



THE Grauer Gazette

Encinitas in Love

By MJ C.

Valentine's Day is celebrated every year on February 14 and is most known for its gift-giving attributes, including candy, cards, flowers, and more. Surprisingly, Valentine's Day's history dates further back than you may expect. The holiday is originally named after St. Valentine, who was a priest from ancient Rome, who supposedly (according to legend) secretly helped couples get married during a time when young men were forbidden from marrying. When St. Valentine was discovered, he was punished and then executed. His death is believed to have taken place on February 14th, and since then, that date has slowly become known as a day of affection and love. By the Middle Ages, people in Europe began sending gifts to their loved ones, which marks the beginning of the traditions of the holiday we know today. Lucky for us, Valentine's Day in Encinitas is hard to do "wrong". There are so many fun and creative places/activities to do with those you love to make this day memorable. Here are some of my ideas...



Spots to eat & hang out
 Handle's Homemade Ice Cream - Pretty classic (but still adorable) Valentine's Day date spot with delicious dessert
 Lofty Coffee - Cozy, relaxing spot, which is perfect for a little brunch date on the day of love
 VG Donut & Bakery - A late afternoon or early evening dessert run can never hurt, and the ocean view is a plus



Fun things to do together
 Watch the sunset at Moonlight - Bring a blanket, snacks, and some music for a classic and cozy beach date (or to hang out with all your friends)
 La Paloma Theater - See a movie or event at the theater for a low-maintenance and simple night out
 Cardiff Rail Trail walk - Scenic walk with amazing views (even better at sunset), great for talking
 Host a Galentine's or Palentine's Night - celebrate with all of your friends, the more the merrier!

Does High School Actually Prepare Us?

By Leyton G.



As many of us seniors begin to prepare for life after high school, and begin to prepare for college, we must ask ourselves an important question: Has high school truly prepared us for what comes next? High school provides us with a formal structure. Deadlines, routines, showing up on time, following directions, and working in groups. These habits certainly matter in college and in most jobs. High school helps us build baseline skills: reading critically, writing co-

herently, learning new math, and absorbing large amounts of information. High school trains our academic muscles extremely well. However, it does not train us for what comes next.

College and life after college demand self-direction. In college, professors do not chase you down for missing work; they simply give you a poor grade. If you decide not to show up to class, you fail. No syllabus is handed to you to tell you how life works. High school often tends to reward compliance over curiosity and memorization more than judgment. The real world cares more about decisions, not worksheets.

High school does not prepare us for the emotional and practical aspects of college. Budgeting, managing stress, navigating failure, setting boundaries, choosing purpose, and handling ambiguity. These are central adult skills, and usually the only way to learn them is through trial and error, not a class. In the realm of high school, there is usually a "right answer" and a "right path." Life after college is not as straightforward. Careers can

shift, plans break, and success looks different for everyone. The ones who do well are not always the ones who did well in class; they tend to be the ones who know how to adapt, ask for help, and recover from mistakes.

So, does high school really prepare us for life after high school? To an extent, of course, but much of life and college we must learn on our own. It is a process that we should not fear, but one we should be excited for.



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Day of Service to Life of Service

By MJ C.

As a great way to give back to the community, the Grauer School hosted its first annual Day of Service in honor of Martin Luther King Jr., which many loved. From working with hands-on local organizations to connecting with elders, the whole day was full of meaningful opportunities. Though MLK Jr. Day passed, our volunteering does not have to. Many of the organizations from our Day of Service still have ongoing volunteer opportunities that can help you reach that 12.5-hour minimum. Here are just a few...

Third Avenue Charitable Organization (TACO) - Helps those experiencing homelessness in downtown San Diego
Monday dinner service: 3:15-5:15 p.m.
Wednesday coffee and clothing service: 9:00-11:30 a.m.

Coastal Roots Farm - Focuses on sustainability through food and hands-on farm work
"Sunday in the Soil" volunteer sessions

By Zoe Br.

Everyone knows that Grauer Expeditions is a substantial part of what sets our school apart from other high schools. While often a marketing point of trips, I feel that the homestay experiences students receive on their travels are still underappreciated. Personally, I will have stayed with three families and one school over my high school career.



