

THE Grauer Gazette

No. 29

ENCINITAS, FRIDAY, MARCH 6TH, 2026

The Grauer School

Third Quarter Wrap-Up

By Luke W.

It is wild to think that this quarter is coming to a close, leaving one last quarter in the 2025/2026 academic school year. A lot happened in the world of Grauer this quarter, so let's recap it!

Coming straight off break, we had our first annual day of service. Students were divided into groups and helped with different community service projects. From helping nursing homes to teaching kids how to play music, students contributed in their own unique ways to bettering our community.

The play *Romeo and Juliet* came shortly after this. It was a well put-together play. It was based on the famous play from Shakespeare, but it was twisted so it was set in the 1970's. There were changes to make the play more enjoyable to our generation, including a 6-7 joke. The set was unlike any

Grauer set design before. It was complex, and it really added even more depth for the viewer.



Tolerance day shortly followed after. Tolerance Day was themed around compassion for yourself and others. Tolerance Day was founded by the United Nations in 1995 to foster greater compassion world-

wide. Students split into grade-level groups and tried to find ways to be even more positive.

Students eagerly awaited ski week. Students traveled to tropical getaways and the snow-capped mountains, and enjoyed time off at home. Ski week was a nice way for everyone to recharge before the end of this quarter.

However, the quarter is still not over! Please try to get your work done so you can get signed out easily on Friday. If high school students get signed out on Thursday, they will be able to enjoy a four-day weekend. Everyone did a great job in the third quarter. Congrats on everyone's accomplishments. Let's keep the same energy as we head into the last quarter of the school year before summer!

Middle School Sports

By Zoe Br.

Sports are an integral part of most schools, and Grauer is no different. The approach that the coaches at our school have for sports, however, is different. Trevor says that the goal of the Middle School sports program is to be fun, inclusive, and competitive, offering a less stressful way to participate in the activities that kids love than the often ultra-competitive club sports. He cites that "seventy percent of kids quit organized sports by thirteen," and he wants to get those kids back involved. The Middle School sports teams have had an exciting year thus far, so let's break it down!

This year, the cross-country team consisted entirely of eighth graders. Individuals on the team medaled at events, and returning runners showed amazing growth and development. Clayton is hoping that current seventh graders will join the team next year and is looking forward to integrating the incoming seventh graders as well.

The flag football team was composed mainly of seventh graders. Nick says the team showed a lot of growth, going from losing their first game by four touchdowns with no scores to winning two games, tying one, and making the playoffs.

The girls' volleyball team had over twenty players this year, creating both Var-

sity and JV teams. The JV team dominated, showing amazing growth and perseverance. The Varsity team took second, having pushed other teams to be better. Erin highlights the good relationship between the coaches and team, and the teamwork between Varsity and JV. It was a great season!



The girls' soccer team featured many seventh graders who were new to the sport. They played league games and one friendly game, taking home two wins. Paulina praises the tenacity and grit the girls had to better themselves: it showed in practice and games. The team showed amazing skill in making adjustments, always having a better second half of the games. They developed

amazingly over the season and made it to the playoffs.

The boys' basketball team also had Varsity and JV teams, including players who subbed in for absences, sometimes playing in both games. Brogan praises how well the seventh and eighth graders worked together. The team consistently improved and made the playoffs!

Middle school surfing had a focus on having fun, enjoying nature, and just getting out into the water.

The middle school archery team consists of fifteen members. They are competing locally and regionally and are focusing on building their confidence on and off the range.

Congratulations to all of the participating students on their great seasons! Your coaches are very proud of you and hope to see your continued participation in the program. Seventh graders: amazing first season, we hope you'll join the team again next year. Eighth graders: you all showed great leadership this year, and high school sports are ready to see you join! Whether you played because you love the sport, wanted to do something with your friends, or wanted to get out and be active, we have loved watching you play all year long!

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Netflix's Mass Removal

By **Beatrix M.Y.**

Over the past decade, Netflix has been a consistent supporter of queer and diverse media. This has been demonstrated through its casual inclusion as well as its support of various queer-centered story telling across its platform. However, after a recent sweep of content removal, many fans have seen their childhood favorites removed from the streaming site.

One of the shocking removals in late February was *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*. Its purpose as a fun and energetic kids' show guided many aspiring artists and writers through their childhood, and appreciation for the five-season series has continued to grow for years across all corners of the internet. Its uplifting message, written and directed by Noel Stevenson, was inspired by the original 1985 series: *The Story of She-Ra*. However, the adaptation took on a much more inclusive approach, showcasing various body types, races, and most importantly, sexualities on screen. For many viewers, this was their first experience seeing such a diverse cast represented in a mainstream animated series.



The Netflix original currently holds an 8.1/10 rating on IMDB, and the reviews speak for themselves. One viewer wrote: "I am a 34-year-old dude who grew up on *He-Man*, and I created an account here to say I unironically loved this show." The show's diversity was arguably its strongest quality, and many viewers felt seen and comforted within its world. One review stated, "Thank you so much for this, Netflix. How I wish I had a show like this growing up. One I could relate to. One that is truly inclusive."

