

# THE Grauer Gazette

No. 09

ENCINITAS, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH, 2023

The Grauer School

## Op-Ed: Greenwashing & The Plastic Straw Movement

By: Ezri R.

“Say no to plastic straws!” is one environmental slogan that almost everyone in this country has heard and seen, whether they frequent social media or not. The plastic straw is the one piece of trash that even the least environmentally passionate person can probably spit out some fun facts about due to the magnitude of Instagram infographics on the subject. The movement had almost every big corporation, even the ones you’d least expect to be sustainable, telling their consumers they could make an impact. They could make an impact by purchasing from them, an environmentally conscious (assuming you take their word for it, since statistics were rarely given to back up that claim) company that would sell you paper straws in plastic cups or ship cardboard packages in a mountain of bubble wrap! We all contributed to building the fervor for this movement that grew from its original goal of being a stepping stone for shaping a more environmentally-conscious planet into a symbol that became the be-all and end-all of the movement.

The fact that many of us spent time campaigning for companies that switched to paper straws and ourselves became

the straw-police, making sure none of



*Photo from NAON*

our friends and family were ever drinking with a plastic straw, was a tactic largely orchestrated by these big organizations. By spreading so much information about one relatively minor piece of trash and making us all staunch advocates for the cause, companies could promote their own businesses by making one banner green and mentioning their “revolutionary” policy on straws. This marketing technique is called greenwashing, where green PR and advertising are deceitfully used to create a facade showcasing nonexistent or minimally impactful environmentally friendly policies.

The reality is plastic straws only comprise 0.025% of the roughly 8 million tons of plastic that flow into the ocean each year. The plastic cup you drank from

with that straw does more damage than the straw itself, and those delivery packages are five times worse. But the large corporations succeeded by making us feel good about ourselves when we use a paper straw. Most of us have good intentions and strive to create a difference, and while oversimplifying the issue makes it more compelling to make smaller changes, it is rarely those smaller changes that will cause a pivotal difference. This plastic straw movement diverted attention away from all the factors of carbon emissions and plastic waste; corporate America successfully aggravated this issue to a magnitude that is a hundred times worse than what any of us could’ve generated in our lifetimes.

Large corporations are rife with greenwashing, and the plastic straw movement was an example of this tactic. By shifting the blame for climate change and plastic waste onto the consumer, these companies could get off scot-free in the court of public opinion. This is not to say that staying off plastic straws is not important, but it’s only a start. In order to create a more sustainable world, we need to shine more light on the practices and policies of the businesses holding up our economy.

## Whats Up with Grauer?

By: Sarai S.

Fall Ball - Grauer High School ASB presents Fall Ball! This year, high school students are invited to spend tomorrow night dancing and enjoying warm fall beverages in the Justice Center. ASB requests attendees wear semi-formal attire featuring fall colors to match the Justice Center, which will be decorated with fairy lights and falling leaves. It’s not too late to grab a

ticket, so throw on your best fall outfit and show up ready to dance!

Grandfriends’ Day - As Thanksgiving approaches, we are reminded to thank our loved ones. This Friday, November 17th, students are encouraged to invite friends and family to spend a day on campus. Guests will arrive at 11:30 a.m. for a student-led tour of the campus, followed by a lunch concert.

High School Play - Erin and the

theater department are proud to announce their Fall play, *Reckless*. The play will be shown November 30th, and December 1st and 2nd in Meyer Hall. While the department assures it will be a fantastic play, don’t expect any answers if you ask what the play is about: it’s all under wraps. To catch the theater department in action, grab a seat, or a refreshment from ASB’s fundraiser stand, sit back, and enjoy the show.

# Community at the *Manyatta*: The Maasai Women

By Sarai S.

There are few places in the United States where one will be greeted by a group of strangers, let alone thanked for your presence with song and dance. In Northern Kenya, it is a little different. Stepping onto the Twala Cultural *Manyatta* (settlement), I was taken by the hand and led into a dance circle. This circle was engulfed in the sounds of the Maasai women welcoming me and others with a song.

The Twala Cultural *Manyatta* was established as a “community project.” Our guide told us the *Manyatta* was founded by a group of sixty Maasai women who aspired to change the traditional societal views of the Maasai people while preserving their culture. Traditionally, Maasai women are not allowed to attend school, own land, or earn their own money. Female genital mutilation is common in Maasai communities, and without their own space, the women feared they would not be able to change the lives of their people. The *Manyatta*, land given to the women by a group of men, aimed to create a space where the women could be self-sufficient. Now, with

over 200 members, the women are able to farm aloe plants, keep bees, and sell beaded jewelry as a source of income.

After explaining a brief history of the Maasai culture and the *Manyatta*, my group was taken on a tour of the land.



Photo By Sarai S

First, we visited their meeting hall, which is a rounded building of carefully stacked stone covered by a thatched roof. The women gathered the stones together and thatched the roof with indigenous plants. Close to the meeting hall lies the aloe farm. Their aloe plants are tended to by a group of eighty women, who farm and sell them to beauty companies in the United King-

dom. Our last stop in the tour was back where we began, a dirt lot with expansive acacia trees. Under the foliage, women sit near blankets they have laid out upon which they display their jewelry. We spent the remainder of our time at the *Manyatta* admiring and purchasing the traditional Maasai jewelry. Their finance manager would record their sales, making sure the profit from each sale was linked to whoever made it.