Starting with my first real high school expedition to France in freshman year, where one other student and I stayed with a French-American family, I have been hosted by the Daraja Academy and a family in Japan. I also look forward to being hosted by a family in Spain this Spring.

(Sunday afternoons)
"Rise and Shine" weekday morning shifts
Dates and times are posted on their volunteer calendar

Temple Solel - Partner with community outreach programs (including preschool and food prep)
Volunteer opportunities are scheduled throughout the year
Contact the Temple directly for upcoming events

Jewish Family Services (JFS) - Supports youth, the elderly, and families through community programs

Safe Parking Dinner Host: Monday-Thursday 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Diper distribution shifts: Monday, Wednesday, Friday (times on sign-up sheet)
Most opportunities require a volunteer application.

Computers2Kids (C2K) - Provided students and families with refurbished tech

Cleaning, sorting, and preparing donated computers

You can see volunteer times after filling out the volunteer form on their website

Summerfield Memory Care - Works with the elderly through games, crafts, and activities

You can schedule shifts by calling the organization.

Sharia's Closet - Provides clothing and hygiene products to families in need

Monday-Friday: 9:00-5:00 p.m.

Saturday: 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Having a Day of Service furthers our understanding of how volunteering impacts our community and makes a meaningful impact. I hope that all of you continue to get involved with these organizations and gain valuable experiences that turn volunteering into a habit!

Homestay Experiences

To say I have taken full advantage of these experiences being offered is an understatement. Spending a few days every year with a family that is not all that unlike my own has given me greater insight into the lives of people around the world than any other way of learning could.

Recently, I had the opportunity to provide this experience that I have so cherished to two students from Japan. I got to pull from my time with host families to create what would have been my perfect homestay. We set up two rooms with options for them to stay together in a room with two beds, or stay in separate rooms, giving each their own space. I put together gifts for them that were significant to San Diego, but also could be easily appreciated in their day-to-day lives—rather than a sweatshirt that said "Encinitas" in giant text across the chest. My family and I took them to get tacos and walk on the beach, and then to get bagels downtown and walk around Balboa Park. We ended their time

with us with a quiet game night at home and a home-cooked meal. By prioritizing showing them a lot of the area, while also keeping the days slow and mellow, we were able to really get to know each other.



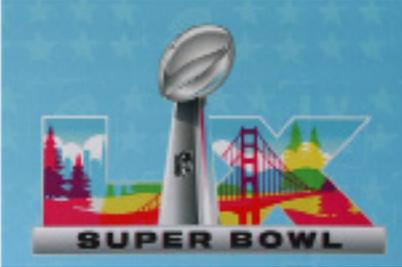
I know that at first the idea of staying with a family you've never met, in a country you've never been to, with a culture you know nothing about sounds absolutely terrifying. However, all these families want is to make you comfortable and show you what makes their lives so cool. Next time you're picking your expedition destination, look harder at the trips that offer homestays, because they just might become some of your favorite high school memories.

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The Revolution About To Be Televised

By Zoe Ba.

“The revolution’s about to be televised. You picked the right time by the wrong guy.”



It seems as if an insurmountable amount of time has passed since Kendrick Lamar’s half time show in 2025. During this time, President Donald Trump was inaugurated for his second term, wherein upon his first days in power he already began instating drastic policy shifts regarding immigration. This included Executive Order 14159 which allowed for deportation to occur without a formal court hearing. In addition to this, President Trump expanded the imposition of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) nationwide by authorizing their ability to extort hospitals as well as schools. This supported an unruly political climate with both parties uncertain as to what was the right approach to revising immigration policies. Despite this, in September 2025, immigration activist and singer Bad Bunny was selected to be the Super Bowl LX Halftime Headliner. Almost immediately this decision was met with criticisms. His adamant support for the immigrant community and his vocal disapproval of the Trump administration caused great distress for Republican NFL viewers. They claim that his music clashes with the “traditional” image of the football company. In an ironic turn of events, their critiques were met with a compromise on January 18th when Greenday was added to the Super Bowl line up.

The nostalgic punk rock band headlined the opening ceremony at Levi’s Stadium on February 8. Their presence, although providing a larger range for the broader football audience, continued to act as a protest against the current administration. In performances preceding the Super Bowl, they changed their lyrics in

the song “American Idiot” from “I’m not part of a redneck agenda” to “I’m not part of a MAGA agenda”: further solidifying their anti-Trump political views. During the opening ceremony, the band played three of their most popular songs: “Holiday”, “Boulevard of Broken Dreams”, and “American Idiot”. For this performance, the lyrics steered away from their traditionally “politically charged” verses, instead focusing on rallying the audience to get excited for the game.