Despite massive success and overwhelming support for a possible movie ad-

aptation, Netflix recently removed the show from its platform. This decision sparked significant backlash online. The show's creator, Noel Stevenson, has not commented on the removal, leading many to believe that he was not involved in the decision. Alongside *She-Ra*, *Bottoms*, an openly queer story, will soon be removed from Netflix.

Luckily for watchers of both of these shows, they haven't been completely erased. Longtime fans can still stream them on platforms such as Apple TV and Amazon; however, those subscriptions are not free. As a result, many viewers are curious about Netflix's motives behind this decision as the majority of right-wing policy makers have expressed their anti-LGBTQ+ beliefs. Hopefully, this has no ulterior motive, but the coincidence of removing one of the most queer-friendly shows off the streaming platform has raised some eyebrows.

Most likely, this is just a routine business downsizing. Still, that explanation does little to lessen the disappointment felt by audiences across the globe who have lost access to one of their favorite shows.

What Happened at the Grammys?

By **Zoe Br.**

On February 1st, the 68th annual Grammy Awards took place. The Grammys are an award show to present some of the most major awards in the music industry. This year, the event was hosted by TV and Broadway's Darren Criss and featured an amazing number of performances, including Zara Larsson, Rosé, Bruno Mars, Sabrina Carpenter, Katseye, and Post Malone, to name a few.



Most people are familiar with the awards in the General Field. Record of the Year was awarded to "Luther" by Kendrick Lamar and SZA, along with everyone else who worked on the song. Bad Bunny won Album of the Year with his alternative reggaeton album *DeBí Tirar Más Fotos*. Billie Eilish and Finneas won their third Song of the Year award with "Wildflower." Olivia Dean took home the award for Best New Artist after her second album had five singles chart. Cirkut (Henry Russell Walter) won Producer of the Year, Non-Classical, for his work on *Mayhem*, "ATP.," "It Girl," and more. Songwriter of the Year, Non-Classical, went to Amy Allen for her work on "ATP.," "Just Keep Watching," and "Manchild," among others.

There was an interesting lack of drama, as far as award shows go. While some fashion



choices caused a stir, the night seemed to be much more focused on celebrating music and promoting influential people speaking on political issues. Ozzy Osbourne was honored with an In Memoriam segment following his passing last year. It was refreshing to see an award show focused on what it's awarding, rather than just being general entertainment.

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Do We Really Have Souls?

By Leyton G.

A soul is generally referred to as the immaterial essence, animating principle, or immortal core of a human being, often considered the seat of consciousness, intellect, and emotion. Humans clearly have minds, identities, and moral awareness, but does that prove the existence of a soul, or is the soul simply a story we tell to explain these miraculous traits?

Greek philosopher Aristotle, one of the most renowned philosophers to walk our planet, had a very introspective view of the soul. He believed that there were three levels to the soul: a plant soul, an animal soul, and a rational soul (the one that humans possess). Aristotle believed that the soul was basically the thing that makes you alive and uniquely human, not something that floats away after death. 17th-century French philosopher and scientist, René Descartes, had a different take on what a soul is. He believed that the soul was an immaterial mind, completely separate from the



body. One of his most pivotal ideas was “I think, therefore I am.” Descartes believed that your soul becomes your consciousness, your inner voice, and your identity that survives physical change. However, modern science challenges Descartes’ theory. Through advancements within the realm of neuroscience, we can see that humans can have personality changes with brain damage. So if the brain changes the self, is the soul truly independent?

Although philosophers have a lot to say about how the soul works, so do most major religions. Most traditionally believe that the soul is immortal, the seat of mor-

tal, and your true self. Many of these major religions believe that your body is just a temporary vessel for your soul. They believe that the soul carries far more beyond just your biology. However, scientists and materialists have a completely different theory. They believe that there simply is no soul at all. They see that we have an extremely complex brain, that we can have drastic personality changes, and a consciousness.

Since the beginning, we as humans have always wanted all the answers, but some we simply are not allowed to have. That is the beauty of our existence. Instead of asking “Do we have a soul?” ask “Why have we invented the idea of a soul?” In my personal opinion, your ‘soul’ is what makes you love, but also hate. It is what makes you laugh, but also cry. It is what makes you unique and special, because there is truly only one of you. And nothing can ever recreate or replicate anything as perfect as oneself.

Are People Becoming Illiterate?

By Zoe Ba.

“I’ll just Sparknotes it,” someone says.

“What do you mean? I can just have ChatGPT summarize it for me,” another person adds.

This is the discourse that has increased in frequency. Over recent years, the average person’s attention span has decreased from two-and-a-half minutes to around forty seconds, making even the act of finishing a movie a feat for some. The reliance on instant gratification and dopamine has turned what was once a leisurely activity into one that requires intense focus. Within the last couple of decades, reading for pleasure has decreased by over 40%, according to KPBS. Now, it is estimated that only 43% of adults in America read even one piece of literature in a year.

“So what?” you may be thinking, and you are right to think so. It is not as though people have become magically illiterate; why should you care that fewer people are reading for fun?