At every stop in the tour, it became clear that the *Manyatta* thrives on togetherness. They farm together, build together, and live together. My time on the *Manyatta* clarified how much humans have to be grateful for. While I was shocked to hear about everything the Maasai women have endured, they showed that they continue to cherish every moment and give love to everyone around them. They understand that, strangers or not, every person deserves gratitude and unconditional love, which is a philosophy every individual should integrate into their daily lives.

# Varsity Volleyball: Season Recap

By Adele F.

Grauer's volleyball season has officially come to an end. The season was nothing short of thrilling, filled with ups, downs, and moments of unwavering determination. Last year, Grauer made school history by advancing to the CIF finals for Division 4. This year, the bar was set even higher for the new season. While advancing a division can be a daunting task for any team, this year's team was eager to prove their previous success was not a fluke. Over the season, the team demonstrated remarkable spirit and talent, bringing their best efforts regardless of whatever formidable opposition they faced. Despite each game being a battle, the Grauer players demonstrated incredible resilience and determination throughout

the season. Clearly, a team that never backed down from a challenge, always fighting until the last point.

The 2023 varsity volleyball season also marked a bittersweet moment as six senior players bid their farewell. These athletes have been the backbone of the team for years, leading by example and showing immense dedication. As these players embark on their new journey, their presence and contributions will be sorely missed. In an interview with one of our beloved departing seniors Gabby C, she stated, “I really enjoyed the varsity indoor volleyball season this year, mainly because of how much I love the girls on the team and how much chemistry we had as a whole. The moment we stepped onto the court, we always played our hardest while ha-

ving the best time.”

The Grauer School and Horizon Prep Girls Varsity Volleyball team demonstrated this year that success in sports is not just about winning championships but the resilience, teamwork, and passion athletes bring to the game. Let's go, Grauer!

Photo by Kai D.



Photos Continued on Page 8



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# Greed, Racism, and Genocide: The Story of the *Killers of the Flower Moon*

By: Gavin M.

On the evening of October 20th, fans lined up excitedly in crowds worldwide to witness Martin Scorsese's new blockbuster film, *Killers of The Flower Moon*. Yet, despite the film being helmed by both massive and upcoming stars such as Leonardo DiCaprio, Robert De Niro, Brendan Fraiser, and Lily Gladstone, the film's significance relies not only upon its phenomenal acting. Instead, *Killers of The Flower Moon* is an unexplored and tragic tale of American history, containing potent racism, unbridled greed, and cultural genocide.



In the mid-19th century, the United States, led by President Andrew Jackson, enacted a federal program named the Indian Removal Act. On the surface, this legislation authorized the president to grant unsettled land west of the Mississippi in exchange for "Indian" lands within U.S. borders. However, this enactment served as a racially motivated method to deprive Native Americans of their ancestral land, sending them on a tortuous journey across the United States in what would later become known as the "Trail of Tears."

Approximately 10,000 Native Americans died along these grueling routes, drastically diminishing the communal numbers of tribes and introducing them to deadly newfound diseases such as measles and influenza.

*Killers of the Flower Moon* takes place nearly a century after "The Trail of Tears" in the northern region of Oklahoma. Living on a stretch of territory extending from the Ohio River into Oklahoma, the Osage Tribe was one of many communities forced to relocate during the late 1800s. However, instead of being resigned to a life of sickness and poverty, the Osage community discovered something that would forever change the course of their history: oil.

In the late 1890s, oil reserves were discovered on Osage land, leading the Osage Tribe to become the wealthiest community on the planet instantaneously. As expected, white citizens desperately began attempting to acquire this priceless piece of land through any method possible. Utilizing backhanded practices such as "oil leases" and marrying into Osage families, white fortune hunters flocked to own a personal scrap of the Osage's immense wealth. Soon, the federal government required that for the Osage community to sell their oil legally, they must be accompanied by a white "guardian." Almost immediately, this conservatorship became manipulated by individuals finding "guardians" who would purposely ignore illegal methods to undermine the Osage's wealth, including murder.

A particularly discriminatory aspect of the federal government's law detailed that members of the Osage community were legally unable to sell their ownership of the oil-rich land. Yet, if a member of this community died and left their land to their non-native partner, they would be ensured full rights. This law gave way to a wave of terror and violence over the next two decades.

From 1921 to 1923, at least 60 influential members of the Osage community

were brutally murdered. Over this period, government and private investigators tasked with solving this increasingly bloody case died of mysterious foul play, including being thrown out of moving trains.

The investigation reached its apex on the morning of March 10th, 1923, when the home of Rita Smith exploded, killing three out of four remaining members of a wealthy Osage family inside. Not only was this event the height of the "Osage Reign of Terror," propelling the story to national headlines, but it lies at the heart of *Killers of the Flower Moon's* story.

