

THE Grauer Gazette

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ENCINITAS, WEDNESDAY, MAY 27TH, 2026

The Grauer School

Making the Most of Your Time at Grauer

By Zoe Br.

Dear Grauer Student,

If you went to any of the Senior Graduation Defences earlier this month, you probably heard Dana prompt us to advise the younger students on campus—here is some of that advice.

One of the most common responses was to say “yes” and to join in activities, and it was the most common for a reason. Middle and high school are perfect times to experiment with hobbies, interests, sports, and everything else that makes up you. Does this mean that you should say “yes” to every extracurricular or project you hear about? No. If you have no interest in something, don’t join in. That could make you resentful of yourself and the people involved, while also taking up your precious time.

So that’s what to join, but how do all those different activities help you? Well, in many ways. They can give you a space to better connect with similarly inclined peers and could launch a whole new friendship. They teach you helpful life skills that you might not learn elsewhere: leadership, teamwork, sewing, building, coding, and problem solving, to name a few. Even if you don’t end up loving the new extracurricular and decide to step away from it—which is perfectly fine and another important thing to learn how to do—you will have learned things about yourself.



These campus-related activities can also give you access to teachers and faculty that you might not otherwise connect with. This can make starting in their class later in your Grauer journey less daunting, make striking up a conversation or asking questions less scary, and give you access to these amazing people earlier. Additionally, having worked with a variety of students and faculty alike gives you more resources

down the road because you know who to go talk to, and they know you, so they really want to help.



Every semester, when it’s time to choose our expeditions, we are told to pick what we find most interesting, to push ourselves out of our comfort zone, and not to just go where our friends are going. If you are at Grauer for all of high school, that is eight different trips you’re picking. My advice is not to pick every expedition for the same reason. Go on trips with your friends—it’s fun, you connect even deeper, and you’ll think back on those memories very fondly. But, don’t shy away from trips that really interest you because your friends don’t want to go—I went to Poland last year without any of my close friends just because I love history and the trip sounded perfect. Despite being alone for most of the trip, I still had fun and learned a ton. By going on expeditions for various reasons, you’ll get a better overall experience and learn more about yourself.

Along the same vein, pick classes for you, not for anyone else. If you are interested in music, but all of your friends are taking art, you might be inclined to take art. This can be a great place for personal growth and finding more people to connect with: join a music class, put yourself out there, and remember, you’re at Grauer, if you don’t like it, you can switch.

Self-advocacy is maybe the most important core value to develop over your Grauer career. You go to a school that is very accepting of any changes you need to make to better your life and your mental

health. In ninth grade, I wanted to continue to study history, despite not having a history class. I ended up working with Peter to create an honors program in Geometry, where I made presentations about different aspects of the history of math. It is opportunities like these that make Grauer so special, so take advantage of them: ask for extensions, work with teachers, and make your education work for you... and ask for help.

While Grauer had countless wonderful activities, sports, and clubs to offer, I think it is important that you have something outside of it, too. Whether that is a club or an independent sports team, a friend group that survived from elementary school, a big, close-knit family, a place where you routinely volunteer, a job, or really anything else, having that outside outlet builds up your life more and can easily make you feel more productive and involved while also giving you access to different people and resources.



This school is a wonderful place with countless opportunities, and you’ll likely have a good experience no matter what. However, to have a really amazing time here—and be sad to leave—you really need to take advantage of the experiences offered to you. Don’t let the opportunities pass you by; collect them like the precious treasure they are because they will teach you more important lessons than your classes themselves.

Your friend (and a very sentimental senior), Zoe Brisbois

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Behind the Stage

By Isabella M.

Two Fridays ago, the Grauer School hosted a night of art, live music, and fun: Grauerpalooza! The evening held performances of songs (from throughout the decades), a gallery of student art, student-designed clothing, senior businesses, and more. However, it would not have been possible without all the months of hard work from the students.

Grauerpalooza is a wonderful example of how our school events bring the community together, as we see everyone pitching in around campus. Students are helping each other learn parts, find equipment, and giving each other encouragement. In the music room, students will be coming in whenever they can to practice, demonstrating their excitement for the concert. In the art room, students are creating their art throughout the year. It is phenomenal to be

able to see all the hard work showcased as the year comes to a close.



Families and friends alike arrive on campus, and there is immediately an electric atmosphere. Whether it's their first time performing or their hundredth, student excitement feels tangible on campus. For three hours, students performed on stage, showcasing songs they spent countless hours on. Through each song, you watch confidence and smiles grow.

The end of the evening is one of the most moving moments, though. Students congratulate each other, the audience claps, and appreciation for all their hard work is felt. Even further, as Tom Hopper commented, "To cap off the whole concept of community, you have not only our students, you have family members, friends, parents, etc., all stepping in to help actually break down the equipment and bring it inside. Also: they aren't just helping with the sound equipment. They're helping clean up our festival... that was one of the most beautiful parts, seeing everyone come together at the end... And I just think that is a really important part of the community." The most beautiful part to me is that this isn't just one event; this is a daily part of life at the Grauer School.

Middle School Highlight

By Zoe Br.

The Middle School Associate Student Body has been very active this year. They have hosted an impressive number of dances, as well as a beach party; this month, they topped the year off with a Field Day!



On May 8th, instead of going to their usual Friday activities, the seventh and



eighth graders were treated to an afternoon of exciting, active, and community-building summer-y fun. There, they jumped around in a large bouncy castle-esque obstacle course, got henna tattoos from Sahina and some of the students, had an opportunity to enjoy some facepainting, and participated in a water balloon fight!

Based on how successful the event was, Paige, Paul Michael, and the Middle School ASB are reflecting, looking ahead, and hoping to turn the end-of-year Field Day celebration into a new annual Grauer tradition.