Following Greenday’s performance, Charlie Puth sang the national anthem. Drawing inspiration from the R&B style, Puth’s rendition of the “Star Spangled Banner” in D major was considered phenomenal. His vocal performance left no doubt as to why he was selected.

By the end of the second quarter, when the Seahawks were winning the Super Bowl at 9 vs 0 and it was time for Bad Bunny to commence his performance, another half time show was simultaneously taking place. Turning Point’s “All American” Alternative Half Time Show (an ironic name considering Puerto Rico is an American territory) included artists such as Brantley Gilbert, Gabby Barrett, Lee Brice, and Kid Rock. The alternative performance began with a guitar rendition of the “Star Spangled Banner” and ended with a cover from Kid Rock of “Til You Can’t” by Cody Johnson. Around 4 million people tuned into the performance on Youtube and the show lasted a few minutes into the 3rd Quarter of the Super Bowl.

Despite the attempt to combat the Super Bowl LX’s viewership, around 135 million people tuned into Bad Bunny’s performance making it the most viewed half time show in history. Before his performance, the singer said in response to the criticisms regarding the music being Spanish that the only language people need to know is the language of dance.

He started his performance with “Tití Me Pregunto” and ended with “D+MF”. The set was built to mimic the



iconic landscape and traditions of Puerto Rico. However Bad Bunny did not shy away from having the symbolism expand beyond cultural representation and into political commentary. On the football he held throughout the performance was the message “Together We Are America”.

His entire performance appeared to be centered around two primary themes. The first being Love, visible through the real marriage that occurred on stage, the screen flashing the message “The only thing more powerful than hate is love”, and the message he tells the camera in Spanish which roughly translates to “...I never stopped believing in myself. And you should believe in yourself too. You’re worth more than you think.” The second theme most prevalent during the half time show was Latin American Pride. In one of the scenes, Benito (Bad Bunny) gives his grammy to a young boy that possibly represents a younger version of himself or is acting as a tribute to his origins. Before the final song in Bad Bunny’s setlist, he says “God Bless America” before listing the countries in both North and South America, reframing what it means to be a part of America.

Regardless of your political views, Bad Bunny’s half time show was truly phenomenal, with an entertaining story meant to inspire empathy and kindness in all.

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Love is Not in The Air

By Zack H.

Love may not be in the air for Chula Vista and Oceanside, according to a recent national study on “dating friendliness,” which has ranked both cities near the bottom of the list for singles across all of the United States. This study, done by WalletHub, surveyed more than 180 of the largest cities in the U.S and organized them into a list from best to worst cities for dating. Cities were scored using factors such as cost of living, dating opportunities, dating interest, and the overall quality of life. Higher-scoring cities tended to have more social venues, affordable date options, strong single populations, and easy access to activities that encourage face-to-face interactions. In contrast to the two Southern



California areas, Encinitas ranked among the top small cities in the country, highlighting its higher overall livability. For students and young adults living in Encinitas, this difference is noticeable. The city’s coffee shops, surf culture, and accessible beaches make it easier for people to meet and connect socially. While the rankings do not determine anyone’s love life, they do highlight how much location can influence social opportunities. Regional differences in culture, local amenities, and cost of living play a huge role in how and where people form relationships, making where you live an important factor in modern-day relationships.

The Rise of AI Therapy

By Sadie S.M.

In the last few years, the significance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has increased worldwide. Platforms such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude provide interactive, adaptive conversations with participants, which, in many situations, prove to be a very useful and insightful tool. However, in every story, there is always an opposing view. Individuals, including a significant number of adolescents, began using the technology for a concerning reason: therapy.



Currently, a shocking one in eight adolescents and young adults turn to AI for therapy and assistance, according to a study by JAMA Network Open. To many professionals, this statistic is unfortunate to see as a shift in adolescent and young adult mental health support weakens every day. Therefore, the question “how did this become a reality and what are the consequences?” was created to improve the situation for all adolescents and young adults.

