

# THE Grauer Gazette

No. 33

ENCINITAS, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2026

The Grauer School

## Welcome Back, Grauer

By Sadie S.M.

The beginning of the year marks a transitional period for everyone at The Grauer School. Whether it is an incoming student who has never set foot on campus or a returning senior accepting their many “lasts”, coming back to school brings ambivalent emotions. With that said, there are many reasons to embrace this period, even if it feels uncertain at the time; the most significant is finding community.

Grauer is a tight-knit environment of 171 students. While that number is far smaller than many middle and high schools in the area, Grauer still houses plenty of communities that showcase its robust student population. The twist is that students must explore those options and find their community through personal exploration. Easier said than done, Athletic Director and High School Dean of Students Trevor Olson captures the process in a few simple words: “...real connection takes time, and sometimes it requires putting your-

self out there, trying something new, joining a team or club, or simply starting a conversation with someone you normally wouldn't.” There is no denying that the tricky task is figuring out which community a student belongs to; however, one of Grauer's primary priorities is fostering these environments, and those who do prioritize this discovery have felt its effects.



Peggy Gardner captures Johnny King with middle school art class in the Art Room on August 18, 2026.

Charlotte Johnson and Inder Chokkar, both seniors and Grauer students since seventh grade, are ideal examples of taking

this process into one's own hands. Charlotte has pursued her communities through the theater department, starring in plays such as “Romeo and Juliet,” and the Girl Rising Club, of which she is currently Vice President. Inder has also prioritized his Grauer communities by pursuing, and now leading, the Grauer School Shockwave Team, and is also committed to the Speech and Debate team. Their advice is simple: Charlotte says, “Through trying new things, trying clubs and new classes has really helped me connect with new people,” while Inder advises, “Never say no to new opportunities.” Together, these two students highlight Grauer's commitment to sparking community involvement in every student.

Changes are hard. Whether it's starting at a new school or pursuing a new activity, adversity comes with these things. Thankfully, the Grauer School community offers assistance, support, and connections unlike any other. With that, welcome back, Grauer.

## From Campus to Concerts

By Samantha M.

From performing at Grauer Paloozas to gaining over a million Spotify listeners, many Grauer alumni have harnessed their creative side and successfully entered the music industry. Currently, six major bands and artists have graduated from the Grauer School.

The first band is Racecourse, an indie rock band based in New York. The singer is not only an alum but also the daughter of our music and theater directors! Reya Langen graduated from Grauer in 2011. Her band has two popular hits: “Caledonia” and “Pennybox.”

The second group with a Grauer School graduate is Celebrity Telethon, formerly known as Jack Habegger's Celebrity Telethon. Jack Habegger graduated from Grauer in 2017. Celebrity Telethon is known for their folk rock and cowpunk style of music. They have released two full-length albums under both band names and are continuing to per-

form in Oregon, Montana, and Washington.

The next performer goes by the stage name of GUPI, but is better known across campus as Spencer Hawk. GUPI graduated from Grauer in 2017 along with Jack Habegger. He is known for his electronic-sounding music and has over 16 million Spotify listens. GUPI has released four full solo albums and two full collaborative albums. To fully understand his style, listen to GUPI's albums in production order.

Going back to an earlier graduating class, the class of 2012 has two graduates who are now successful in the music industry. The first alum is Jake Kelsoe, who is a member of four separate bands! He plays in Band Argument, OMO Cloud, Dog Magic, and Fuzz Huzzi. He enjoys playing indie rock with a twinge of art-pop or fuzz. His most famous work is with the band Band Argument and their album “If the Accident Will”.

The second alum from 2012 is Nick Arnold. He went on a national tour with Gemini Syndrome in August of 2018. Now, he is part of a Brooklyn-based punk rock band named Surfbort, where he is the lead bassist. They have released three studio albums, performed on six tours, and gone on tour twice themselves.

The last alum is Brian Warren, who graduated in 2005. Warren is a part of the band. Weatherbox is an indie pop/punk rock band, located here in San Diego. They have released three albums and toured 20 times!

Grauer alumni have been chasing their dreams on stage worldwide. From electronic pop to punk rock, these musicians have created a career out of what they love. They have proven that hard work, dedication, and determination can make any dream possible. Grauer is here to support your creativity and let your uniqueness shine.

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# The Freedom to Explore

By Nathaniel T.