The Met Gala: The Good and The Bezos

By Zoe Ba.

Whether it be through illustrative embroidery or a statement necklace, clothing has long been considered a form of expression for the vast majority of the population. With the Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) officially opening a new gallery titled the "Condé M. Nast Galleries", it

should come as no surprise that this year's Met Gala was centered around honoring this expansion. Costume Art, in particular, is what inspired this year's theme, "Fashion is Art," which encouraged guests to wear garments correlated to the exhibitions found within the Met. chance to connect

directly with the community," said event coordinator Jasmine Patel. "It's exciting to see so many people appreciating local talent and spending time together."

On May 4, 2026, the event received a strong start with Joshua Henry's live performance of "I Wanna Dance With

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Somebody”, after which guests began to arrive on the carpet. One of the more notable outfits of the night was Sabrina Carpenter’s. Arriving in a custom Dior slit tulle dress, the singer played into her “Old Hollywood” aesthetic by complementing the look with doll curls and a bejeweled headpiece affectionately known as a “Sabrina”. Furthermore, the outfit, designed by Jonathan Anderson, also featured film strips from the 1954 movie *Sabrina*. These strips formed the bodice wrapped around the singer. The artist’s presence alone was not the end of her involvement in the Met Gala; Carpenter also performed a short (and certainly a little sweet) set alongside Stevie Nicks as guests enjoyed their dinner.

Although the duo’s performance was one of the more memorable occurrences, many outfits worn on the Met Gala’s 2026 carpet were performances in their own right. It was through such an execution that many were left questioning whether time travel was real. Singer and songwriter Bad Bunny (Benito) arrived at the Met nearly twenty years older, providing a glimpse

into how his “silver fox” era could present itself. With gray hair and hyperrealistic prosthetics (designed by Mike Marino) covering his face and even his hands, Benito was unrecognizable as he walked down the Met’s green carpet. This design was said to be inspired by one of the texts provided in the exhibition catalog: “Perhaps reflecting our fear of having to face our own mortality, the youth-oriented fashion industry has traditionally ignored the aged body.” In an interview with *Vogue*, the artist stated that one must attempt to do everything they wish to do so that when they do eventually reach that older age, there will be nothing to regret.



Many designers went above and beyond to deliver on the Met Gala’s theme, providing a swarm of well-dressed celebrities to funnel into the art museum. However, alongside the positive response this year’s Met has received, there has also been incredible backlash. The primary cause of this negativity is connected to Jeff Bezos’ role as one of the primary sponsors and honorary co-chairs. The event has already been critiqued for being “out of touch”, es-

pecially when taking into consideration the surrounding political climate. Some view the event as nearly dystopian, and comparisons to *The Hunger Games* have been circling the internet. As such, the billionaire’s involvement only appeared to enhance the event’s incongruity. An anti-Bezos campaign encouraged boycotts and was further supported by New York’s mayor, Zohran Mamdani’s decision to skip the event.

This year’s Met Gala, as always, succeeded in raising the funds required for the Met’s self-funded Costume Institute; however, the discourse surrounding the event should not be omitted. At what point do current events take precedence over tradition, and can this event truly claim to do all this it hopes when its existence is reliant upon secrecy? Fashion being the strong medium that it is, one cannot help but wonder whether this year’s theme could have done more to utilize its influence.

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Red Queen v.s Powerless: When Inspiration Becomes Plagerism

By Beatrix M.Y.

Red Queen, by Victoria Aveyard, came out in 2015. The story follows a girl named Mare, who lives in a world where class is divided by the color of one’s blood. Most people in this story are normal people, or Reds, with normal human abilities and red blood. However, the hyper elite, or Silvers, have silver blood, and with that speciality, they also possess specialized powers. These abilities can range from element manipulation to metal-bending and physical enhancement. Mare is a highly skilled pickpocket and the older sister of Gisa, who is a talented seamstress. Mare spends the book posing as a Silver and working under-

cover for the rebellion as she tries to blend in with the elite. There she finds herself in a deadly tournament where she must prove her abilities.

In all, it was a relatively standard 2010s YA book. The series experienced relative success, and its fan base remained strong as the five-book series continued. However, after the last book was published in 2018, its popularity began to slow. However, it cemented itself as a classic, and many first-time readers were directed to it when they entered the “book-tok” space.

Powerless, by Lauren Roberts, was released in 2023, nearly 10 years after

Red Queen’s first publication. The story follows a girl named Payden, whose world is divided into two social classes following a plague. There are ordinary people with regular abilities and the Elite, who were granted powers following the plague. Payden is a skilled thief, and her best friend, Adena (who is described as practically a sister), is a talented seamstress. Payden spends the majority of the book posing as an Elite, and suddenly finds herself thrown into a dangerous tournament where she goes toe to toe with powerful Elites on a battlefield.

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Hopefully, you read that last paragraph and realized how similar the two books are. In addition to these glaring similarities, there is also a love triangle between the two princes of the kingdom; these princes have the same father but different mothers; the elite class is severely removed from the lower class to “keep their bloodlines pure”; and the seamstress’s best friend/sister gets her sewing fingers broken. However, these are just thematic similarities; there were scene-for-scene recreations several times throughout the book. For instance, there is a ball scene where the main character gets dancing lessons from one of the princes, and then she dances with the other prince. While they are dancing, the rebellion that they work for attacks the ball.



There are so many more similarities, both scene and thematic, and people online have been calling out Roberts for her rewriting. Surprisingly, Roberts hasn’t shied away from this comparison. When she first began advertising her book, she described it as a “mix of Red Queen and The Hunger Games,” but it isn’t inspiration; it’s exact plagiarism. Following this discovery, a significant amount of Robert’s fanbase has dropped her. However, there is a bright side to this: Aveyard’s books have seen significant popularity growth, with ex-fans of Powerless seeking out the original text that they love so much. This controversy has encouraged readers to think deeper about the media they are supporting and consuming moving forward.