Rita Smith's brother-in-law Ernest Burkhart, was the nephew of a wealthy cattle rancher named William K. Hale. Hale had spent the last years amassing power in the region through murder, bribes, and intimidation. Yet to the outside world, he was masked in a cloak of compassion, "helping" the Osage community and even naming himself "The Reverend." Years before, Hale had pressured his nephew to marry into the Osage community with the plan of murdering and poisoning members until all wealth was his. Yet, when it came to killing his wife of multiple years with whom he had three children, Burkhart hesitated, angering Hale enough to pay Mollie Smith's doctors to poison her slowly. Fortunately, investigators for the case discovered Hale's plan before it was too late, ending his immoral spree of power.

While the Osage community murders are a chilling tale in American history, a more enduring effect is the disenfranchisement of Native Americans. Today, about 2% of the United States land and less than 1% of government spending is allocated to Native American tribes. However, when the Osage tribe stumbled upon their wealth, the government enacted multiple programs to share in their discovery. In return, the Osage's ability to share in the "American Dream" was ripped away, provoking the significant question of who the American Dream truly applies to.



# The Importance of Voting

By Emerson M. G.

Voting is one of the most important traditions in our country and represents one of the most valuable fundamental rights given to American citizens. With the upcoming 2024 election, many upper-classmen at Grauer will have the opportunity to participate in and exercise this right for the first time. While some people may believe that their vote doesn't make a difference, this couldn't be further from the truth. Every election year, less than 50% of Americans in the 18-20 age group register and vote. However, if this voting bloc showed up at the polls, it could significantly alter the political landscape and bring about many changes in America. It's worth noting that over four million Americans will turn 18 this year, resulting in each state gaining an average of 160,000 new voters. Reflecting on the 2020 Presidential election, this number of voters could have potentially impacted the election results in states like Arizona, Georgia, Wisconsin, and more. This illustrates the power and

influence that new voters, such as myself, possess.

Even with the Electoral College in place, your vote continues to hold significance. A prime example of this is the 2000 Presidential election. The election stretched on for weeks, leaving uncertainty about the next President. It ultimately came down to a recount in Florida, which culminated in a Supreme Court decision. Al Gore lost by a mere 0.009 percent of the vote, approximately 537 votes in Florida, and George W. Bush was declared the next President. While this election was extraordinary, it emphasized to the American people that every single vote carries enormous weight. Even if your state predominantly leans in one direction during the Presidential election (e.g., California typically voting Democratic), you can still participate in local and state elections, which are equally consequential. Elected officials at these levels create legislation that can directly impact your life.

If you're not yet 18, there are ways to actively engage as a citizen and prepare for voting when the time comes. The most important step is to stay informed. Read, research, understand your stance on political issues, and identify the individuals you want to represent you when you can vote. Have conversations with people, even if you can't vote, you can still make your opinions and voice heard. Remember, the right to free speech is another one of your fundamental rights as an American citizen, so don't hesitate to exercise it! And finally, consider pre-registering to vote! Once you obtain your driver's license, typically at age 16 or later, you have the opportunity to preregister. While this isn't the same as full voter registration, it helps ensure that when you become eligible, you'll be ready to cast your vote.

**To register or preregister to vote, go to: <https://registertovote.ca.gov>**

# Why Are Expeditions So Valuable?

By Gabby C.

Each semester at the Grauer School, students pick one of the several options offered to go on an educational adventure with their teachers and peers. The purpose of expeditions is for students to gain independence and to be pushed out of their comfort zones, and to learn and be exposed to different cultures and areas outside of The Grauer School campus. This fall, the expedition options were: Pali Institute Middle School Expedition, Cachuma Lake and Santa Barbara High School Expedition, The Real L.A. Expedition, Kenyan Connections, Exploring Thailand: Service

and the Arts, Journey to Bahia De Los Angeles Expedition, and San Diego Day Trips. As a student who had the once-in-a-lifetime experience of going to the Exploring Thailand: Service and the Arts expedition, I could independently grow and get exposed to an area of the world that I had never been deeply familiarized with. Not only did I fall in love with the beautiful country of Thailand, but I was also able to learn about the differing cultures and religions practiced there as well. If Thailand were not an expedition option, I would have never been able to grow, mature, and be exposed to an area of the world that is so tremendously

different from Encinitas, California. After interviewing 12th grader, Kai A., about her experience on the Kenyan Connections expeditions, she shared that, "Being on expeditions relights your imagination and reminds you of all the different cultural places that the earth holds. Being in Kenya with my fellow classmates and teachers was one of the most inspiring and culturally shocking experiences I was able to accomplish." The Grauer School's expeditionary learning makes the school so extraordinarily unique, as other schools do not offer this type of educational experience. Not only are these expeditions impactful and educational, they are also a moment for students to make connections and close bonds with their peers. These beneficial experiences unique to Grauer are something that no student should miss out on. Regardless of where a student decides to go for their expeditionary learning, there is always a life-changing and memorable destination for each and every individual.



Photos by Gabby C.



# Thanksgiving: Remembering Where it Came From

By Gabby C.