Just a few weeks, we will all be departing to go around the world on a wide array of adventures! I interviewed our head of school, Dana Appleman Diggs, and many of our teachers who are either involved in our current expeditions or were original founders. I did this to learn the history of these expeditions, so you could get some backstory on where you're going and why the Grauer School does them in the first place. Our founder, Stuart Grauer, wanted our great school to have a core value of learning through discovery because he believed teenagers learn best when they have the freedom and ability to learn in the world on their own. Thanks to Patricia Young's expansive and helpful records, I learned the interesting history of all these events.

Patricia will run the Pali Expedition this year, and she was also one of the original people who pushed for it. It first ran in 2015, and it became one of the four main Middle School expeditions. Since then, it has run five more times and gives middle school students the true nature camp experience Stuart sought.

Second is the DC Expedition, the other Middle School expedition. This is one of Grauer's long-running expeditions, with records showing the earliest Grauer went was in 1999, and the original teacher who created it has long since left us. Our principal, Alicia

Tembi, talks highly of how beneficial this is for Grauer students to visit our capital and learn about our early history and culture.

Another upcoming expedition is a long-running Joshua Tree Expedition. It first ran in 1999 as a camping expedition, it is now on its 8th run and has shifted to a more all-day style adventure trip. Our students will work for themselves while learning practical, useful skills. This expedition, originally pushed forward by our founder, Stuart, is popular! The Hidden Trails expedition that takes you to the Canyon of Kentucky, led by the original creator, Paulina Davis Fisher, having gone to college in the area, she re-membered the outdoors and wildlife fondly. From horseback riding to mountain biking to diving and more, she says this is one of the best places she's ever been! Originally run in 2022, it is now in its second iteration.

Lake Powell is an expedition that is very dear to our very own Trevor Olson. Trevor originally ran this expedition in the fall of 2014. This expedition was born when a Baja Expedition was sadly canceled. Trevor booked two houseboats on Lake Powell and brought all the seniors to the hot, sunny Arizona lake. Although the students were initially disappointed, the expedition turned out to be a roaring success and has since run twice more.

Canada is a first-time expedition. When I interviewed Mimi Robinon, she said she has always been interested in Canada and, more specifically, Quebec because it is a French-speaking area. She and Dominique Bartoughian decided it would be a great place to host an expedition to learn about the culture of an area many of us have never been to. This year, many of our students will depart and break new ground as they learn and discover a new and exciting part of the world.

Kenya is an expedition that is deep in Grauer's core. Originally run in 2018 by Shelley Joslin, this expedition will take you to the Daraja Academy, where Shelley went as part of her degree when she was still in college. You'll be able to follow around students at the school and see their day-to-day life, as well as embark on a safari.

And finally, we have a Grauer classic: the local expeditions. Local expeditions first came about after the tragic event of 9/11. Being unable to fly was a problem for Grauer; with multiple expeditions planning to go abroad, they had to readjust. They settled on local expeditions, with Dana running the first local expedition to Disneyland.

So there it is, everybody. I hope you are all excited and thrilled; I know I am for the upcoming Grauer fall expeditions!

## Get Your Daily Dose

By Gwyneth M.

The opening of the new "feminine-forward" local diner, Coffee Dose, attracts flocks of trendy teens and photo-seeking influencers. Founded by the husband-and-wife duo, Jeni and Oscar Castro, Coffee Dose features a colorful mint-green and light-pink interior that creates a whimsical, upbeat atmosphere for sipping coffee and catching up with friends. With edgy phrases like "Anti B\*\*\*\* Serum" on its cups and unexpected slogans like "Order Up B\*\*\*\*\*" decorating the room, Coffee Dose caters to younger diners. Their drinks also intertwine with the mood. The most popular beverages include 'Bananarama' and 'The Valley Girl,' which taste as sweet as the toddlers look

twirling around the checkered-tiled floor. The menu does not reflect traditional diner food; instead, it includes items like the Chill-aquiles nachos, smothered in flavorful salsa verde and queso fresco sauce.



Meal at Coffee Dose in Encinitas, September 7, 2026.

Grauer student Jaden Beyer's favorite menu item was the 'Single Disco pancake.' "I really liked the addition of the miso butter. It added depth and umami." Open Monday through Sunday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Coffee Dose caters to early risers and slow starters alike. Located in Rancho Santa Fe Plaza in Encinitas, this diner is a quick drive from school and a great after-school date spot or hangout. If you do not enjoy being surrounded by selfies and sugary-sweet serums, Coffee Dose may not be the place for you. However, if you like all things pink, this is the perfect destination.