The Return of Phoebe Bridgers

By Sadie S.M.

After a two-year hiatus, Phoebe Bridgers made an unexpected reappearance on May 8, 2026, in Roswell, New Mexico. With only a one-day notice, every Pharbz, the term for a Phoebe Bridgers fan, was distraught about how to attend the concert. Even though only a few hundred people were present, the venue was ignited in support of the reemerging musician. Now, these devoted individuals are looking forward to a promising future filled with more music; however, for the average person, the name Phoebe Bridgers may not even register. Therefore, whether someone is a dedicated fan or is hearing of her for the first time, this article will cover the ins and outs of Phoebe Bridgers.



Growing up, Bridgers lived a relatively simple yet creative life in Pasadena, California. As a kid, her Mom worked in real estate while simultaneously balancing a comedy career, and her Dad was a set builder for TV shows and movies. Both of their presences in the artistic world heavily impacted Bridger’s decision to pursue mu-

sic later in her life. Specifically, her love for music grew during middle and high school. At age 13, Bridgers learned guitar, a skill which she used to make some extra money at local farmers’ markets. A few years later, she attended the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, a place where she studied jazz and embraced collaboration with bands. These moments set the stage for her future, ultimately persuading her to drop out of Berklee College of Music in Boston.

Shortly thereafter, Bridgers released some SoundCloud tracks, but nothing too professional yet. In 2015, though, Bridgers connected with well-known singer-songwriter Ryan Adams and finally released her first single, “Killer.” It was a song filled with dark emotion and folksy feels, defining her career as it continued with those same undertones. Two years passed before she launched her first studio album, *Stranger in the Alps*, and then another three years before her most famous album, *Punisher*. While *Stranger in the Alps* gathered Bridger’s listeners, *Punisher* secured four Grammy nominations.

Unlike many popular musicians, Bridgers was not only a solo artist but a member of the band Boy Genius. Composed of three individuals: Phoebe Bridgers, Lucy Dacus, and Julien Baker, Boy Genius was powered by friendship, harmonies, and emotional depth. Sadly, while the band did

begin soon after *Stranger in the Alps* was released, they have now taken an indefinite hiatus due to members’ pursuit of individual careers. Do not lose hope, though, because there is always a possibility.

Now, back to the present day. At this moment, Bridgers has played two small-venue concerts: in Rockwell, New Mexico, and in Lubbock, Texas. Unfortunately, both concerts were marketed in a very niche way with flyers, meaning people outside of those areas had limited access. There was also a strict “No cellphones, smart watches, smart glasses, cameras, or recording devices allowed” on the flyer, so video footage of her actual stage presence is nonexistent. On the flip side, Pharbz are optimistic. Now, the hope is that if Bridgers maintains this status quo, the future of new music is bright, meaning that sparks have reignited with fans globally. So, next time a celebrity or musician goes on a hiatus, hang on, because they might be back quicker than expected.

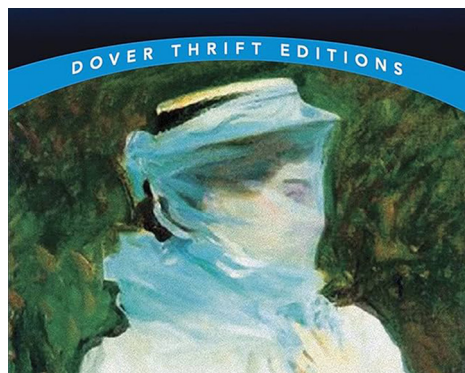


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Self Talk: The Awakening

By MJ C.

The Awakening by Kate Chopin tells the story of Edna Pontellier, a woman living in late 19th-century New Orleans, Louisiana, who begins to question the expectations placed on her as a wife and mother.



At the start of the novel, Edna follows the traditional role society expects of her, but after spending time at Grand Isle, she starts to realize she wants more independence, passion, and control over her own life. Her relationships with Robert Lebrun and Alcée Arobin help awaken emotions and desires that she has long ignored. As Edna grows more aware of herself, she distances herself from her husband, Léonce, and the strict social rules surrounding her.

The novel explores themes of freedom, identity, gender roles, and the conflict between personal desire and social responsibility. The ocean becomes an important symbol of escape and self-discovery, representing both freedom and danger. Edna's

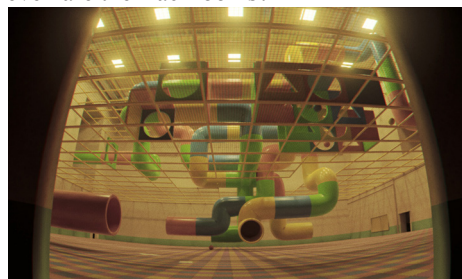
"awakening" is not just romantic, but emotional and psychological as she searches for who she truly is outside of society's expectations. However, because the world around her does not allow much space for female independence, her journey ends tragically.

Personally, I think The Awakening is powerful because it shows how difficult it can be to choose yourself when the world expects something different. Edna is often judged for being selfish, but I think she is really trying to understand her own worth and identity. Her story feels frustrating and sad, but it is so very honest. It makes readers think about how much society shapes personal choices, especially for women, and whether true freedom is ever possible.

Lost in the Backrooms

By Sadie S.M.

At the end of March, A24, an independent American film and television company, released a trailer for a movie that will set the tone for this year's horror. Backrooms, a movie about the liminal space conspiracy theory, is set to premiere on May 29, 2026. Due to this quick turnaround between the official announcement and the release date, many people are left wondering: What even are the Backrooms?



