the public eye alongside the rise of COVID-19 and other health concerns. Maybe it's obvious that these tiny pieces of plastic are harmful to humans and the environment. But what exactly are they, what do they look like, what do they do, and how many microplastics am I inhaling right now?

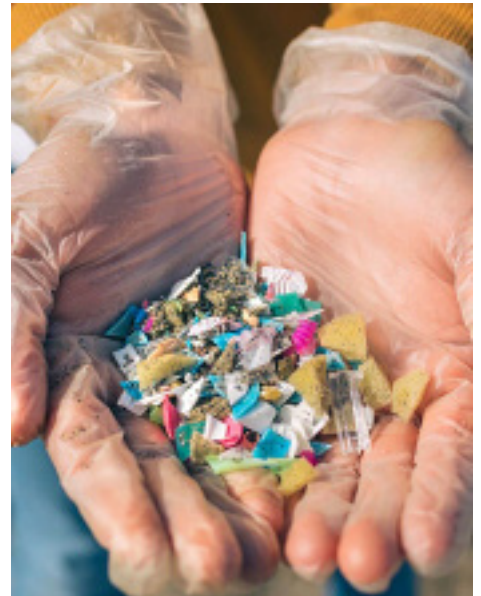
Microplastics are defined as plastic particles less than five millimeters in diameter. It's a general definition of a general assortment of particulates, as these pieces of plastic can not only vary in size but also in shape. The lower bound for their size is only one nanometer, almost the width of a DNA strand. They can appear as fibers, film, beads, or fragments—usually as a smaller part of a whole plastic item. Microplastics often shed off regular pieces of plastic; they strip from their original part and dissipate into the air and surrounding environment. Plastics you're familiar with, such as plastic wraps, bottles, and utensils, are continuously shedding plastic.

It gets interesting when you look at where they are, and they are everywhere. From the ocean to the air, there is no escaping them. They are so widespread mainly due to increased pollution, as plastics can easily spread through the environment and atmosphere through recycling plants, landfills, and wastewater facilities.

They don't only spread through trash, as they can also be found in cleaning products, rain, seafood, and produce. Clothes made from synthetic fibers, which shed microplastics when washed, have deposited the most microplastics in the ocean. Most microplastics within homes come from clothing, furniture, and other regular plastic items. Health and beauty products usually contain microbeads—small, bead-like particles of plastic. Because of the recent pandemic, disposed face masks have heavily contributed to the global increase of microplastics.

Microplastics can be found in various places in the body, such as the blood, liver, and kidneys. Marine, animal, and cell studies have shown that they can cause damage to DNA, which may lead to cancer. Furthermore, microplastics are commonly paired with chemicals like BPA, phthalates, and heavy metals. These chemicals can cause damage and disruption to the nervous, reproductive, and other systems. Some models show that accumulation affects the cells, lungs, liver, and gut. Nanoplastics—plastics smaller than one micrometer—are small enough to enter cells and wreak havoc. They are formed by microplastic breakdown in the environment. However, the effects of microplastics are still under research; not a lot is known about them. Right now, inhaling them is fine for us since we are adaptive to them.

The overall situation is similar to climate change: it will be a massive problem in the decades to come if nothing is done. With so many plastics around, how do you avoid them and reduce their environmental impact? Well, to start, when buying groceries from the store, avoid plastic-packaged products. Drinking tap water from a glass or stainless steel faucet is an excellent alternative to microplastic intake from bottled water. Plastic bottles, along with straws and bags, are examples of single-use plastic items.



You can replace these with refillable water bottles, stainless steel straws, and cloth bags, respectively, to avoid intake. To avoid microplastic pollution in the ocean and in the air, start by buying clothing made of natural fibers—cotton, silk, linen, or wool—instead of synthetic fibers—polyester, nylon, or acrylic. Finally, you should check certain household health and beauty products, such as toothpaste and body wash, for microbeads by checking the ingredient list of each product or looking at the many lists available online.

Though the microplastic problem is undoubtedly becoming an increasingly important global issue, as long as we do our part and spread the word, we should strive for a future where we don't have to worry about it.

The Grauer Gazette Team



The Fall of Black Friday

By Milan B.

Known as the biggest shopping event of the year, Black Friday offered huge discounts and unparalleled deals that drew massive crowds to stores. In the past few years, shoppers have noticed worsening discounts and deals; rising prices and deal fatigue make deals appear less enticing. Now, people wonder what happened to the unbeatable deals that once made Black Friday such an exciting occasion.