In the United States, there are many iconic holidays: Christmas, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and many more. Yet, we often do not give any thought to the history behind these storied traditions. By learning more about the stories behind these days, we can embrace and better understand history. One of the most important and longstanding American holidays is Thanksgiving. As most of us were taught in elementary school, Thanksgiving celebrates the feast shared in the year 1621

between the colonial Pilgrims and Wampanoag Indians, and today is a day to give thanks and show appreciation to loved ones. However, Thanksgiving did not become a recognized holiday until almost a half-century later, in 1789. That year, former President George Washington discussed with Congress the idea of creating an annual holiday for the purpose of giving thanks to the people around us. Almost immediately after, on November 26, 1789, the national holiday, "Day of Public Thanksgiving," was implemented.

Today, Thanksgiving takes its place as a treasured holiday, an annual moment where families are given an opportunity to openly exchange gratitude and appreciation. Unlike some other holidays, Thanksgiving's commitment to the expression of love, gratitude, and thankfulness, is a welcomed change from the "hustle and bustle" of the year. Spending time with family and friends on this holiday is a special moment and should never be taken for granted.

# Horror for the Holidays

By Lily T.

Many think that the spooky spirit dies off on November 1st, as fall bleeds into winter. However, as the night grows longer and the marine layer thickens into a deep fog, it's still the perfect time to curl up with a nice horror movie. The isolation caused by being snowed in and the softer nature of the holidays contrasted with the sharp gore of the genre is the recipe for the perfect horror film. As the Grauer Gazette's resident horror aficionado, I have gathered some of my favorite scary movies for winter. Curl up with some hot cocoa, ignore the tapping outside your window (it's probably just the wind, after all) and hopefully enjoy some of these holiday classics.

On the lighter side, we have my favorite Christmas movie of all time: *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. Tim Burton's masterpiece is an adorable, albeit creepy, stop-motion movie about Jack Skellington, mayor of Halloween Town, and his attempts to recreate this Christmas spirit with a haunted twist. This movie is perfect for all ages, with the imagery being more eerie than outright terrifying. I watched it for the first time when I was eight and I turned out just fine!

A wintery creature feature (and a classic) would definitely be John Carpenter's *The Thing*. Taking place in the Arctic tundra, this story is a master class in build-

ing tension and suspense (the body horror is also sublime). The story follows a team of researchers in the Arctic who stumble onto an extraterrestrial being that has the power to replicate the form of any living creature- even a human being. This is one of my all time favorite movies, and it's definitely worth a watch for any horror fan (avoid the remake, it's not as good).

You can't talk about wintery horror movies without bringing up *The Shining*. Although this movie has been a bit overhyped since its release- Kubrick has created some genius films, but his work isn't the epitome of horror- *The Shining* still remains a fun winter movie about the importance of family over the holiday season. There's even a dog! Everyone loves a dog. There are also a multitude of holiday-themed slashers,

ranging from comedy with moments of genuine terror to just plain silly. The most infamous of these would definitely be *Black Christmas*, the 1974 movie about a group of sorority sisters who have to fight back against a killer over winter break. It would be a typical slasher if not for the holiday twist, which is always a little fun if you don't mind some absurdity in your horror films.

The holidays can also be a stressful time for many, so please take care of yourself! No one wants a deranged lunatic on the loose, so make sure to take time to relax and sleep well as we come closer to break and finals. Horror is just fiction, folks, so please be patient with the people around you as we navigate the end of the semester.

Photo from *The Shining* (1980)





# Primaries for Dummies

By: Sarai S.

This article will simply lay out the basic facts of the primary elections... read it if you don't understand anything about politics, but want to sound smart!

## What are the primaries?

The "primaries" is a term used to encompass all primary elections. The primary elections take place from early March to mid-September of election years (every four years) in order to determine who will run in the general election. In 2024, 46 states will place legislative, congressional, gubernatorial, statewide office, and presidential candidates on the election ballot. The other four states include Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, and Virginia, which hold their elections in odd-numbered years (2023, for example).

## What is a caucus?

Instead of a primary election, some states (such as Iowa), will use a caucus as a form of voting. In a caucus, voters will stand on the side of the room representing which candidate they are voting for. From there, each side will give a speech advocating for their chosen candidate in order to convince others to join their side. A caucus can be "open" or "clo-

sed." If the caucus is "open," any state resident, regardless of party affiliation, can vote. Conversely, if it is a "closed" caucus, only residents registered to vote under the candidates' party (Democrat, Republican, Independent, etc.) can vote.

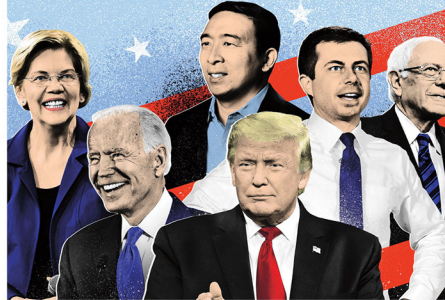


Photo by Junior Scholastic

## How do the primaries affect the general election?

The primaries are elections within parties, meaning that members of the same political party are running against each other to become the candidate for that party in the general election. At the end of the primaries, there will be one candidate for each party. This creates a much smoother general election, as citizens will be voting between a smaller pool of candidates. Unlike the primaries, the general election consists of candidates from different parties running against each other, to

determine an overall winner.