Before diving any deeper into the endless maze, picture this: a vast space of doors upon doors, bright lights flickering with eerie anticipation, and a silence that echoes louder than a hyena's yell. That feeling, the one portrayed by simple yet creepy words, is the constant state and concept of the Backrooms. Starting on the internet, like most conspiracies today, the Backrooms grew out of a single photo and description, one published on 4chan, an online website where anonymous users can post and discuss ideas. The imagery rapidly spread due to its enticing, mysterious ambience, which proved in-

creasingly valuable to the entire plot. As the theory progressed, even more individuals began to make assumptions and predictions about it. This communal effort made it more elaborate and complicated, and simultaneously more confusing.

Now, what about some theories within the overall framework? Well, one of the biggest misconceptions is that the Backrooms are solely one room on one level. In reality, the Backrooms is a series of levels, each with its own unique pattern of rooms and corridors. It is also predicted that as one moves down a level in the Backrooms, the scenes become weirder and more eccentric. Another idea is about the "9223372036854775807 level" of the Backrooms. This number, one known as the biggest value of a 64-bit signed integer in computing, has been used as the metaphorical last stage of the Backrooms. It is simply a way of stating how distant the final level is from reality. Lastly, the most crucial part is that an individual must "no clip" to enter the Backrooms. "No clipping" is basically a glitch in a video game; however, in the Backrooms, it is the way people travel from this reality to another. By "no clipping," people find doors to enter the Backrooms, and from there, the exploration, which sometimes turns into the end, begins.

Snapping back into reality, how

does the movie intertwine with all of this? Mainly, this marks a serious milestone in the horror industry. While a few internet fads have become movies, including in 2018 one based on the Slender Man theory, the A24 adaptation may be more influential. This is due to its director, Kane Parsons. Kane is a man of many talents, including a strong YouTube presence for his involvement in a series about the Backrooms. The series explores what the Backrooms may feel like in the first-person perspective, which has deeply captivated viewers worldwide. All of this reassures the audience that the movie will reflect the actual Backrooms and will not become a boring recreation.



In sum, the Backrooms conspiracy theory is one of the most baffling online spectacles of human imagination. It shows how, sometimes, a little curiosity and suspicion can lead to bigger things. Now that the movie is coming out in a few weeks, the final steps for everyone are to sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.

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Nobody Is “Original”

By Zoe Ba.

“It has all been done before.” I drag the tips of my fingers down my face and stare red-eyed at the blank page before me. My fingers itch with one million untold stories, and yet it has all been done before. I have to urge to curse anyone and everyone who ever dared to write.

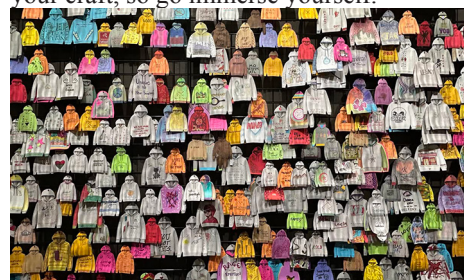


If this scene looks familiar, have comfort in the knowledge that originality is near impossible...at least in the way it's so commonly defined: with the insinuation that your idea must not only be unique but also rid of inspiration. This definition fosters ri-

gidity and the inability to think creatively; for in order to be creative, inspiration is required, from others and the environment surrounding you. Oftentimes, it is this fear of having your art misinterpreted that stunts the production of truly original pieces. It may seem paradoxical to view art stemming from a shared idea as original; however, I assure you that it is. While an idea may have been “done before”, the important thing is that it has not been done by you. This leaves a vast array of pathways to take: to make the art your own and to pursue the angles left unexamined.

Look at the actress Rachel McAdams. Can you think of a movie where she played a time traveler's wife? Because I can think of three, all of which were successful: *The Time Traveler's Wife* (2009), *Midnight in Paris* (2011), and *About Time* (2013).

This just goes to show that originality is not about similarity; it is about bringing your unique insight to whatever idea sparks your interest and exploring beyond. There has been a lot of debate over what can or cannot be considered original; regardless of this, your voice should still be heard in whatever form it desires. Staring at the blank page does nothing; often, you will find the addition of unique qualities to your art only comes once you've immersed yourself in your craft, so go immerse yourself.



KAZTEL and the New Era of Independent Fashion

By Leyton G.

In recent years, independent fashion has begun to redefine the clothing industry. Instead of relying on massive corporations or traditional luxury houses, a new generation of designers has started building brands through individuality, internet culture, and direct creative expression. One example of this new movement is KAZTEL, an experimental clothing brand focused on atmosphere, storytelling, and design.



KAZTEL was created with the intention of becoming more than just a clothing label. The brand combines elements of fashion, graphic design, music, and visual art to create pieces that feel emotional and immersive rather than simply “trendy.” While many modern brands focus primarily

on fast-changing trends, KAZTEL prioritizes identity, originality, and artistic direction.

A major part of KAZTEL's identity comes from its visual style. The brand explores distorted graphics, halftone textures, oversized silhouettes, metallic imagery, and ambient design influences. Its inspiration comes from multiple cultures, streetwear movements, and experimental visual art. Instead of designing clothing only for functionality, the goal is to create garments that feel like part of a larger world or atmosphere.

KAZTEL takes inspiration from designers such as Raf Simons and Martin Margiela. Through its designs and pieces, KAZTEL pays homage to New York and Japanese streetwear, while maintaining a laid-back Southern California demeanor.

One of the most important aspects of independent fashion today is access to creative tools. Programs such as Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator allow small designers to create professional-level graphics and mockups without needing

the resources of large fashion companies. Through experimentation with screen printing, garment construction, and digital design, independent creators are able to turn ideas into fully realized clothing collections.