The earliest signs of AI therapy appeared over ten years ago, in 2015, when AI first became accessible to the open market. Since then, it has only grown in relevance and magnitude, and with the release of OpenAI’s ChatGPT in 2022, the technology expanded even more. That is when professionals noticed the drastic increase in the number of individuals using AI for therapeutic purposes, making the question of why become very prevalent among professionals.

Through various studies and informational interviews, professionals discovered that adolescents and young adults feel extraordinarily comforted by a non-judgmental, easy-to-navigate support system. They felt they could express their true thoughts, and with the responses being instantaneous, many did not see an issue with it. Thankfully, at the surface level, AI provides vague and seemingly harmless answers; however, once users express suicidal and self-harm-oriented thoughts, the AI response also takes a turn for the worse.

AI bots tend to phrase statements in accordance with their routine responses. Therefore, instead of advising individuals not to engage in self-harm behaviors, bots use words such as “safely” or “responsi-

bly” engage in them. This is where professionals see the need for serious change. As of late 2025, OpenAI faced seven to eight wrongful-death lawsuits for the deaths of multiple individuals, including 16-year-old Adam Raine. His death sparked intense media coverage because AI “encouraged” and “advised” him to engage in self-harming acts. It was devastating not only for his family but for the world, and the emphasis on change became even more prominent.



AI can serve as a powerful tool across the spectrum, but it can also come at a serious cost. For adolescent members in particular, it is important to remember that there are alternatives. Even if it feels like there are not any, there are helplines and trusted adults to reach out to. It is up to everyone to acknowledge the faults, and by doing so, it enables a new generation of emotional support and assistance for everyone.

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I'd Rather Have a Classic Car

By Luke W.



Today, cars are constantly evolving; they're becoming smarter and more technologically advanced with each passing year. They just keep getting bigger, flashier, and packed with larger touchscreens every year. Our cars are getting smarter, to the point that Teslas can have full-on conversations with their onboard Grok AI; however, do you ever wonder why we actually need this? Recently, I decided to step back and reconsider my relationship with modern cars.

For years, I have had a friend who exclusively drives classic cars. I used to think that he was insane for missing out on Apple CarPlay, air conditioning, and all the new features that come with owning a new model. He owns a 1988 Chevy Blazer, and until recently, I never fully understood the appeal of driving a classic. I never expected to change my perspective, but I am now grateful that I did.

One Sunday evening, while scrolling through Facebook Marketplace, I came across a 1968 Ford F-250. Certain that I was not going to buy it, I made a low offer. To my surprise, the seller accepted. In this moment, I imagined what my life would look like with an almost 60-year-old car, which is a dramatic shift from my 2018 F-150. I jokingly asked my parents if they would support my decision to buy this, and to my surprise, both my parents were supportive of me using my cash to buy this truck. After sleeping on it, I scheduled a time to see the truck in person.

That Wednesday, I looked at the car, and it was love at first sight. It was in relatively good condition for being a 58-year-old truck. I signed the title, and just like that, it was mine. The drive home was nerve-racking, as I had never driven a manual truck before, but it was also unforgettable. Along the way, seven different people rolled down their windows to compliment the truck. It was then that I realized how uncommon it is for young drivers to be behind the wheel of a vehicle this old. Seeing the smiles it brought to people's faces was so rewarding. The days to come were just filled with driving the 1968 F-250, everywhere,



including to and from school, running errands, and along the coast. Over my time with the car, I came to the revelation that new cars no longer have the same soul as classic cars. I enjoyed learning how to drive a manual, sitting on a bench seat, and listening to the loud V8 engine. Today's cars have become so automated that drivers are often disconnected from the experience itself. My F-250, despite its challenges, made driving fun again.

Looking back, I am confident in my decision to buy the truck. While knowing that classic cars are not the most reliable cars, the experience they offer is unmatched. I love how everything is so simple, and it just works. I encourage people to consider whether or not they really need a brand-new 2026 car, or if they would get the same value in an older car at a fraction of the cost. I am grateful to my friend, Alex, for showing me the beauty of classic cars.

Surfers Chase Waves, Thieves Chase Keys

By Zack H.