Some people say that the term “Black Friday” originated when businesses shifted from “being in the red” (losing money) to being in the black (making a profit); however, this is not true. The actual name originated with the Philadelphia police in the 1950s and 1960s, and they used

it to describe the chaos that ensued in the city after the annual Army-Navy football game held the day after Thanksgiving. Because of the influx of people arriving for the football game, storeowners noticed they made significantly more money on “Black Friday,” which started the “shifting from red to black” narrative. To attract more customers and to sell old stock, store owners began to offer additional discounts on Black Friday, leading people to camp outside stores and rush in as soon as the doors opened.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Black Friday shopping shifted from in-store to online, creating a “deals weekend” that lasted from Black Friday to Cyber

Monday. After 2020, retailers transitioned from the traditional in-store Black Friday promotions to week-long online sales. This shift allowed retailers to reduce the need for overstocking their physical stores, allowing them to offer more products at discounted prices online.

One of the most significant issues with Black Friday today is companies artificially inflating prices in the weeks leading up, only to reduce them back to or slightly below the original price while advertising a big discount. While Black Friday still has some deals, the increase in prices and the reduction in discounts have made this once-exciting occasion seem like any other Friday.

Wanna Art Major? 101: It's Not Your Average Application

By Clay B.

If you're anything like me, becoming an art student—having your own studio and creating endless pieces—is the dream. While most schools are obsessed with grades, test scores, and extracurriculars, art schools care more about who YOU are as an artist. It's less about following a formula and more about showing what you can create.

First things first, yes—grades do matter, but they're not the be-all and end-all. Your high school transcript should show you're serious about your future, but what really counts is your portfolio. But, there's a catch: building a great portfolio takes time—a luxury you might not realize you're missing until senior year (like me). You need to start at least a year (preferably two) before you apply. Why? Because art schools want to see how you've grown over time.

Every art school has specific portfolio requirements, but there are key categories they all look for. First, observational studies—think still lifes, portraits, or landscapes where you focus on shadows, light, and proportion. These pieces show

your technical skill and ability to observe the world around you. Then, experimental work—this is where you get to take risks and play with new techniques or materials. It's about thinking outside the box.

But the core to your portfolio is that it is personal to you. Self-portraits, abstract art, or pieces that reflect your thoughts or struggles help admissions see who you are as an artist. Don't just create what you think will impress them—make art that tells your story.



As many students submit their college applications, the waiting game begins. But for those applying to art schools, the process is a bit different. While most of my classmates are focused on the typical college prep—essays, tests, and extracurriculars—art school applicants are juggling

portfolios, artist statements, and a whole different kind of pressure. Many don't realize the unique demands of this path, which requires not only talent but a commitment to personal growth. Of course, I remain unfamiliar with the application process for science-focused schools, or other specialized programs, too. Every path comes with its own set of challenges, and while the art school route may seem unique, it's just one of many ways to pursue a passion and future career.

Lastly, the descriptions of your work matter more than you think. You'll need to explain your thought process, inspiration, and why each piece represents you. A few sentences can show the admissions team that your art has depth and meaning. These few sentences, which I thought were simply just a few sentences, are actually your only opportunity to explain yourself—to explain why you want to become an artist.

I'll be honest; It's a lot to juggle—grades, artwork, descriptions. But as a senior who survived the dread of college app season, I'm confident anyone is capable. So, if you're going through it, you're not alone—and hopefully this could make your senior a little easier.

ENCINITAS, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH, 2024

Peanut the Squirrel: From Innocent Squirrel to Political Martyr

By Asa S.

Peanut the Squirrel, also known as P'Nut, was rescued by Mark Longo in 2017. Peanut's mother had been run over by a car while he was just a baby. Longo bottle-fed him for eight months before releasing him to the wild. About a day after releasing him, he found Peanut sitting on his porch, and when Longo opened the door, he immediately ran inside. Unfortunately for the pair, it is illegal to keep squirrels as pets in New York, and Longo had no license order to keep him legally. In April 2023, Longo and his wife founded the P'Nuts Freedom Farm Animal Sanctuary. They had rescued over 300 animals by late 2024, but neither Longo nor his wife were licensed as wildlife rehabilitators. The lack

of proper licensing culminated in The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) seizing Peanut after they obtained a search warrant based on the social media presence of the Longos'. During the seizure, Peanut bit one of the NYSDEC wildlife biologists, causing him to be euthanized to test for rabies. Peanut had to be euthanized because there are no rabies testing methods approved by the CDC that do not involve euthanization. The death of Peanut the Squirrel caused widespread public backlash, especially among the MAGA movement, who blamed it on Democrats. JD Vance posted on X that "Don is fired up about P'Nut the squirrel" (Don referring to Donald Trump).