Another reason independent fashion has grown rapidly is that younger audiences are increasingly searching for individuality. Many consumers no longer want clothing that feels commercial or identical to everything else available in stores. Instead, people are drawn toward brands with a clear artistic vision and a strong sense of authenticity. Independent labels often feel more personal because they are closely connected to the designer's own ideas, interests, and experiences.

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Although building an independent fashion brand can be difficult, the process encourages creativity, entrepreneurship, and problem-solving. Designers must learn not only how to create clothing, but also how to market products, communicate ideas, source materials, and develop a recognizable identity. Through KAZTEL, these challenges become part of the cre-

ative process itself.

KAZTEL reflects a larger shift happening within fashion today. Independent brands are proving that creativity and originality can exist outside of major fashion corporations. As technology and social media continue to evolve, smaller designers now have more opportunities than ever to shape culture and build meaningful cre-

ative communities. In many ways, brands like KAZTEL represent the future of fashion, one built on experimentation, individuality, and artistic freedom.

For more information, please reach out to our Instagram at https://www.instagram.com/kaztel_00/

What is Larping, and How Does One Larp?

By Leyton G.

What does it mean to larp? Larping means Live Action Role Playing, where people physically act out characters or scenarios in real life rather than simply describing them in a game. Typically, this consists of people in costumes, wielding foam swords, fantasy politics, vampire intrigue, post-apocalyptic barter towns, and dramatic declarations in a park at 2 p.m. However, it has evolved far beyond medieval forests and foam swords.



Today, larping is often used to describe people performing a lifestyle or identity through visible status symbols rather than authentic experiences. It is no longer about fantasy kingdoms but about curating personas. The costume rack has changed. Instead of chainmail, it might be a quarter-zip sweater, a Starbucks-colored Rolex, a leased Lamborghini, a matcha to pair with wired headphones, or a social media profile built like a movie set.

The quarter zip has become one of the great uniforms of aspirational adulthood. It signals polished success, country-club competence, startup confidence, or finance-floor efficiency. It can be practical clothing, of course, but culturally it has also become shorthand for someone trying to inhabit a specific archetype: the youth executive, the golf-networking strategist, the “I close deals before lunch” character. The garment itself is innocent cotton. The theater happens when it becomes a shortcut to credibility.

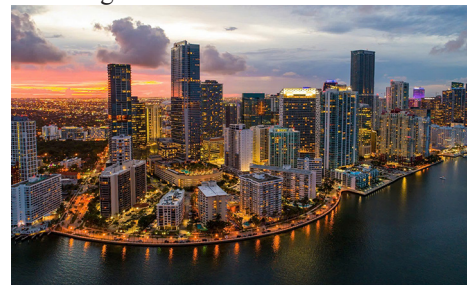
Modern larping often lives in the tiny accessories, the props that seem casual but are carefully chosen. If the quarter zip and Lambo are billboard-sized signals, then matcha and wired headphones are subtler brushstrokes. They whisper their identity instead of shouting it.

Matcha has become more than a drink. It can signal wellness, discipline, taste, and a kind of polished self-optimization. Carrying an iced matcha through the city suggests routine, intention, and maybe a life organized around calendars and morning rituals. It says, “I am not chaotic coffee energy. I am a curated focus.” Whether that is true or not, it almost doesn’t matter, because the cup itself conveys the message:

green liquid as personal branding.

Then there are the wired headphones, one of the most important essentials for larping. In an age of invisible wireless earbuds, wired headphones feel deliberate. They suggest authenticity, anti-hype taste, nostalgia, or artistic seriousness. The dangling cord says, “I reject frictionless convenience. I choose texture.” They can imply someone is more tuned into music, more grounded, less swamped by trend cycles. Again, sometimes true, sometimes theater.

These are just a few minimal examples of how to larp. Many of us must work our way up to what many call Larp Maxxing. Larp Maxxing is when you acquire a penthouse in Miami, an arsenal of Rolexes, Lambos, and maybe even a seat next to Clavicular. I hope this article was informative and helps many further their LARPing. Good luck.



By Luke W.

May Gray, June Gloom

Imagine this, your school workload is lightening up, you start hearing about summer plans, but one thing is off: the weather. In Southern California, the weather never reflects summer this time of year. Tourists expect sunny beaches with blue skies, but are met with fog and cold

water. Southern Californians have nicknamed this season “May Gray” and “June Gloom,” reflecting the dense layer of fog that hovers over the coast.

Locals call the fog the marine layer. The marine layer is common because cold ocean water cools the air above it. The

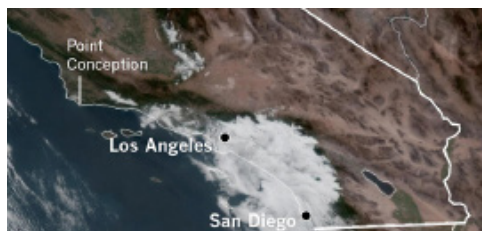
cool air gets trapped beneath the warmer air in the higher atmosphere. This creates a temperature inversion, which prevents the clouds from rising or moving away.

This phenomenon occurs from San Diego to Los Angeles. Occasionally, the clouds burn off by mid-afternoon,

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revealing sunny summer skies. Most of the time, the gray lasts for the entire day. The further inland you go, the less cloud coverage there is because the land heats up much faster than the ocean.

Although most Californians dislike this weather (I am one of them), it of



fers a more gradual transition into the intense summer heat of Southern California. For tourists expecting sunshine and blue skies in June, the gray skies can be disappointing. But for locals, late spring reminds us that even in a place famous for its weather, nature still follows its own schedule.

By MJ C.