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# The Southern California Stereotype

By Dharma C.

Sunshine, Wellness, Surfing—when you hear these words, there is not much else to think about besides California. The land of avocado toast, bleach-blond hair, and flip-flops instead of shoes. SoCal is truly the place of everyone's dreams, but where did that stereotypical belief come from? How is it possible to hear three words and know exactly what place is being talked about? The Southern California stereotypes have truly been ingrained in everyone's minds, but how have they spread so far? The even stranger question is: why has the stereotype stayed so accurate?



Tony Webster captures Black Beach California.

When word of the gold on the West Coast spread, hundreds of people came flooding to California. Even though the indigenous people were there prior, they were forceful-

ly removed. In 1849, California became the place of materialistic dreams where life could change in the blink of an eye. After this, hundreds of thousands of people came flooding to SoCal. By the late 1800s, California had been marked by railroad companies as "the land of perpetual sunshine". This name not only drew in more tourists, but also inspired the idea of California being a wellness getaway.

By the end of the 1900s, California was established by the media into 3 subsections: Hollywood, Surfers, and "The Valley". The Hollywood effect started as California was seen as the place to be for rising stars, with it being associated with glamor, fame, and a focus on attraction. The rise of the surf stereotype came as the popularity of skateboarding and surfing grew, and as groups such as "The Beach Boys" gained popularity. The laid-back, sun-bleached beach bum became the face of all the SoCal guys. On the other side, girls got placed into the "The Valley" category, where every sentence goes up like a question and 'like' is the main word in

their vocabulary. SoCal girls also got established as more ditzy when songs like "Valley Girl" by Frank Zappa became popular. After that, movies like Clueless set the stereotype in stone.



Pickpic captures surfer.

Now, how does all of this relate to today? Most of these stereotypes are still relatively accurate, with the tanned skin and health crazes, but why? Well, most of these stereotypes came from a truth, such as being exposed to large amounts of sunlight causes lighter hair and more tanned skin. This also applies to the health crazes, because when everyone is so active, nutrition is more highly valued.

The California stereotype did not appear overnight. It has been crafted over decades, and while it can be exaggerated, most of it holds up to this day.

## Am I A Good Person?

By Kian H.

How can we, as human beings, know that we are good enough? The answer to this question is unachievable; by no attestable standards can we assemble a universal moral code that all must follow to be classified as having an objectively good ethical posture. How, then, must we determine whether our actions stem from an authentic place of compassion, or are simply the outputs of an external demonstration of moral behavior?

One critical aspect of modern introspection stems from social media. The knowledge we consume and rely on for external validation is now operated by algorithms programmed to rationalize consumers' opinions. Essentially, whether for better or worse, they profit from submerging us in what we perceive as being true. That exposure inherently transforms our perception of the world and of other people, and begins to shape our understanding of right and wrong. Social media, as well as serving as an outlet for escap-

ism and a means of self-expression, becomes an intuition we apply routinely to our lives. Because online resources now replace social interactions, humans naturally adopt the ideologies and belief systems they encounter. We construct, in our minds, better versions of ourselves, shaped by the consumption of surrounding excellence, which in turn causes us to look inward and seek only the negative components that hold us back from those idealized personas.

Moral scrupulosity derives from religious insecurity regarding one's ability to virtuously practice their faith. Its modern definition encompasses any hyperfixation of one's moral composure—the manner in which they conduct themselves in relation to personal ethics. This condition tends to appear—to a higher degree—in those who are conscientious or aware of their behavior, and possess the capacity to honestly assess their actions. In any case, people desire truth. We are innately drawn to the reality of our

character, and to reach that wisdom, an establishment of general moral principles must take place. If our understanding of integrity wavers, our outward judgment of morality will as well. This disconnect between internal and external standards is what constitutes moral scrupulosity. A problem that arises even within the correlation of inner and outer moral assessment is doubt: uncertainty about whether our moral posture is straightened for genuine righteousness or simply to appear to others as recognizably good-natured. If the latter is true, and we are unaware of our own disingenuousness, the potential for fulfillment seems impractical, and developing moral scrupulosity is an organic response.