On a sunny January day with good waves, the parking lot can feel like part of the lineup. Surfers who arrive before dawn hide their keys in wheel wells or under bumpers, and then paddle out, leaving phones, wallets, and credit cards behind. Federal prosecutors say that a Southern California crew exploited that very routine with a coordinated scheme that allegedly stole just over \$1 million from surfers along the coast. According to court documents, the operation worked like a relay. One person was designated to watch surfers park and note where they hid their keys. Another member stayed on the beach to confirm the target had actually entered the water. Then, once given the all clear, a third member would take the key,



unlock the car, and take phones, wallets, and any other valuables. The supposed ring-leader is Orange County resident Moundir Kamil, who then used the stolen cards and phones to quickly transfer money, overriding any fraud alerts that appeared on the victim's device. What made this case stand out wasn't just the thefts but the strategy and scale of the operation. As the federal case moves forward, it stands as a reminder to coastal communities that surfers may be most vulnerable before even touching the water. For many, the safest session may now start before waxing the board, by instead using a lock box, and assuming that someone could be watching the parking lot just as closely as the waves.

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Winter Olympics

By Zoe Br.

The Milano Cortina 2026 Olympic Winter Games are underway, and there is already plenty of news. The U.S. has so far won seven medals, including two gold, three silver, and two bronze. Breezy Johnson brought home gold in Women's Downhill Alpine Skiing, which was the first medal secured by the U.S. team. She also helped the Women's Team Combined take bronze, along with Jacqueline Wiles (4th) and Isabella Write (21st). While these are major highs of the first week, Alpine Skiing also contained a low, as skier Lindsey Vonn crashed in the downhill. Vonn had torn her Anterior Cruciate Ligament, more commonly referred to as an ACL, the week prior. While the injury did not bar her from competing, it messed up her run, causing her to crash, which required her to be air-lifted off the slope and to a hospital. She is reported to be recovering and stable.

The U.S.'s second gold came in the figure skating team event. This event has a qualifier and final round, where each place



is worth points, starting at ten for first and subsequently decreasing. After the qualifier, five teams are eliminated, leaving the top five to compete in the final. Madison Chock and Evan Bates took first in the Ice Dance qualifier, while Alysa Liu took second in women's singles and Ilia Malinin took second in men's singles. In the final, Chock and Bates once again took first, as did Ilia Malinin, with Amber Glenn taking third in wom-

en's. There will be individual competitions for each event in the coming weeks.

The U.S.'s silver medals were collected by Ben Ogden in Men's Sprint Classic Cross-Country Skiing, Alex Hall in Men's Freeski Slopestyle Freestyle Skiing, and by the curling team, who won eight of eleven matches. Ashley Farquharson took bronze in Women's Singles Luge.

Interestingly, there have been multiple minor issues at the games. It appears that the metal part of the awarded medals separates very easily from the ribbon to which it is attached, which often occurs when recipients jump in celebration. When this happens, the Olympics provide a new, non-separated medal. There was also an issue with the figure skating podiums damaging the skates of multiple skaters from the winning teams. Luckily, the skates seem to be repaired in time for their next competitions. With nine days left of competitions to watch, it's definitely shaping up to be a very exciting Winter Games.

Southern Snowstorms

By Beatrix M.Y.

Monday, January 20th marked an intense snowstorm that swept across the South and the Midwest of America; the storms tapered off by February 1st. While the ten-day freeze may have provided kids with a few days off from school, this period was also marked by severe tragedy stemming from inadequate education about keeping you and your family warm and healthy during storms.

Despite the south being known for blazing hot summers, these freezes have become a more and more common occurrence. The first in this string of especially cold winters began in Texas on February 11th, 2021. This freeze was devastating and equally unprecedented. People, for lack of a better term, started running around like chickens with their heads cut off. Within the first 48 hours of the storm, nearly 70% of Texas residents had lost power, and nearly 50% had lost access to water. To people who have spent time in colder climates, this may not have been as big a deal as it truly was,



but in all honesty, many Texas citizens had nothing to get them through the storm. Crucial items like winter jackets, back-up heaters, snow scrapers, and an understanding of how to drive on icy roads were no where to be found. This unfortunate combination led to 246 deaths from causes such as car crashes, carbon monoxide poisoning, starvation, and hypothermia.