Memorial Day is an important American holiday observed on the last Monday of May each year. It is a day dedicated to honoring and remembering the men and women of the United States Armed Forces who died while serving their country. Originally known as Decoration Day, the holiday began after the Civil War, one of the deadliest wars in American history. Families, friends, and communities would decorate the graves of fallen soldiers with red poppy flowers, flags, and wreaths to show respect and gratitude for their sacrifice.



Day of Poppies

The first large observance of Decoration Day took place on May 30, 1868, after General John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic called for a nationwide day of remembrance. The date was chosen because it was not the anniversary of any specific battle, allowing all soldiers to be honored equally. Over time, the holiday expanded to recognize all American military personnel who died in service, not just those from the Civil War. After World War I, Memorial Day became a national day of remembrance for all fallen service members. In 1971, Congress officially declared Memorial Day a federal holiday and established it to be on the last Monday of May.

The importance of Memorial Day is significantly more than barbecues, beach trips, and the unofficial start to summer break. At its core, it is a reminder of the cost of freedom. The rights and privileges

Americans enjoy today were protected by people willing to risk, and often give, their lives.



Many traditions help keep the purpose of Memorial Day alive. People visit cemeteries, attend parades, place flags on graves, and participate in moments of silence. At 3:00 p.m. local time, the National Moment of Remembrance encourages people to pause for one minute to honor those who died serving the country. This small act symbolizes national unity and appreciation. Remembering them is not just tradition; it is a responsibility. Memorial Day helps keep their courage and service from ever being forgotten.

Young Voters and The Future of Elections

By Zack H.

Voting is one of the most important rights people have because it gives citizens a voice in the decisions that shape their communities and future. With upcoming elections, many people in Encinitas and across California will vote for important leadership positions, including mayor and governor.



These elections can impact issues such as education, housing, public safety,

roads, and the overall direction of the community. For many young people turning 18, it can be easy to avoid voting. Politics can often feel confusing or disconnected from everyday life. Some people think their vote does not matter, especially in large elections where millions of people participate. Others simply do not take the time to research candidates or understand the issues being discussed. However, local elections are sometimes decided by very small numbers of votes, meaning that every vote truly can make a difference. The mayor of a city like Encinitas helps make decisions that directly affect residents, while the governor influence policies across the entire state. Even if someone does not follow politics

closely, those decisions still affect daily life through taxes, schools, transportation, and the economy. Voting is not just about politics. It is about participating in the future of the community and making sure different voices are represented. Young voters especially have an opportunity to shape the future, and choosing to participate is an important part of becoming an engaged young adult.



ENCINITAS, WEDNESDAY, MAY 27TH, 2026

Misinformation and the Hanta Virus

By Beatrix M.Y.

Recently, there has been an outbreak of misinformation running rampant on social media. It all started on April 11th, when a Dutch passenger on the cruise line MV Hondius passed away after reporting symptoms of an illness since April 6th. Shortly after, his wife evacuated the cruise ship and began traveling home before suddenly passing away at an airport in South Africa. On the 27th, another passenger, a British man still onboard the ship, begins reporting the same symptoms, and he is evacuated to a hospital in South Africa. Still on board the ship, a German woman falls ill and passes away on May 2nd, becoming the third fatality recorded. Later that week, the British man was identified to have the Hanta virus, which was the first time the virus was identified as the cause of the deaths. This was also when people on social media started reporting on it. Since then, there have been 4 more reported cases, all of which were on the cruise ship. Since then, the majority of passengers have been evacuated from the boat, but every country that has welcomed them back to their native shores has been keeping them under careful watch. In addition to this, there have been no outbreaks separate from the one on the

cruise ship, meaning the virus hasn't spread to other people who hadn't been on the boat.



Despite how well this was contained, social media blew up with these reports. People began making videos urging their viewers to start stocking up on things like masks, gloves, and toilet paper, all things that became scarce during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, many creators made videos expressing their anger that their lives were being infringed upon by two pandemics, despite there being no evidence of the Hanta virus having pandemic-level transmissibility. There has also been a significant amount of AI videos circulating online; these clips can contain fake news reports, "inside" videos from on the cruise ship, and more. The noise in online spaces has been overwhelming, and the lack of facts in these spaces allows people to

fabricate information. Several people have reported seeing false claims that outbreaks occurred following the cruise ship evacuation, despite no confirmed outbreaks or speculation to that effect.

Despite the constant fear-mongering, it is important to look at the facts. The reason the Hanta virus is not even close to the severity of COVID-19 is that it is so much harder to get. It is only transmitted through inhalation of airborne particles containing infected rodent excrement. This type of dust is common in areas with constrained or poor ventilation, which explains why the outbreak occurred on a cruise ship.

It is important to note that it is important to stay cautious and aware of these situations; it is more critical that people don't lose their heads. Stay informed and rational.



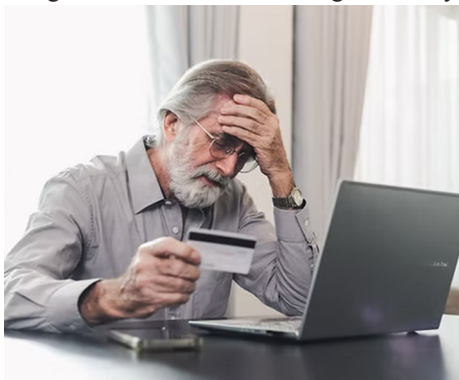
Senior Finance Scams

By Sara L.

More and more seniors are falling victim to financial scams, with the total amount lost adding up to billions of dollars. The scams range from fake government agents to elaborate online romances, with scammers combining unfamiliar technology with emotional manipulation to drain seniors' retirement savings. According to FBI reports, Americans over 60 lost more than \$3.4 billion to scams in 2023, an 11% increase from the previous year. Experts believe the true number is even higher because many victims are embarrassed or afraid to report being scammed.