Aside from being a fundamental skill that has been proven to boost cognitive development, reading has long been renowned for its ability to foster empathy. Books provide readers with the unique ability to step into the lives of diverse characters and expand their emotional understanding. This is particularly prevalent in books that utilize first-person narration, as it is easier to insert yourself into the shoes of the heroine. Studies by the National Library of Medicine have found a direct correlation between higher levels of empathy and increased productivity and creativity in the workplace.

It is not that social media is the enemy or that reading should be the only source of entertainment; rather, it is the lack of critical thinking that has flourished as a result, and the decline of mental well-being alongside it. Most words, even those found outside the pages of a book, are now only being skimmed to match the decreased attention span, resulting in an inability to process complex information.

In order to combat the mental crutch we created for ourselves, it is essential that we actively seek to challenge our brains. Studies have found that even fifteen to thirty minutes a day of reading can significantly enhance cognitive function, with the National Library of Medicine claiming it can additionally improve sleep if done consistently before bed. If you find yourself itching for entertainment from your phone, maybe exchange five of those minutes for a book, and you could be surprised where it takes you.

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Just a Little Sweet Treat Please...

By MJ C.

Much like my fellow nightly sweet treat lovers, I often find myself searching for new cookies to try, hoping they might magically appear in my cabinet. I recently fell down a baking rabbit hole and stumbled across the Idaho State Fair Blue Ribbon-winning chocolate chip cookie recipe while strolling on Pinterest (which had originally been posted on TikTok). The cookies were created by a home baker with the account called @mildwestsami, who won top honors at the Idaho State Fair. After hearing all of the hype and reading all of the comment reviews, I had to try them myself.

Recipe/Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

In one bowl, add...

½ cup of butter (softened, not melted)

¼ cup of white sugar + 2 tablespoons

½ cup of brown sugar

Mix until smooth

In the same bowl, add...

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract (be generous)

Mix until smooth

1 ½ cup flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon salt

Add dry ingredients on top, then mix all together until just combined

Mini chocolate chips (enough to be a 50/50 cookie-to-chocolate ratio)

Bake for 8-10 minutes – Makes 12-15 cookies

Let them cool and enjoy!

When I pulled these out of the oven, the kitchen immediately smelled incredible. The warm butter and melted chocolate smell gave my kitchen that cozy bakery vibe, which was perfect for my Sunday night sweet treat. The cookies were soft in the middle, slightly crispy on the edges, and they entirely lived up to the Blue Ribbon reputation. These were dangerously delicious and are guaranteed to disappear fast as your nightly sweet treat!



How Can You Turn Your Passion into Your Career

By Leyton G.



We all have passions. It would be a boring world if we did not. However, not many people are able to turn their passions into their careers. Most people usually have to work jobs that they have some interest in, but are not extremely passionate about. According to Deloitte, the world's largest professional services network by revenue and employees, just 13% of the U.S. workforce is actually passionate about their job. That's about 1 in 8 people who are truly pursuing their passion in the workforce. However, nothing is impossible, and there are ways to turn your passion into your career.

There are practical steps to accomplish this goal. One of the best ways is by interning at a company that specializes in your particular passion. This is how you meet people in that area of the workforce, learn the ins and outs of the business, and make sure that you are truly dedicated to this career. Remember, talent plays a huge role in your passion as well as your career; however, you need to truly put in the work if you want to succeed. This is a non-negotiable aspect: you must keep building skills in order to succeed. We talked to one of Grauer's very own students for this article, Ty Morgan. Ty is going to be entering the music industry after graduation and is planning on moving to Los Angeles. He plans to get an internship and learn every aspect of the music industry. Ty has already amassed a huge amount of success in the world of music. He is one of the most talented guitarists I have ever personally met, has grown a huge amount of followers via social media, and has been part of various bands. He has shown that he shares an un-



breakable bond with music, and he plans to seek out success through his passion.

Some of us will not be able to turn our passions into careers, and that's alright. We have so much to look forward to, but if you truly want to accomplish this goal, it is not an easy path. It demands that you sacrifice valuable things such as time and effort. Yet, as we can see time and time again, success favors the bold.

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State of the Union: True or False

By Isabella M.



After the State of the Union Address on February 24, 2026, many people have expressed frustration at the lack of accuracy in the information presented. Therefore, the Grauer Gazette has decided to make a game of guessing which facts presented during the speech were true or false. Answers will be released in the next edition - be sure to check if you were correct!

Rules: Circle T/F depending on whether you believe the statement President Trump made during his speech was True/False. All are direct quotes from the President. Best of luck!

T/F: “Last year, I urged this Congress to begin the mission by passing the largest tax cuts in American history, and the Republican majority delivered so beautifully.”

T/F: “[in celebration of the] 250th anniversary of our glorious American independence.”

T/F: “I ended eight wars.”

T/F: “We will always protect Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid.”

T/F: “the roaring economy is roaring like never before”

T/F: “We are deporting illegal alien criminals from our country at record numbers, and we’re getting them the hell out of here fast!”

T/F: “If we’re able to find enough of that fraud, we will actually have a balanced budget overnight.”

T/F: “The flow of deadly fentanyl across our border is down by a record 56 percent in one year.”

T/F: “So in my first year of the second term—should be my third term.”