Imposter syndrome, or the overwhelming sensation of unworthiness—whether apparent or not—constricts so much of our daily interactions. People are held back by their inability to communicate basic human desires, and how they judge themselves and people close to them will always

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# OpEd: Our National Parks Are Not For

By Isabella M.

The United States of America has a long history of conserving its natural lands. In the last two years, however, many of the country's lands have been stripped of their protections for profit. The most recent of these attacks is on one of California's favorite national parks: Yosemite.

The Trump Administration plans to trade a quarter-mile strip of land to a private developer. This developer (Kingsbarn Realty Capital) wants the land so they can build a more convenient road to their private property just outside of Yosemite National Park. In exchange, the government would receive land of equal value somewhere else in California.



Photo of Isabella Monacelli in Yosemite National Park by Susa Visuri.

this land trade would be to make a private property more conveniently accessible. However, the property already has road access, and a privatized road through this national landmark is not necessary. The sole purpose would be to maximize the landowner's profit.



This is in no way acceptable. These national parks were established to help preserve the land, and privatizing any part of them would be criminal. The Grauer School has run expeditions to Yosemite numerous times, and each time Grauer students are stunned by its beauty. This spring, Clayton Payne led the expedition, bringing students up the Mist Trail to Vernal Falls, toward Yosemite Point and the top of Yosemite Falls, spending their time appreciating the park's beauty. When asked about the proposed plans, Clayton responded that Yosemite is "one of America's greatest ideas and greatest contributions to the world...a promise to not

just [to] the future generations of America, but to the future generation of Global Citizens. As such, I do not feel that the U.S. government should privatize or sell any parts of the national parks system. And to do so is to break a covenant with future generations."

Yosemite is not the only public land under threat—over 86 million acres of land have already lost protective status under the Trump Administration. Additionally, funding for the National Park Service has been cut, leading to staff reductions and a large maintenance backlog across all of the parks. The current administration is systematically taking away our public lands, trading the long-term well-being of many for the short-term benefit of the elite, and that is criminal. We must stand up.

So, what can you do? Reach out to your elected officials. Speak to your members of Congress, voicing your support for fully funding these conservation programs and keeping public land in public hands. Support conservation groups. Join local trail-building events and participate in National Public Lands Days. Speak out against legislative efforts to transfer, sell off, or reduce protections for public lands. Our national parks are not for sale.

Photo by Thomas Wolf at Glacier Point on September 26, 2016.

Land trades are acceptable in very rare circumstances, but they require two main prerequisites. First, the monetary value must be equal. Second, it must demonstrate that it will primarily benefit public interests over a private entity. While this proposed trade meets the first condition, it does not meet the second criterion. The reasoning behind

## The United States is Burning

By Samantha M.

More than 8.4 million fires have been reported across the United States in 2026. As of September 11, 2026, wildfires are raging across 15 states. 12 of these fires are located in Washington state. Most 2026 wildfires are caused by humans, but several conditions are worsening them.

These influences include extremely dry vegetation, which is increasing with the intense summer heat wave and drought conditions. The second is low humidity, caused by rising global temperatures and an atypical La Niña pattern. The La Niña pattern was atypical, with lighter conditions in the prior months of 2026, which then increased to an El Niño pattern by late August. Thirdly, tight atmospheric pressure has made the wind incredibly powerful.



Widemouth 2 wildfire burns near Richmond, Utah on August 7, 2026.

Unfortunately, these fires have not only impacted the environment but also people. In early August, over 60,000 people were forced to evacuate from their homes in Washington. Since then, 45,000 more have had to do so. There is no statistic for the whole U.S., but based on the Washington and Nevada fires, around 750 structures have been destroyed. These fires not only damage people's living situations but also trigger health

problems. The difficulty of containment has worsened air quality, affecting over 20 states. In some places, air quality was so poor that professionals deemed it hazardous and warned people to try to stay indoors as much as possible.

Some ecological effects of these wildfires include: risk of flash floods, landslides, and erosion. Though wildfires can be natural, there are still things we can do to prevent them. Ways to help prevent the spread of fires include keeping your grass trimmed short, avoiding anything that can ignite a spark on dry or hot days, and making sure all matches are fully put out before disposing of them. It is also recommended to keep an emergency first aid kit with burn treatments and to clear a perimeter around your household of leaves or quickly flammable objects.

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# Updated COVID-19 Shots Are Coming: Here's What Students Should Know

By KC G.