This public outrage led to ten bomb threats against NYSDEC buildings in the following days.



This outrage also caused some legal changes, with a bill called "Peanut's Law: Humane Animal Protection Act" proposing an amendment to New York State law that would limit government animal seizures.

Snow Culture

By Zack H.

There has forever been a distinct relation between skiers and snowboarders, but to fully understand the relation you have to get a deeper understanding of each sport. Skiing is not a modern day sport; dating back to 8000 BC the sport carries a lot of history. The first skis were a couple pieces of wood lined with fur on the bottom. By the 18th century skiing continued to grow in acclaim and had become a popular sport and recreational activity. Skiing has evolved a lot since then, though, developing steel edges and side cuts which allowed the user to carve rather than slide sideways. By the 1930s everyone was skiing, first from Europe and North America, all the way to Japan, New Zealand, and many other places.



Snowboarding is a much more modern sport compared to skiing. Starting out in 1965 when a Michigan engineer fastened

two skis together for his daughter. Snowboarding really evolved in the 80s and 90s with more race and trick events entering the snowboarding scene. In the 80s snowboarders faced challenges with being banned at most resorts until the 90s when most bans disappeared. Although, by the 20th century, snowboarding really picked up becoming a nation wide sport.

To get a deeper understanding of the diversity in both sports I've found a couple of students at The Grauer School to see their thoughts on the opposing sports. Firstly, I talked to Luke Wachtel, an experienced skier enthusiast. He's asked to tell me about his experiences so far skiing and his thoughts on snowboarders: "Okay, I lived in Jackson Hole, Wyoming and was a freestyle skier on the Evolution Ski Team, at JHMR, you know snowboarders often times can disobey laws of the mountain, and are sometimes very reckless this only speaks for a minority of snowboarders though." Next Luke is asked if he thinks snowboarders should be allowed on all mountains and why: "No they shouldn't due to their track pattern, the boards often corrupt good snow." Should they be

allowed on any resorts? "Yes they should, if I was a snowboarder I'd want somewhere to do it".

Next I interview a retired grauer school student named Jean Felix, he is asked similar questions to Luke. He's asked to tell me about his experiences so far snowboarding and his thoughts on skiers: "I've grown up skiing my whole life until my parents finally let me try (snowboarding) when I was 10. I instantly fell in love with the sport and never want to ski a day in my life. Regarding skiers I think we gotta get them off the slopes, I'm sorry to break it to them. Skiing is a thing of the past, snowboarding is for the younger generation." Next I ask him if he thinks skiers should be banned from all resorts, or just enforce kindness between the two sports, he says, "Nope, they need to be off the mountain, they take everything up and treat us all like peasants."

After interviewing an enthusiast from both sports, I can see how both sports— to a certain level— resent each other, but hopefully one day they will learn to love each other and leave room on mountains for both sports.

ENCINITAS, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH, 2024

A Director Predicts Their Own Death

By Kate Z.

Let's have a scene, perhaps,
where I gasp for air.
No blood. Perhaps somebody else's.
But not my own.
I crawl towards the stairs, yes,
as if to reach for a light!
The end of the tunnel.
Genius, really how human hope shines so
bright on the screen.
Then, I think we will have blood.
A close-up of a face.

Perhaps somebody else's, not my own.
Eyes closed.
Or, if you will, eyes open,
but emotion is so difficult
to tell somebody to feel!
Closed or open?
I'll decide later on, you see,
because the process takes time.
Both dying and creativity.
Didn't Plath say something on this?
Is it an art?

Well if it is, then this will be a spectacle
red and shining.
I said red just now, didn't I?
So then there will be blood.
Not from a wound,
but from something else.
Oh, what else, if not a hole in a heart.
A scene where I gasp for air and grab your
hand and you tell me to let go
and I say kid, if I let go now, we'd both fall.

Letter To Those Three Points of...

By Kate Z.

Light, as all things start.
I ask you to count headlights
Until you reach 100,
or until I come back.
You can see your breath.
I am standing in a parking lot,
asking you to stop time,
which is very unreasonable of me.
We both know this.

You say I'm kind.
I believe you only when it's late enough.
Words do not stop me from
clawing at a blue glow, desperate,
with us laughing on the other side.
They can only serve to shave down my
nails until I have nothing to hold you with.
If it all goes to hell,
drive to my house.