## What is different about this year's primaries?

When the first primary elections took place, the order in which the states held their elections was chosen at random. As Iowa is the first state to hold a democratic caucus, it also holds the most power in determining the democratic candidate. This was seen in 2008 when Barack Obama was running for president. Before the primaries, Obama was pulling (numbers estimating who voters will vote for), significantly lower than his opponents. However, after winning the Iowa caucus, his polling numbers shot up. This year, the democratic party voted to change the order, placing South Carolina as the first state to hold an election. This remains slightly controversial, as studies show that Illinois is the most diverse state (CNN), and in turn most representative of voters. Therefore, many democrats argue Illinois should be the first state, as it will be a better representation of Democratic voters. Voters will have to wait and see what a change in the state election orders will mean for this year's elections. After all, the order has been changed before so it can be changed again.

# Op-Ed: Do Teens Think College is Worth it?

By Emerson M. G.

With the skyrocketing cost of college education and intense competition for admission, many teenagers today are questioning the true value of a college degree. As Grauer seniors embark on their own post-high school journeys, the debate over the value of a college education remains prominent.

For example, in colleges such as Kenyon College in Ohio, tuition alone can soar to \$70,000, not including the additional expenses for housing and other necessities. While this cost may seem high, it's not surprising, as the price tag for most private colleges is mostly similar. Accord-

ing to CNBC, one truly unbelievable statistic is that college tuition has surged by 168% over the past 20 years, a fact that has seemingly gone unnoticed by many.

For some of us, taking the university path is a chance to delve into subjects we're passionate about, providing a sense of structure and opportunities for personal growth. To many, college is an exciting adventure where we can meet lifelong friends, explore new interests, and learn the value of independence. Many teens believe a degree, in the long run, can open doors to better career opportunities and higher earning potential.

Yet the idea of graduating from

college with a mountain of debt is still enough for some of us to question if it's all worth it. Many teens are electing to skip the typical college route to explore gap years, online schools, or even vocational training. By seeking alternative paths, they believe they are gaining independence and practical skills without huge debt.

Ultimately, the answer to whether college is worth it is a complex and personal question. For many, it's not only the high price tag; it's about goals, aspirations, and emotional values. Therefore, as Grauer seniors venture forth into the future, we shouldn't only think about investing in education but our dreams.



# Teacher Spotlight: Louise Hyland

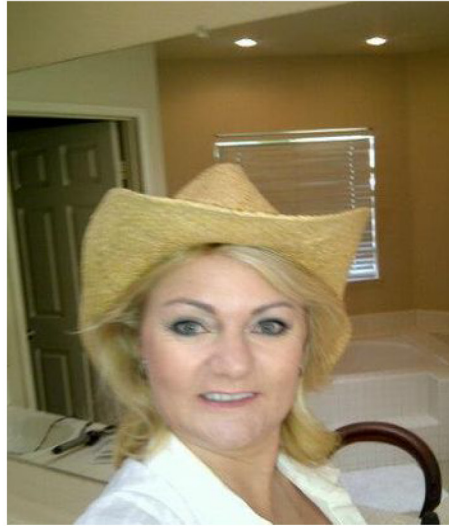
By Adele F.

In the vibrant tapestry of The Grauer School's community, our teachers are more than just educators; they are role models, mentors, and sources of inspiration. Each one of them brings a unique background to the classroom and some have fascinating immigration stories that have shaped their lives. Today, we would like to shed light on one such story, that of our beloved English teacher, Louise Hyland, whose journey from South Africa to the United States is a testament to courage and resilience.

Louise immigrated to the United States in 1992 when she was 24 years old. However, her story goes back to her roots in South Africa. Louise was born in Ivanda, a small town outside of Johannesburg, where she spent a significant part of her life. It was in South Africa that she met her husband and started a family, including a daughter who was just 6 weeks old when they embarked on their life-changing journey.

What makes Louise's immigration story particularly intriguing is the context of apartheid in South Africa during her upbringing. Her parents had moved to South Africa from England as part of the national effort to increase the white population in the country. Consequently, Louise grew up in predominantly white neighborhoods, attended white schools, and for her childhood she remained oblivious to the implications of apartheid. It was only as she grew older that she began to grasp the inherent injustices and discrimination of the apartheid regime.

mination of the apartheid regime.



*Photo of Louise trying to be American*

The motivation for Louise's immigration was a combination of personal beliefs and a desire to effect positive change. A few years before her departure, the South African government banned the teaching of English to black children in towns, forcing them to learn exclusively in Afrikaans. Louise, shocked by this discrimination, decided to take a stand. She founded a school that aimed to educate black students and adults, providing them with the ability to read, write, and speak English. Louise's courage to take a stand also led to numerous challenges. She received death threats from those who opposed her efforts to promote equality and education for all. The threats escalated to a terrifying point when she received

a phone call, warning her about threats to her daughter's well-being. The caller revealed knowledge of her daughter's daily routine, making it clear that her family's safety was in jeopardy. Around that same time, her husband, who was defending the African National Congress, was abruptly approached by a man in a supermarket and told, "Your wife and daughter are very cute, what a shame they'll be gone soon." It was these circumstances that ultimately prompted Louise and her family to make the life-altering decision to immigrate to the United States. Their arrival marked the beginning of a new chapter in their lives, but their struggles weren't quite over. When they arrived in the U.S., they were confronted with the obstacle of finding work. Louise struggled to find any form of employment for a while, due to her circumstances. She did not have a work visa at the time which posed tremendous difficulty. Ultimately, however, Louise was granted a work visa and the financial stress was relieved.