One common scam is where scammers present once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that appear legitimate. Victims are often shown professional-looking documents before being pressured to send money. These

investment scams have caused some of the largest financial losses among seniors. Romance scams have also increased, where scammers form fake online relationships and gain their trust before asking for money.



Another growing issue is impersonation scams, where criminals pretend to be employees from the Medicare or Social

Security Administration, demanding immediate payments or personal information. New AI developments also allow scammers to create convincing phone calls and fake voices, making the inauthenticity even harder to detect. Tech-support scammers frighten victims with fake virus warnings to gain access to their computers. Experts say seniors are often targeted because they may live alone, manage large retirement accounts, and are generally less familiar with modern technology and fraud tactics.

As technology continues to evolve, financial scams are becoming more believable, common, and dangerous. Families and financial institutions are encouraged to warn older adults about the warning signs of a scam and create stronger protections for their retirement savings.

ENCINITAS, WEDNESDAY, MAY 27TH, 2026

How AI is Affecting the Job Market

By Sara L.

The implementation of AI in the workplace is changing the job market at an unprecedented pace, leaving many uncertain about their future. Many industries are beginning to replace human workers with AI systems as they are more efficient and cheaper. As layoffs and competition both rise, colleges and schools are attempting to prepare students for this new AI-driven workplace.



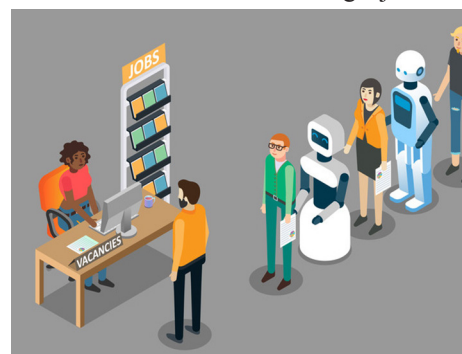
Recent reports have shown that the job market is the toughest it has been in years. Companies are hiring fewer en-

try-level workers because their tasks are being delegated to AI. On Wall Street, firms have begun using AI tools to write reports and automate repetitive tasks. This has led to a large number of job cuts in the financial industry, along with major layoffs in tech and media companies. Money that would have gone toward hiring new workers is being used instead to invest in AI systems.

However, experts say that not only is AI removing jobs, but it is also changing them. The new demand is for workers who have the ability to use AI effectively. Skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity are becoming increasingly important, since AI cannot yet fully replace human judgment and emotional intelligence. Colleges are starting AI classes and training programs after recognizing the new demand for these skills. Some universities now teach students how

to use AI tools in professional careers, and educators have begun taking the stance that schools are responsible for guiding students through this new technology instead of treating it as a taboo tool.

The message is clear, for high school and college students: AI will likely be involved in some aspect of almost every career field. However, while automation has already begun replacing certain positions, students who learn to use AI will have the best chance of securing a job.



Creative Writing

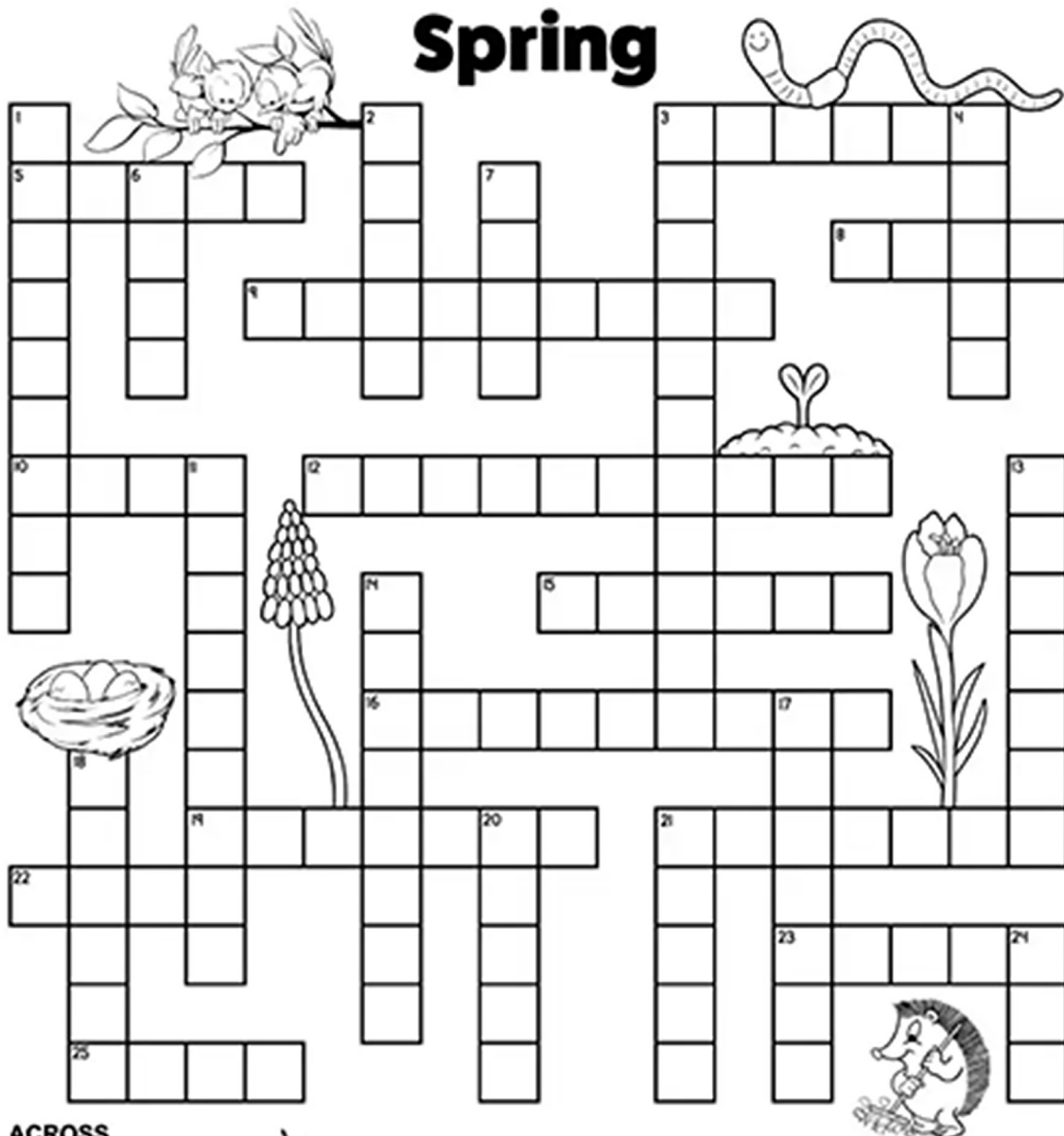
Danger was a hopeless excuse for not living, when death was in us at all times. I still remember the day I had found him. The beast with spindly claws and a heart of heat. My savior. They all said it was satin that fell from the sky. I did not listen, frankly I did not care. They had taken everything from my family. Poor we were and poor we would always be. I lived where death itself was our master. Living is something you must work for, something you must buy. Ever since I could remember my father had always said we must look for the light. Our light was the wool, the sheep. No one ever saw the Shadow king, but you could feel when it was time, time to pay your due. The Troll Toll was what it was called. The dreaded day every year you had to give. The darkness had crawled into our village and sat in our shadows. If you walked down the street you could see piles of various goods on the doorsteps of people's homes, their sacrifices. Nobody dared to steal from the sacrificed piles be-