We can sit together.
That wouldn't be so bad.
But that's only if you want.
I wanted to write about love,
but I can only write about
windless nights and insistent rain.
Maybe a monster, if I'm lucky.
Maybe an angel.
What's the difference, anyway?

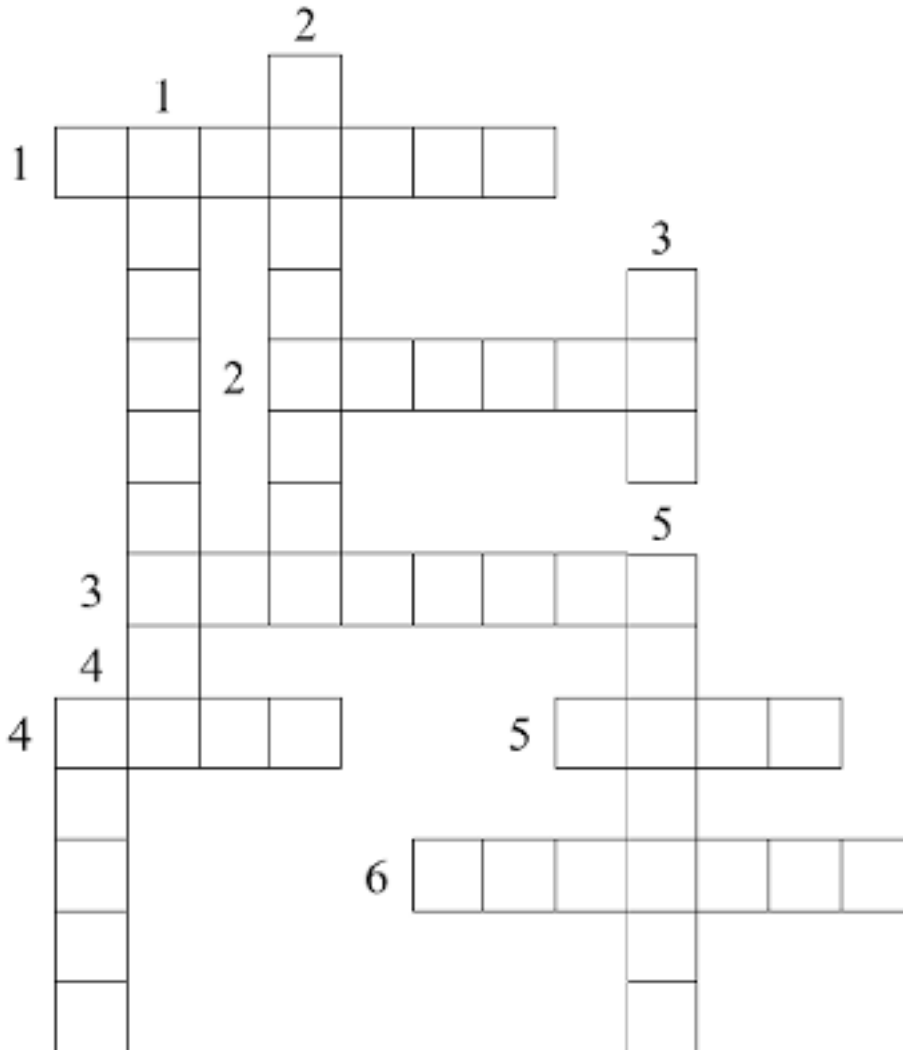
Theater's Fall Play: Frankenstein Photos

By Peggy G.



The Grauer Gazette Crossword

By Zoe Br.



Across

1. Multibranched candelabra related to Hanukkah
Shinny, sparkly foil
2. "We're fighting the _____!"
3. Something San Diego never sees
4. Left under the tree
5. Small four sided top

Down

1. Type of tree put up for Christmas
2. Either of Earth's poles reaches maximum tilt;
Winter _____
3. Similar to an imp; helps 4Down
4. Started as a saint, solidified as a Coca-Cola ad
5. Horror movie based in winter

ENCINITAS, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH, 2024

The Team



Ezri R.
Editor-in-Chief



Adele F.
Copy Editor, Current Events



Kate Z.
Music Editor



Brandon D.
Director of Features



Anthony B.
Current Events Editor



Asa S.
Column Writer



Milan B.
Technology Editor



Clay B.
Marketing and Website



MJ C.
Layout Editor, Column Writer



Leyton G.
Entertainment Editor



Zoe Ba.
Arts & Sciences Editor



Zach H.
Column Writer



Zoe Br.
Assistant Editor



Luke W.
Column Writer



Isabella M.
Sports Editor



Chiara C.
Column Writer