T/F: “We have added 70,000 new construction jobs in just a very short period of time”

T/F: “murder is down 1000%”

T/F: “And no more crooked mail-in ballots”

T/F: “I believe the tariffs, paid for by foreign countries, will, like in the past, substantially replace the modern-day system of income tax—taking a great financial burden off the people that I love.”

T/F: “In four long years, the last administration got less than \$1 trillion in new investment in the United States. And when I say less, substantially less. In 12 months, I secured commitments for more than \$18 trillion pouring in from all over the globe. Think of it, much less than \$1 trillion for four years versus much more than \$18 trillion for one year.”

T/F: “Gasoline, which reached a peak of over \$6 a gallon in some states. Under my predecessor, it was quite honestly a disaster; it is now below \$2.30 a gallon in most states

and in some places \$1.99 a gallon. And when I visited the great state of Iowa just a few weeks ago, I even saw \$1.85 a gallon for gasoline.”

T/F: “America is respected again, perhaps like never before...we now have the strongest and most secure border in American history by far.”

T/F: “They poured in by the millions and millions from prisons, from mental institutions. They were murderers, 11,888 murderers. They came into our country; you [Democrats] allowed that to happen.”

T/F: “American natural gas production is at an all-time high because I kept my promise to drill, baby, drill.”

T/F: “We have more jobs, more people working today than ever before in the history of our country.”

T/F: “[The] Biden administration and its allies in Congress gave us the worst inflation in the history of our country. But in 12 months, my administration has driven down to the lowest level in more than five years.”

T/F: “Under the ceasefire [of Israel and Palestine] I negotiated [that] every single hostage, both living and dead, has been returned home.”

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Does Killing Cartel Leaders Reduce Violence or Make it Better

By Zack H.



Cartel kingpin Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, also known as El Mencho, who was reportedly killed during a recent military operation, has once again sparked a long-standing debate in Mexico's war against organized crime. Founder and head of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), El Mencho was considered one of the most powerful and dangerous drug traffickers in the world. His cartel built a reputation for extreme brutality, rapid territorial expansion, and advanced weaponry. For many years, the U.S. and Mexican authorities saw him as a top-priority target. From a government perspective, the removal of such a threat stands as a major tactical victory. But as history has shown us, and as we are seeing again, these victories can come at a cost.

Mexico is known for relying heavily on what experts call the kingpin strategy: targeting the highest-ranking leaders of criminal organizations to break them from the top down. This logic seems straightforward: if you remove the head of the operation, the organization will fall. However, past examples complicate this assumption. When Joaquin Guzmán, also known as El Chapo, the leader of the Sinaloa Cartel, was captured and eventually extradited to the U.S., many thought the cartel would permanently weaken. Instead, more factions competed for control, and violence in certain

regions grew as rival groups fought over trafficking routes and territories, meaning the organization did not disappear; it adapted.

This same risk applies whenever a cartel leader is killed, reflecting the fact that criminal organizations are not built around one person alone. Rather, they function as layered systems made up of regional commanders, armed enforcers, corrupt officials, financial leaders, and distributors. In fact, one of the immediate consequences of a leader's death is often fragmentation. Without a single authority figure to enforce order,

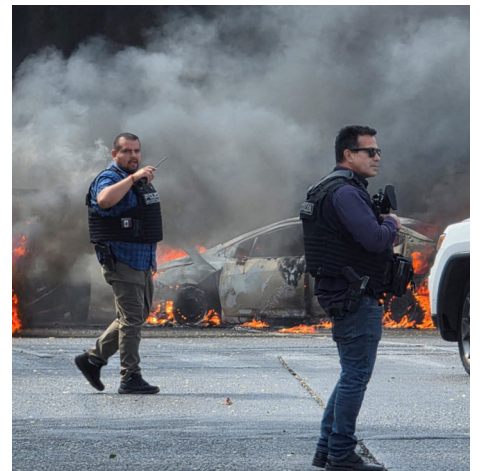


ambitious commanders may begin to fight for control. These battles spark turf wars that spread far beyond the cartel's core territory. Violence that was strategically planned to protect profits can become more chaotic and public. News following El Mencho's death, for example, has shown an increase in retaliatory attacks across areas where the cartel has strong control. It is common for cartels to use violence as a message, to demonstrate resilience, intimidate rival cartels, and show that the organization will remain powerful despite the loss of leadership.

Beyond internal power struggles, there is an even deeper structural issue: that drug trafficking is driven by massive international demand and huge financial incentives. As long as there is a profitable market for narcotics, the system produces replace-

ments, and new figures will rise to fill any opening. Some argue that the kingpin strategy can still have short-term benefits. By eliminating experienced leaders, governments potentially disrupt communication networks, strategic planning, and financial flows. It can send a signal that the government is capable of asserting authority. For certain communities terrorized by a specific leader, such a removal can feel like justice. Whether that disruption can translate into long-term benefits for reducing violence depends on what follows. If law enforcement and institutions are strong enough to stabilize the affected regions, continue dismantling remaining operations, and prevent fragmentation, the strategy may succeed. If not, the vacuum can create space for smaller groups that are less predictable and sometimes even more violent.