In the following years, there were several uncanny snowstorms, not quite to the level seen in 2021, but prevalent enough

to make an impact on how the south understands storms. Unfortunately, many are still making the same errors as they were 5 years ago, with 42 people, mostly in Texas, dying in direct coalition to the storms and another 500,000 losing power at one time across the regions hit by the storms. As people all across the South face the consequence of underpreparation, this tragedy speaks volumes about how undereducated large swaths of America have become about personal safety rules, but it makes sense. Many people in the south are tried and true, which often leads to an intense lack of travel to even other places in the United States where there might be colder weather. Up until this decade, winter in the south was a slight chill in the air, and it is up to the government to provide aid to its people. However the people must recognize that this will be a pattern continued into the future, and that listening and learning will be the best step forward to everyone's safety in the coming years.

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A Deep Look at Deep-Sea Discoveries

By Sadie S.M.



2025 not only brought innovative technological advances and shocking global events, but also delivered many deep-sea discoveries. Scientists and researchers worldwide used cutting-edge technology to uncover the unknown parts of the sea, and what they discovered was nothing short of astonishing. In one instance, at least twenty species that look straight out of a science fiction movie were found, and the story of their discovery is both fascinating and informative.

Since 2018, a team of researchers at the California Academy of Sciences has collected coral reef data from multiple regions. To discover this information about sea life, the team uses special monitors called Autonomous Reef Monitoring Structures (ARMS), which are placed three hun-

dred feet below the dark sea. Last year, at a reef near Guam, the team acquired a series of these devices and the information they stored, which led them to some unique findings. Out of 2,000 specimens recorded, the team revealed 20 entirely new species.

However, the numbers do not stop there. According to Luiz Rocha, a California Academy of Sciences ichthyology curator, “It’s probably going to be higher than that because one of the things we do is we confirm everything with genetics[...] and [...] sometimes what happens is what we thought was not a new species ends up being a new species because the genetics is different.” Overall, scientists want us to understand that the numbers are exponentially greater, and with ever-changing technology, they are constantly moving closer to discovering a whole new batch.

Additionally, while twenty species were added to the list, one stood out to the scientist the most—the hermit crab—clam hybrid pairing. Unlike most instances when hermit crabs attach to easily accessible snail shells, this species bonds to a clam shell. It is a mysterious adaptation that shocked the team, including Luiz Rocha, and its cool



and unique attributes make the crab stand out as the most mesmerizing discovery of the research expedition.

These occasions enlightened scientists to a whole new series of deep-sea life, but it is crucial to remember that these discoveries were not the only ones. Other groups of scientists and researchers uncovered similarly intriguing species in 2025, and the team at the Academy of California Sciences is just one exceptional story of sea life discovery. Over the next two years, the science community will commit itself to seeking new information about these creatures. These efforts are essential to the future of marine research, and with every discovery, humanity takes a step toward a better understanding of the unique livelihoods.

We’re Not Meant to be Understood By Everyone

By Leyton G.

As humans, we experience a vast range of emotions, and we are inherently social beings. For millions of years, humans have survived by cooperating and evolving in groups. Even today, humans are biologically wired to seek relationships, friendships, and partners. However, it is sometimes difficult to be truly authentic around everyone. People often hide who they really are to fit in or be accepted. We hesitate to reveal our true selves, so we speak the safest language, hold the safest ideas, and live at the safest volume. If every person were to immediately “get you,” it may be because there is little resistance in what you are saying.

Many people view misunderstanding as a failure, but in reality, it is far from



one. When we express ourselves honestly, the people who resonate with our ideas will lean in and listen, while those who do not will drift away. This is not a form of exclusion; it is alignment. Being selectively understood allows us to create authentic connections, rather than broad approval. A

few people who truly believe in you and understand you outweigh a crowd that vaguely agrees with you.

If you want something you have never had before, you need to do these things you’ve never done before. Growth requires friction; new ideas often sound unrealistic before they sound realistic. Artists, writers, thinkers, and journalists often get dismissed or misread before their work finds the right audience. If your goal is to be immediately and universally understood, you are going to end up recycling what’s already familiar. Innovation arrives wearing confusion.

So go do something nobody’s done before. They will not understand it now, but they will eventually.

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Life of an Entrepreneur

By Luke W.