cause they knew that they would be seen by something greater than themselves. My family, the three of us, did not have any money to give, but some wool. The grey, white bundles of fluff would sit in baskets on our doorstep before nightfall. In the morning it would be gone. Ravaged in the night by some unseen terror. Slowly every year we could feel the cold grow more demanding. The shadows gripped our lungs and scraped at our health. The king wanted more. Slowly sucking us of everything. Every year there were fewer baskets of wool to give. We worked so hard till only the shell of our lives remained. Still wanting more, still unsatisfied the king had not seen our sacrifices as enough. With one meager half basket of wool on our step we could feel the rage of darkness. It was so cold when the Toll Troll was due that year. That night the shadows took him, Grandpa. That was the punishment, we had nothing to give, but our souls.

Grandpa was gone and I never

saw him again. Death had come in the shadows where we could not reach and ripped the old white haired man from our pleading grips. The shadows took the weak. The ones with the thinnest life lines, the ones with nothing to give, the ones just like us. So the next year when almost all of our sheep had suffered from disease and famine we were desperate. My father tried to talk to neighbors for help. He tried everything, for he knew what it would cost him if he had none to give. The world works in selfish ways and this world is driven by fear and boney fingers clutching onto their last coins. Nobody helped us, nobody was willing to share. Father was gone by first light, taken in the night by the greedy fingers of darkness that was the king. I could feel the hollow cavities where Father and Grandpa once filled. I would get them back. I promised that, I had to. When I saw the flaming monster, the dragon fall from the sky I ran in the direction of the light, as everyone ran away.

ENCINITAS, WEDNESDAY, MAY 27TH, 2026

**ACROSS**

3. these hatch from eggs
5. a bird with a red chest
8. it makes kites fly
9. a fuzzy insect that makes honey
10. it starts as a tadpole
12. yellow flowers that turn into white puffs
15. baby cows
16. it has colorful wings
19. these small creatures have six legs
21. you can jump in these after it rains



22. baby deer
23. many families travel during spring ____
25. another word for dirt

DOWN

1. a bug with a long body and two pairs of wings
2. birds like to eat them
3. this insect has a long, fuzzy body
4. opposite of cloudy
6. you plant this in the soil, and it grows into a flower

7. a young horse, less than 4 years old
11. planting flowers and vegetables
13. bees love to visit them
14. you hold this to stay dry in the rain
17. a red insect with black spots
18. they carry their homes on their backs
20. a flower that blooms in spring
21. baby dog
24. baby goat

**Tree Valley Academy**

The Team



MJ C.
Co-Editor-in-Chief



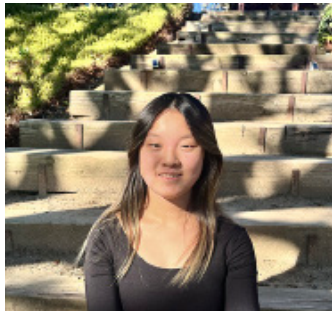
Zoe Br.
Co-Editor-in-Chief



Beatrix M.Y.
Column Writer, Co-Media Executive



Zoe Ba.
Column Writer, Co-Media Executive



Sara Lu
Column Writer



Leyton G.
Entertainment Editor, Column Writer



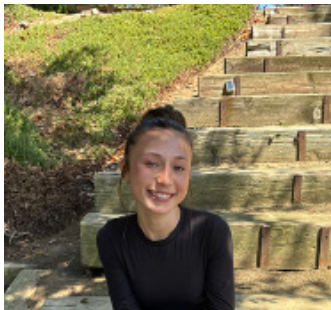
Luke W.
Politics Editor, Column Writer



Zack H.
Local Correspondent, Column Writer



Isabella M.
Layout Editor, Column Writer



Sadie S.M.
Website Manager, Column Writer
International Events Editor