This debate highlights a bigger truth: that cartel violence is not simply the product of individual personalities but is rooted in systemic factors such as economic inequality, corruption, and international drug demand. Military operations can continue to remove leaders, but without structural reforms in judicial systems, law enforcement, and economic opportunity, the cycle will continue. In the end, the question is not only whether removing a kingpin reduces violence but whether the state is prepared to manage the consequences that will follow.



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Social Media Trial Follow-Up

By Sara L.

The Grauer Gazette previously covered the start of the U.S. social media addiction trial. Recently, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg testified in court against plaintiff K.G.M.'s claims that Instagram and other Meta platforms were intentionally designed to be addictive to teens. The plaintiff's testimony focuses on the infinite scroll feature as well as the use of algorithms in curating one's feed for maximum engagement, and her ultimate claim is that using social media when she was younger is what caused her anxiety and depression. The plaintiff's therapist also testified and emphasized the impact of social media on mental health.

Zuckerberg denied that Meta apps were intentionally created to be addictive. He maintained that Meta's goals are user satisfaction and community, expressing the difficulty of enforcing age restrictions. As the prosecution attempts to prove that social media executives knew of potential dangers to youth, and yet refrained from acting in the interest of maximizing profit, the trial has marked similarities to early tobacco and opioid litigation.

The debate over youth access to social media isn't just limited to the United States. Several global governments are beginning to consider restricting or banning

social media for minors. Australia already has a social media ban in effect on those under 16, and many European and Asian countries, such as France, Spain, Germany, India, and the United Kingdom, are considering taking similar actions. These countries cite concerns about mental health risks and online safety for children and teens as developments continue to raise global skepticism about the role of social media in teens' lives. As the trial moves forward and countries across the world make their own decisions, American teens are watching closely to see what the court will decide.

Missing Person: Nancy Guthrie

By Sadie S.M.

The name Nancy Guthrie sounds fairly normal, and to most people, her missing person report would be like any other. However, as a newspaper, this story hits a little closer to home. Nancy Guthrie is actually the 84-year-old mother of Today Show anchor Savannah Guthrie. This means she has direct ties to the world of journalism. Given this and the fact that the case remains an enormous mystery, why not give an in-depth rundown on the incident and its aftermath?

January 30, 2026: Nancy Guthrie spends the day with her daughter and son-in-law in a nearby Tucson, AZ neighborhood. After about three hours together, Tommaso Cioni, her son-in-law, drives her home. He waits to see that she made it safely inside, and then drives away. Her garage door was open for around two minutes. This was the last point of contact with Nancy.

February 1, 2026: At around 1:45 a.m., the front-door camera of Nancy Guthrie's house was disconnected. About 25 minutes later, a motion notification from another camera goes off, but no footage is recorded. Fifteen minutes later, Mrs. Guthrie's pacemaker disconnected from her phone. This is the estimated time of her capture. In the morning, she does not arrive at her friend's house to stream the Sunday

church service. Shortly after, family members go to her house and find her missing; they report it to 911, and an investigation is opened later that day.



February 2, 2026: Around 24 hours later, a ransom note was sent to a Tucson news station. They immediately send it to the police. However, TMZ got word of the note and quickly spread it across the internet, sharing that it demanded millions of dollars in bitcoin.

February 3, 2026: Savannah Guthrie, anchor of the Today Show, steps away from the Olympics coverage. Mary Carillo took her place alongside Terry Gannon at the games, while previous co-anchor Hoda Kotb returned to the show to fill in for her.

February 4, 2026: The Guthrie children share a heartbreaking video online. Savannah Guthrie shares that her family wanted to know of her mother's safety, and that any ransom letter should be directed towards them, not TV stations. They ended the video by expressing their willingness to talk; however, they needed to be reassured that she was alive beforehand.

February 10, 2026: Skip forward to over a week after her initial disappearance, and footage reveals a masked figure at the front of her house. He was armed and wearing a ski mask, yet it was still a needed break in the case. Authorities later detained someone for questioning, but determined that he was not the perpetrator.

February 15, 2026: Mysterious DNA is found on a pair of gloves two miles from the house. Later, the FBI noted that the gloves were similar to the ones in the footage. Although it never proved to lead to any person or indicator of Nancy.

February 24, 2026: The family offers a \$1 million reward for anyone who may have details or facts on her mother's whereabouts. She also mentioned that her family understands her mother may be dead, but they still want to hold onto as much hope as they can so they can potentially bring her home.

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Ukraine vs. Russia

By Luke W.

Ukraine is now four years into a war that was supposed to be over in 24 hours. On February 24, 2022, Russian troops invaded Ukraine, threatening their sovereignty. Russia set out to reconquer Ukraine after its earlier separation from the Soviet Union. Vladimir Putin declared a special military operation to try to take key cities in Ukraine, hoping to cripple their government. Russia attacked Kyiv (the capital), then tried to surround Ukraine from the north, the east, and the south. They used missiles to target cities and essential military bases. Russians were surprised by the fierce opposition that they faced.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy organized one of the most thoughtful de-

fense operations in history, rallying support from foreign countries. They received good funding and support from numerous countries, including the United States. Their military managed to pushback the Russian soldiers, so much so that they withdrew from northern Ukraine. A push-and-pull scenario occurred for a long time following this. Russia would gain, then Ukraine would take it back, over and over again.