This article is for the creators of the world: the people who want to make a difference through business. Throughout my high school experience, I have started multiple businesses and gained a firsthand look at what entrepreneurship entails. I have experienced both success and failure, returning to the drawing board countless times. Entrepreneurship requires persistence, discipline, and constant motivation to see results.

My first business was a Bitcoin mining operation during my eighth-grade year. I built a computer with the goal of generating passive income around the clock. Shortly after building the computer, the price of Bitcoin dropped from \$60,000 to \$30,000, instantly cutting the value I was mining in half. At the time, I was incredibly disappointed with this business's performance. Through this experience, I learned that markets fluctuate dramatically and that you need an appropriate long-term plan. Today, the Bitcoin I mined is worth far more than it was in eighth grade, due to rising prices, which proves that patience can turn setbacks into a good investment in the long-term.

My second business was a photog-

raphy business. In the summer before ninth grade, Pacific Light Photography LLC was born. During this time, my grandfather had stage four cancer. Before his passing, he noticed my fascination with photography. A few days before he died, he mentioned seeing a flying object above surfers at the beach. I told him, "Papa, that's a drone. You can connect them to your phone and take photos and videos with them." He jokingly told me he would buy one for me, though I did not believe he actually would. After he passed away, my parents informed me that he had set aside money for me to buy a drone. To this day, it remains one of the most meaningful presents I have ever received.

I got the DJI Mini 2, a basic model, but I loved it and took it everywhere to photograph landscapes and events. While I was on a walk with my dad, he suggested I try using the drone professionally. He introduced me to his friend Dave, a realtor, for whom I completed my first job without pay. He ended up liking my work, so he gave me a job. It was here that I made my first dollar as a photographer. He later referred me to the owner of Beach Wolf Cafe, who paid me to create an advertisement. That

summer became a turning point where I focused on learning how to improve and grow my business.

Over time, I have reinvested my earnings back into the company, and Pacific Light Photography LLC is now a California-recognized business. I have upgraded from an iPhone to a Sony AiV DSLR camera. It has not been an easy journey to get to this point, and it required many sacrifices for success. Entrepreneurship is time-consuming, and much of my free time is dedicated to the business. It is a constant grind, and you must be motivated to persevere through failures to reach a point where the business can reach sustainability. Reaching a point where I can begin taking on employees has been incredibly rewarding. Although it is not easy, entrepreneurship is fulfilling both financially and personally. The future of the world depends heavily on visionary entrepreneurs who are willing to take risks and create something meaningful. My website is pacificlightphotography.com, and I am always open to questions about my business or how to get started.

Kristi Noem--Resignation or Impeachment?

By Sara L.

Kristi Noem, the United States Secretary of Homeland Security, has recently been facing criticism following the deaths of two US citizens in Minneapolis. Renee Good and Alex Pretti were both fatally shot by Immigration and Customs Enforcement just a few weeks apart. With videos circulating online and eyewitnesses speaking out, it has become clear that Noem's official statements do not match what actually transpired. In the eyes of critics, Noem has already failed as a leader simply by allowing these deaths to occur. They point to past occurrences of Noem's lack of transparency regarding government mat-

ters. On the other hand, Noem's supporters argue that she is merely obeying and enforcing the law to the best of her ability.



Among those supporting Noem is President Trump, who has continued to remain an adamant supporter of Noem despite calls for her removal or impeachment. Disregarding these requests means that, despite the political controversy Noem has created, her position remains relatively safe. However, discussion has already been sparked about government accountability and concerns over public safety. Noem can still decide to step down and take responsibility for the actions of her agents and the lives taken. As impeachment and dismissal from her role seem unlikely, only she holds the power to de-escalate the political drama.

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The Legacy of Catherine O'Hara

By Beatrix M.Y.



On January 30th, Catherine O'Hara passed away. Details about her passing have come in discreet snippets, and one can infer "a brief sickness" most likely refers to cancer. While some chose to focus on the manner of her passing, it is important to recognize the incredible career she had and the lives she touched with her wit and humor.

Catherine O'Hara started off her career in Toronto and quickly shot into the spotlight. She first appeared in the cast of

The Second City in the 1980s, earning an Emmy for her writing and acting on the comedy. From there, she moved to do guest work on shows like 30 Rock and Saturday Night Live, before making her film debut alongside Eugene Levy (soon to be lifelong friend and costar) in the show Double Negative.