Louise's story is a testament to the perseverance of so many that have immigrated to the United States. Her commitment to education and social justice serves as an inspiring example for us all. This remarkable story allows us to see our teacher in a new light, appreciating not only her expertise in the classroom but also her incredible resilience and determination that brought her here.

## ComplexCon Returns With A Fresh Approach to Art Programming

November 18, 2023 - November 19, 2023

Long Beach Convention Center  
300 E. Ocean Blvd | Long Beach, CA  
90802

VIP | 9AM - 7PM  
GA | 11AM - 7PM

Los Angeles, CA (November 8, 2023) - Arts and culture festival ComplexCon had an undeniable reputation for leading the conversation surrounding pop culture and trends. Now, it makes its seventh annual return to the Long Beach Convention Center November 18th and 19th, this time with a reinvigorated approach to art.

The comprehensive, expertly-curated festival takes a holistic approach to discussions about style, entertainment, and brands that would not be complete without art. With a refreshed dedication to inclusivity, ComplexCon presents an immersive and unforgettable weekend of style, sneakers, art, food, music, inspiration, and more.



# Writers Block

## softly spoken; 5:28 am

By Kate Z.

i ask her what being in love feels like  
 she tells me i have to find out for myself  
 i don't know how  
 the shadows make shapes on my wall  
 and the world is a snow globe with no snow

## December 4th, 1934

By Gavin M.

The day was dark. In the town, the winter had reached its peak, and the chill had grown frost across the dirtied plains. In an unassuming farmhouse, with doors that grew rust and tables that grew empty, a child named Iris was born. As her mother recalls, Iris' cries that evening were not of pain but of a joy that carried her through her early years. When Iris grew older, she would often look out across the empty Texas plains and ask her father, "Was there ever green there?" Her father's eyes would look calmly into his daughter's before falling into a forced forgetfulness - not of shame but a painful remembrance that was better left unsaid. Growing up, Iris quickly learned that the past was something that was better left unsaid, something she would never understand until she grew older.

By the age of ten, Iris had lost two of her older brothers and, despite being the youngest in the family, was forced to accompany her mother into town to gather what was needed. So with an autumn-colored bag and a doll whose face was slightly crooked, Iris and her mother would drive into a lovable but forgettable Texas town every Thursday.

It was on a wind-chilled Thursday afternoon when Iris witnessed her mother sitting on a kitchen chair in an empty room. "Are you ok, Mama?" Iris spoke concernedly. Her mother's time-worn face turned, revealing tears that dried in the black air. Iris watched as her mother's hand moved across the wooden table, grasping a piece of paper. "What is it, Mama?" Without words, Iris's mother's eyes spoke a pained tale, one from a faraway place. Then, in one soft-spoken word, Iris's deepest fears were confirmed "Father!"

# Varsity Volleyball: Season Recap Photos

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*Photos by Kai D.*





# Archer City, 1966

## A Flash Fiction Creative Writing Story

By Gavin M.

It happened in the final two weeks of high school. I was outside of the Royal Theater on a date with some blonde girl whose name I can't remember. She was dressed in a colorful, almost nauseating shirt with faded jeans. As soon as I heard the sound, I knew what it was. A lone gunshot ringing out into the night. Now, Archer City isn't a small town, but when I tell you that shot rang out like some sort of screeching devil, I'm not lying in the slightest.

Immediately, people outside the theater turned their heads so hard you would've thought some got whiplash. They peered out into the dark night, trying to catch a glimpse, some clue about what happened, but nothing was there. The girl I was with pulled on my arm and asked if I knew what had happened. I don't remember what I said, but it was something along the lines of "I don't know either. Why would I know?" That lie didn't do much, but what could I have said? I told her that I had to go, and so I left that old broken-down theater playing Doctor Zhivago. To this day, I still don't know what actually happens in that film. I never even got to watch the damn opening credits.

Everybody in our town knew pretty much everyone, but that didn't mean they liked each other. My friend at the time, Danny, told me that senior year, he felt the whole town was coming apart. Lucky for him, he had gotten a scholarship the summer before to Texas University for some bio-engineering degree. Pretty amazing, considering his parents were some of the most religious people in town. How he got so good at it, I'll never know. I think he works down in Houston still or maybe moved out East. I don't remember to tell the truth, but the reason I knew exactly what that sound meant that night was because of a guy named James Lucas. In school, he was a typical jock, popular with the girls and guys, but to everybody, dumb as a doorbell. I knew differently. I had met him a couple of years ago when we were still in middle school.