In 2023, a major technological advancement gave Ukraine a significant advantage. Ukraine began to use AI drones to counter the Russian soldiers' basic training. The drones are used to take down Russian soldiers remotely, and they're highly effective. A Ukrainian operator hides un-

derground or in a shelter and controls the drone. Using fiber optics cables, the operator could remotely detonate and weaponize the drone while staying out of harm's way. Once it's in range of the Russian soldiers, they give it the signal, and it becomes incredibly deadly.

This push-and-pull has continued until today. They mostly use long-range missiles to damage infrastructure across both countries. The war lines are fairly static, although the war's devastation has continued. It has dislocated many citizens from their homes, along with hundreds of thousands of military casualties. Hopefully, Ukraine will be able to preserve its sovereignty and continue to defend itself.

Avalanche Advisory

By Sadie S.M.

What began as a day of joy, filled with the recreational activity of skiing, quickly turned into one of the deadliest incidents in California history. It is a story of pure sadness and remorse for the families who lost their loved ones; however, it also reveals a broader issue that deserves attention.

Three days before the devastating events, eight friends—mothers, wives, and proficient skiers—set out on a backcountry excursion across the untouched snow of the Sierra Nevada. Organized by the Blackbird Mountain Guide group, the women began their three-day skiing trip at Frog Lake Backcountry Huts, 3,700 feet above sea level, tucked in the lush Tahoe National Forest. From then on, the women, four guides, and three other individuals trekked through gorgeous scenery, exploring the unknown California nature.

Unfortunately, their trip coincided with one of the largest snowstorms California has seen this year. Warnings circulated widely across media outlets; nevertheless, the group continued on its route. Sadly, the warnings proved to be accurate. On Tuesday, February 17, 2026, six mothers:

Nicole "Niki" Choo, Carrie Atkin, Liz Clabaugh, Danielle Keatley, Kate Morse, and Kate Vitt; and three tour guides: Andrew Alissandratos, Nicole Choo, and Michael Henry, lost their lives in an avalanche. It was sudden and unpredictable, and now, the world mourns the loss of these nine individuals.

Although it is crucial to remember that this is not the first avalanche this ski season. So, why? Is there a reason, or is society just becoming more aware of these natural phenomena? The answer is yes, there is evidence behind why avalanches are becoming more common.

In recent years, the world has grown hotter. Since the pre-industrial period, the world has warmed about 2 to 2.65 degrees Fahrenheit. That number may seem small, but its impact is far more important. This rise in temperature has led to many issues, including the climate cycle, which affects global snow levels. As a result, the base layer of much of the snow on the mountains is considered "wet-snow."—Composed mostly of rain and melted snow that has refrozen, making it incredibly susceptible to avalanches. This leads to changes in avalanche density, making them more

powerful and harder to escape.

That being said, what can every individual do with this information? First of all, be conscientious about the conditions. If something looks a little off, do not risk it. Secondly, prioritize preparation. Although avalanche safety equipment can be expensive, investing in proper gear and training can mean the difference between life and death. Lastly, take everything with a grain of salt. An avalanche can still occur even if the conditions do not indicate a high risk.

In the end, the avalanche that took the nine lives of those people on February 17, 2026, was horrific. Nothing could have prepared those families and friends for the loss of their loved ones, and understanding the situation in its entirety is crucial to remembering their stories. However, their memory is also tied to something deeper—climate change. This situation is another reminder of what is to come if society does not start taking initiative. Everyone can make a difference, and even starting small, like picking up trash on the beach, could make a meaningful impact.

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Olympic Figure Skating & Mental Health

By Sara L.

In the wake of the Winter Olympics, figure skating has brought mental health to the global stage. Placing intense psychological pressure on athletes, figure skating has a history marked by struggles with mental health, ranging from burnout to anxiety and eating disorders. However, a shift is occurring amongst current U.S. Olympic skaters. Top skaters for the United States are not only succeeding competitively, but also speaking out openly about the importance of mental well-being. Ilia Malinin has gained international acclaim with his amazing technical ability and has been increasingly open about the pressure he is under. Skating to music by NF, an artist known for confronting anxiety, depression, and self-doubt, on a global platform demonstrates his commitment to bringing

attention to the issue of mental health in the sport. Many athletes competing at a high level can relate to Malinin's song choice, as it reflects the struggles that they experience.



U.S. figure skater Amber Glenn is another notable advocate for mental health. Her teammate, Alysa Liu, has made history by retiring from skating at the age of 16 to protect her mental health and returning to win gold in the women's singles.

Conversations about mental health spiked after the last Olympics, when Russian figure skater Alexandra Trusova had a live mental breakdown after not winning gold as her coaches had promised. The publicness of her breakdown forced viewers to confront the issues about the sport's culture, as well as long-standing issues like eating disorders, which have historically been prevalent within Russian skating.

Now, even spaces like the Kiss and Cry zone outside the rink and the recently introduced "leader's chair" are under scrutiny for their psychological impact on competitors. As figure skating evolves and U.S. skaters publicly discuss mental health, it invites the possibility of a future where success is no longer defined solely by medals.