Her hysterical theatrics shone through in films like Beetlejuice, where she famously delivers, "If you don't let me gut out this house and make it my own, I will go insane, and I will take you with me." Her memorable performances in cult classics like Home Alone cemented her legacy into hearts all across America.

In addition to her work in live action productions, which would go on to include favorites like Beetlejuice Beetlejuice, Best In Show, and For Your Consideration, O'Hara cemented herself in the world of voice acting. To boil down her achievements in that category would be near blasphemous, but hands down, the most widely recognized role of hers is her depiction of Sally

in The Nightmare Before Christmas. Not only did she absolutely deliver on screen, but she also proceeded to follow the cast to the annual live Nightmare Before Christmas Showing, which tours in the Halloween-to-Christmas holiday season.

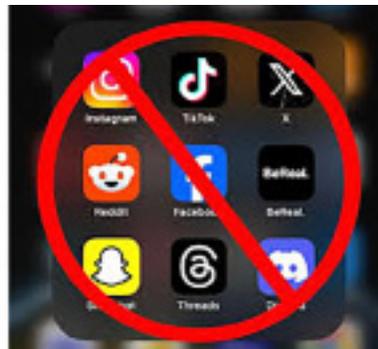


Catherine O'Hara's legacy of genius comedic timing, paired with an eerie aesthetic, has cemented her spot in Hollywood's heart. She has left behind shoes that will not be easily filled, but her legacy lives on in the amazing work she's done throughout her life.

Social Media Ban and Trial

By Sara L.

Last week, a civil trial began in the United States over the issue of teen access to social media. Leading companies in the field, including Meta (parent company of Facebook and Instagram), YouTube, Snapchat, and TikTok, were put in the spotlight on the grounds that their addictive algorithms and platform design are detrimental to teens' mental health and overall well-being. This lawsuit is the first to attack the structural design of social media rather than what transpires on its platforms. For example, Instagram and YouTube's infinite scroll features and algorithm-driven content promotion, designed to optimize user engagement, can trap teens in a never-ending spiral. For instance, liking one reel about struggles with mental health instantly generates ten more. Lawyers involved in the case plan to use internal documents that demonstrate that the executives of these companies are aware of the negative



impact their app's structure and algorithm can have on vulnerable adolescents. While Snapchat and TikTok were also named in the lawsuit, the two companies reached an agreement with the plaintiff prior to the start of the trial. While the many flaws of social media apps are on track to be exposed in the coming weeks as the trial progresses, other countries have already decided on their approach to the widespread issue.

Australia, for example, banned social media in December for teens under the age of sixteen, aiming to lessen the risk of cyberbullying and exposure to mature content while also improving adolescent mental health. Additionally, France has moved to ban social media for those under 15, and both Spain and the United Kingdom have recently expressed similar sentiments. The decisive actions of these two countries highlight the extensive negative impact of social media and pave the way for other countries to follow suit. While the United States has not taken such drastic measures, these leading social media apps being under such intense, nationwide scrutiny may bring their negative impacts to light and force lawmakers to take action. With an understanding of how other countries are addressing the issue, American teens wait to see how the United States will tackle this issue, if it chooses to do so at all.

ENCINITAS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH, 2026

Grauer Brain Rot Quiz

By Zoe Ba.



How well do you know the Grauer School?
Take this Quiz to find out!

Who Welcomes Students at the Tolerance Gate Every Morning?

- Paul Michael
- Peter
- Shelley
- Patricia

Trevor walks up to you; what is he holding in his hand?

- A whistle
- A clipboard
- Your phone
- A mug with coffee

You're in desperate need of snacks, whose room are you raiding?

- Trisha's room
- Shelley's room
- Jessi's room
- Paulinia's room
- All of the above

Who of the following does Roller Derby and Kung Fu?

- Mimi
- Patricia
- Dominique
- Paige

You need some animal love; where are you going?

- The Music Room
- The Art Room
- Science Class
- Home

Whose birthday is it?

- Tracy's
- Shelley's
- Dominique's
- Louise's



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Sudoku

8		1			3	9		6
		9			7	8	5	
2	5		1			4	7	
5				6	1	7		4
7	6		8	3				
	3	2						
	2			1	9	5		
		5				3		2
			4	5	2	1	9	7

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