One day, after eating a nutritious meal of fluff and milk, I noticed him sitting by himself at the end of the yard. I don't know why I did, but I just felt the need to walk over there, some instinct, I guess. When I got there, I asked him his name and what he was doing. He replied simply but I knew there was something underneath. He told me how his family had just moved here from some other town. Why someone would move here, I'll never understand. He had gotten roughed up by some kid after the third period. He said he tried to fight back, kicking and punching, and even got the guy good in the chin but couldn't win. I saw the anger on his face, but even then, I could see the sadness that dripped underneath the surface like a rusted faucet.

Over the next year, I got to know him pretty well, and after a couple of months at school, he started playing football. Immediately, you could tell he was special. I mean, he threw a spiral like you've never seen before. We eventually grew apart, but I always kept watch of him... so did the entire town. In senior year, the whole state knew he was going somewhere. Each Friday night, when the day's heat cooled, and a fall breeze flew through the fields, the two stands that our school had would be overflowing with kids and adults looking to get a glimpse of the great James Lucas. When the game ended, the crowd would mob him like he was one of the Beatles.

In March of that same year, he finally got the town's dream: a full ride to the University of Alabama for football. The town buzzed with energy for weeks. Soon after that, tragedy struck. I knew from being his friend when we were younger that nothing meant more to him than his parents. He would tell me that if he ever got out of Archer City, the first thing he would do was buy his parents a home, something better than the crashpad they lived in. When most people say that, they say it out of some false sense of self-pride, but when James spoke, he was dead serious. That night, a heavy rain fell. His parents, on their way home from a night out, were said to never have even seen the end of the bridge. People in town said the truck spun about six times before it finally stopped in the creek below. James didn't find out till the next morning.

For the next weeks, people saw James less and less around town. The ironic thing was that for all the love the town had given him for his running, passing, and scoring, after the first few days, no one said anything about the accident. Absolutely nothing. The town still loved him of course, but they couldn't care for him the way he needed: the way his parents did. Pretty soon, he couldn't play the way he used to, but the crowd didn't care enough to ask why. They wanted him to be the star he was before.

The day before it happened, I caught a glimpse of him leaving the cafeteria. His eyes were like a ghost's. Murky and empty. In the afternoon, I heard a rumor that Alabama was going to rescind their offer if he didn't get his grades up. No one helped him. The only person who even came to his house after the accident was a college scout who dropped off a letter.

The night before, on the way home from school, I took a turn from my normal route and walked up the road James lived on. The house was eerie. There was nothing different on the surface except some faded paint on the surrounding fence, but the building held a deep feeling of despair. I remember walking up to the door and wanting to knock, but I couldn't. Something held me back. Something stopped me. Even though it wasn't the same, I still wanted to help him.

I loved him like a brother, but love is a funny thing. Everyone in the world can love you and scream your name, but when the lights go out, love disappears real quick. That night, it rained in Archer City.



# The Power of Laziness

## A Satirical Persuasive Essay for Louise's 10th Grade English Class

By Mycah A.

Lazy people are often underestimated for their unique skills and mindset that can provide unconventional solutions and optimize efficiency. Their instinct to avoid unnecessary effort promotes problem-solving automation, resource conservation, and delegation to boost productivity. While the merits of diligence are undeniable, laziness fosters critical thinking to find easier approaches, rather than sticking to the status quo. Thus, the lazy mindset, when harnessed constructively, can drive innovation, enhance teamwork, and unveil ingenious alternatives that may go overlooked by conventional wisdom.

Lazy individuals have an instinct to avoid unnecessary effort. This leads them to favor simplicity and efficiency. The article by Miller et al. demonstrates this through its discussion of "plays." Plays are pre-defined routines that allow complex tasks to be accomplished easily. By compiling common behaviors into a play, the task can be completed more efficiently just by invoking that play. However, the article notes that having too many plays would become inefficient - determining which play to use would require substantial effort. Thus, the play set needs to be limited to contain only the most useful routines. This promotes overall simplicity and efficiency. The quote states, "Plays achieve their efficiency by compiling a set of behaviors from among all those possible and assigning an easily-accessed label to them. If every possible combination had a label assigned, determining the correct one would be inefficient for both supervisor and subordinates. Thus, the play set will need to be limited for most domains" (Miller et al.,). The limited set of plays caters directly to the lazy preference for simplicity. Lazy individuals want to avoid wasting effort considering numerous options or remembering a vast number of plays. They desire the simplest, most straightforward solution. In this way, the article illustrates how laziness favors efficiency through simplified approaches. The lazy mindset seeks the easiest solutions instead

of complicated ones. This tendency can uncover simpler methods missed by conventional thinking. The desire to avoid unnecessary effort leads lazy people to pioneer more efficient techniques.