Double Gold in Milan-Cortina for U.S.

By MJ C.

At the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan-Cortina, the United States wrote an exciting new chapter in its hockey story, winning gold in both men's and women's tournaments, while once again facing off against our longtime rival, Canada. The victories were especially meaningful because they connected today's teams with some of the most memorable moments in Olympic history.

Forty-six years (to the day) after the legendary Miracle on Ice, the United States men's team created another unforgettable moment. In 1980, a roster of mostly college players shocked the world by defeating the Soviet Union, which had dominated international hockey and was considered unbeatable. Occurring during the Cold War, it had a huge symbolic importance for Americans, beyond the world of sports. The victory took teamwork, belief, and overcoming incredible odds, which is why it is still considered the crowning achievement of United States hockey.

In 2026, the Americans defeated Canada 2-1 in overtime to win their third Olympic gold in men's hockey and their



first since 1980! Forward Jack Hughes, despite having his front tooth knocked out by a Canadian player's stick earlier in the game, scored the Golden Goal in overtime. Goaltender Connor Hellebuyck was crucial, stopping 41 shots while shutting down numerous Canadian scoring chances, including a breakaway from their Captain, Connor McDavid, A.K.A "McJesus," who is widely considered the greatest hockey player in the world.

The tournament also demonstrated how deep the hockey community runs, as the Hughes family includes brothers Jack and Quinn, who were teammates and key contributors to the men's team, while their mother, Ellen, works with the United States women's team.

The men's tournament featured the highest level of competition, as National Hockey League (NHL) players filled the roster of most teams from around the world, which is something hockey fans craved after several years when professional players were not allowed to compete.

The women's tournament delivered just as much excitement, as Team USA defeated Canada 2-1 in overtime to reclaim gold. Despite trailing for much of the game, they stayed composed, relied on strong goaltending, disciplined defense, and contributions from younger players, which helped spark their comeback. Captain Hilary Knight's late goal, the 15th of her Olympic career, sent the game to overtime, where Megan Keller's goal won the Gold! Overall, the women's team was undefeated (7-0), which demonstrated the program's dominance.

The United States-Canada rivalry once again showed why these games mean so much. By winning gold in both tournaments in 2026, the United States celebrated two big victories and added another special moment to the history of Olympic hockey.

ENCINITAS, FRIDAY, MARCH 6TH, 2026

The Fortune of the Lawrence Estate

By Zoe Ba. & Beatrix M.Y.

Chapter 1

It has been a few decades since the events described occurred, and so, I believe it is my duty to recount them. Few readers of this capsule will remember my name from those long-forgotten headlines, so I will introduce myself. Willow Blaine, or Will, as many know me, the 1920s were not the best time for a private investigator, much less a woman. Thus, I wore my hair short, in the fashion of the time, and did my best to hide what figure I had behind trench coats and too-large button-ups. I had a more imaginative alias, but clients were not keen on trusting anyone named “Danny California”. Despite that early setback, there were plenty of opportunities to make my name known; New York was ample ground for foul play. This story, although long buried by corruption and hush money, started on a Monday, as do many things.

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This, not-so-fine, morning, buildings wavered in the sun’s rays, and I could feel my neck growing red under its glare. The door slammed shut on a woman whom I convicted only minutes before for the shooting of her husband and his young mistress. As the car sped away, I picked up my pace in the opposite direction. It had only been a few blocks when a familiar voice hidden under a trench coat and an obnoxiously tall hat intercepted me.

“Nice case closed, huh?”

“Jameson, don’t you get uncomfortable under all that fabric?” The boy was only a few years my senior, but his baby face was fully revealed when he removed that horrendous hat. “Yes, the case was a success. Thanks for the tip-off.”

“Would you like another?” His eyebrows raised as he slid his fingers into his coat pocket, removing a jagged slip of paper. I opened it as soon as it touched my hands, quickly skimming the contents before placing it into my pants pocket. The handwriting was horrid, but the address scrawled was a familiar one, recognizable.

“The Lawrence Estate?” I had been there

once on a call back when I was training to be a police officer.

“You know ‘em?”

“I had helped out on a robbery a few years back, simple, some maid swiped some of the eldest daughter’s jewelry.”

“Catch her?”

“What do you think?”

He chuckled before turning back to the busy sidewalk. “So you’re gonna take it?”

“What do you think?”

.....

The Lawrence Estate cast me in shadows as I walked up the winding pathway. Two large columns framed the building’s entry, and perfectly trimmed grass surrounded the structure. Before my finger could reach the doorbell, the entrance opened, revealing Marion, whose lips formed a straight line.

“Hello, Mr. Blaine,” she said as she folded her hands neatly before her.

“Hello.” I glanced at the window that had been left ajar beside the doorway. “How long have you been waiting for me?”

Marion surveyed her nailbeds. “Not too long,” she admitted, “I hope the ride here was good.”

“As good as it can be,” I said. “Could you tell me the reason I’m here?”

“I’d rather show you.” She was away before I could register her absence. The vast manor swirled around me as the eldest Lawrence heir led me through the immeasurable twists and turns of the estate.