Not only does laziness promote efficiency, but it also spurs unconventional thinking and innovation. When faced with a problem, the lazy mind instinctively searches for shortcuts and easier solutions. Rather than following established protocols, lazy thinkers challenge assumptions and imagine creative alternatives. As the article by Haselager et al. explains, computational models of cognition often run into intractability problems when trying to process complex real-world information. Conventional models attempt to form accurate internal representations and plans based on environmental stimuli. However, the exponential combination of variables makes this infeasible. Lazy minds circumvent this issue by avoiding complex modeling entirely. As the article states, "the processes subserving cognitive behavior cannot be directly mapped onto brain structures" (Haselager et al.,). Instead of mapping stimuli to internal models, lazy thinkers rely on simple perception-action couplings. This eliminates the need for complicated abductive reasoning. Rather than exerting great effort to model the world, laziness compels innovators to find simple direct input-output systems. These creative solutions completely reimagine conventional models and spark innovative advancements. The inherent desire to avoid unnecessary work pushes lazy minds to pioneer groundbreaking improvements. Their unconventional thinking challenges orthodox methods and uncovers original possibilities overlooked by traditional perspectives. Ultimately, laziness fosters innovation by refusing established approaches and seeking imaginative alternatives.

Laziness not only drives efficiency and innovation, but also promotes collaboration and delegation. When faced with an unpleasant task, the lazy instinct is to avoid exerting effort personally, if possi-

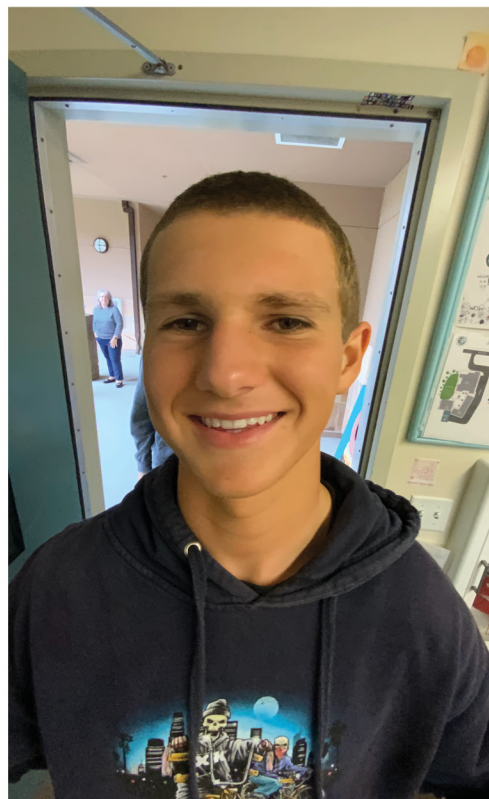
ble. Instead, lazy individuals will attempt to delegate the work to others. As Madsen discusses, delegation is a key leadership skill that enhances teamwork and productivity (Madsen). Rather than monopolizing duties, delegating allows responsibilities to be distributed across capable team members. While often perceived negatively, a lazy person's tendency to delegate can unlock tremendous collaborative potential. Lazy leaders must discern colleagues' strengths and orchestrate skillful delegation to optimize labor division. This avoids overburdening any one team member and ensures each task is assigned to the most capable party. Lazy delegators must provide sufficient guidance to set up others for autonomous success. When done thoughtfully, delegation catalyzes productivity by allowing collaborative specialization. It also provides growth opportunities through new responsibilities and skills development. Most importantly, delegation prevents wasting effort on activities better addressed by others. The quote explains that "Delegation involves work allocation and sharing of responsibility with subordinates...It leads to employee development, unity of direction and optimal utilization of skills" (Singh). In this manner, the lazy inclination to delegate taps into team members' full potential and unique capabilities. Rather than monopolizing duties, lazy leaders distribute tasks to optimize collaborative contributions.

In conclusion, the lazy mindset often defies expectations through its promotion of critical thinking. Rather than blindly following established practices, laziness spurs unconventional solutions that enhance efficiency, spark innovation, and unlock collaborative potential. Thus, when properly channeled, the instincts of lazy thinkers can drive progress and optimize productivity through imagination, delegation, and a relentless pursuit of easier approaches.

## The Artist's Block

The Artist's Block is a column where we interview Grauer student artists. The art form can be something the student participates in on campus or outside of school. If you would like to be interviewed, please contact [grauergazette@grauerschool.com](mailto:grauergazette@grauerschool.com).

This week's interview is with Ty M., a student in 10th grade. Ty is a talented musician who is a leading part of Grauer's Music Department.



*Ty M.*

**What was the first activity that made you interested in your art?**

“When my grandma showed me classic rock. She showed me bands like Jimmy Hendrix, AC-DC, and The Doors.”

**What is your favorite moment in music?**

“Probably performing. It gives me a rush...it's cool.”

**Who is your favorite artist (alive or dead)?**

“Black Sabbath. They're one of the first people to create heavy metal and it's one of my favorite genres...so probably that.”

**What is your dream song to perform?**

“I think I already did it. Ice Cream Man (Van Halen). I've always wanted to play that and I just did. So that's cool.”

**What would you do with your art in the future?**

“I want to be an artist and make money from it. I would love to play some cool shows. Playing So-Fi Stadium would be insane.”

**For students: If you are interested in joining Journalism next year, please contact Louise Hyland for more information! We are always taking submissions so we encourage you to submit to the email below.**

## Info

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