A hush of hurried voices grew louder as we advanced. Eventually, the noise reached a crescendo as Marion pushed through two delicately carved doors. Lying before me was pure chaos; the police force was already scattered across the scene, detectives talked to maids, butlers, and I even caught a glimpse of Mrs. Lawrence, who was dressed in an elegant, sequined white dress. The rest of the room had been blocked by yellow tape, but through the swarm, I was able to duck under without suspicion.

A metallic stench hit my nose,

carried in with a gust from a shattered window only a few feet to my left. The rug was splattered with crimson spray. Around the body, a pool of blood soaked into the hardwood flooring. I side-stepped it just in time to avoid slipping on the gruesome scene.

“Shame, he was a good butler,” I jumped at her sudden presence. “He always had breakfast out on time.”

“He did more than just serve breakfast, Marion,” came a far lighter voice. I turned to meet the glamorous green eyes of Evelyn.

“What are you doing here?” Marion’s voice was a sharp contrast. “Father said for everyone to wait in the drawing room while they cleaned this up.”

“Then I could say the same to you.”

“She was just showing me in,” I interrupted, rudely, in hindsight. “You are more than welcome to retreat to the rest of the house, please.” Evelyn seemed less than pleased with the idea, but she followed suit after her sister and swiftly left me to my work.

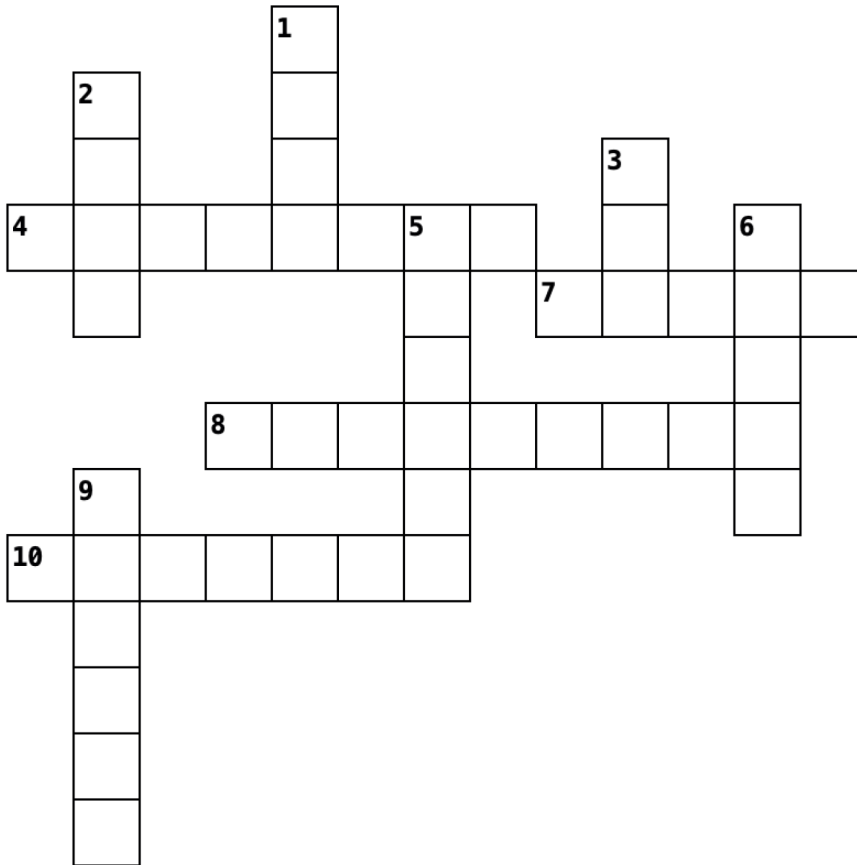
My work, as usual, was mundane at this stage; there wasn’t much to do beyond taking notes and staying out of the detectives’ way. Truthfully, it seemed the Lawrences had no business hiring me as a second opinion. They were a rich family, any thug could have seen the butler and mistaken him for one of their sons, or Mr. Lawrence for that matter, and fired through the window. It seemed cut and dry, but I steadied my opinion and headed home to write a preliminary report to send in the morning.

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My apartment on 7568 Northpark was a relic of the past, but the water ran, and the heat was reliable when it mattered. The clock read half past twelve, but the blur in my eyes was well aware of the time. The knock at the door could have very well been a dream, but in my haze, I stumbled over to open it. I was awoken instantly, however, by the sight of Evelyn Lawrence at my doorstep.

“I have something I need to tell you.”

Crossword



Across

- 4. recent winter sport competition
- 7. opposite of brain
- 8. _____ span
- 10. half a semester

Down

- 1. chocolate in cookies
- 2. color of the Grammy awards
- 3. pronoun
- 5. job
- 6. flies, used in photography
- 9. the "j" in JV

The Team



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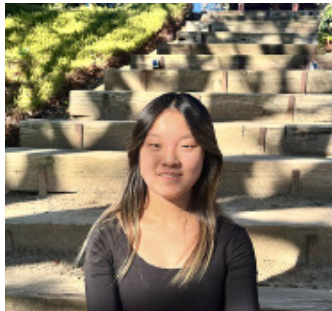
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