Another COVID-19 vaccine is arriving for the 2026-27 season, this time better designed to match the variants currently circulating in the United States. The new shots were updated to target the XFG variant, a descendant of the JN.1 family of COVID-19 strains, to match the variants currently circulating.

Under current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance, COVID-19 vaccination for people younger than 65 is based on individual decision-making, meaning that students and families can consider their health, vaccination status, and personal risk of severe illness. The CDC says that the benefits are greatest for people with high risk of severe COVID-19.

That approach marks a major shift under Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a longtime vaccine skeptic who has repeatedly promoted claims questioning vaccine safety and effectiveness. Since taking office in Jan. 2025, he has used his power

to reshape federal vaccine policy, including replacing the CDC's vaccine advisory committee and narrowing some COVID-19 recommendations.



Vaccine Photo by Paulo H Carvalho & Agência Brasília on July 22, 2021.

However, major pediatric medical organizations are giving somewhat stronger recommendations. For the 2026-27 season, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends an updated COVID vaccine for children and adolescents ages two to 18 who are at high risk of severe illness, have never been vaccinated, or live with someone at high risk.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says healthy teenagers whose families want additional protection should be offered the vaccine. For most healthy high school students, that means the decision is increasingly a personal one rather than a universal federal recommendation.

COVID vaccines do not guarantee that someone would avoid infection. Their primary benefit is reducing the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and other serious outcomes.

Students considering the updated vaccine should consider their own individual risk and vaccination history with a doctor or pharmacist.

Pharmacy manager Aylen Amestoy prepares to give a respiratory syncytial virus vaccine at a CVS Pharmacy in Miami in 2025. RSV, flu, and COVID-19 vaccines are expected to be available at pharmacies and covered by insurance this fall and winter.

# What Is Going on with our Food?

**By Isabella M.**

We have all seen the headlines. Iceberg lettuce. Alfalfa sprouts. Jalapeños. Eggs. Frozen berries. It feels like food recalls are more prevalent than ever, but this is not the case. There have been a consistent number of recalls when compared to previous years. However, experts say it matters more how many people are affected than the number of products recalled. The *Cyclospora* outbreak in July was the third-largest outbreak (in terms of illness cases) in United States history, according to the U.S. Public Interest Research Group.

The CDC has received 18,445 laboratory-confirmed cases of Cyclospora since May 1, 2026. This outbreak has led to a total of two deaths and affected 21 states. This significantly exceeds prior peaks, with a possible explanation being the recent decrease in workforce at the Department of Health and Human Services under Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Robert Custard, an environmental health expert who worked at the Virginia Department

of Health for over two decades, said that cuts to public health staffing and funding can lead to fewer inspections and tests for food safety before they cause illness. He warns that fewer food recalls can signal a decrease in food safety, as less testing occurs, rather than a sign that our food is becoming safer. This counter-intuitive idea is crucial to understand as more foods have been recalled.



Current Data Set of Recalled Products Published by the FDA.

Food recalls have many other misconceptions. A major one being that many

people believe food recalls stem from the FDA, when in fact the FDA is responsible for ~1% of food recall initiations. Roughly 99% are initiated voluntarily by food manufacturers and distributors. Another common misconception is that the location where you buy the food matters. It does to an extent; however, it is much more important to acknowledge the source/manufacturer, as they often distribute to multiple grocery brands. The final and most important misconception is that it is often specific lot numbers; not every product distributed is necessarily at risk of contamination.

As recalls occur, make sure to discard any items that may have been affected. Check the FDA, CDC, and USDA to see if any food matches the recalled brands, lot numbers, or expiration dates. As always, wash hands and clean fresh produce. If someone experiences any symptoms of food poisoning, contact a health provider immediately.

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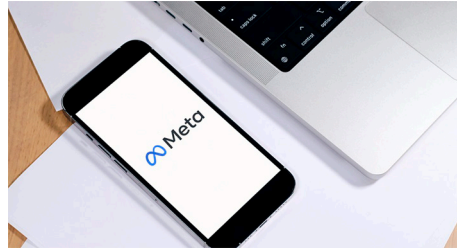
# Meta Pays Big for Teen Protections

By Gwyneth M.

On August 26, 2026, giant technology company Meta agreed to pay 18 billion dollars to U.S. states and territories due to social media's proven harm to children 18 and under. Although the company willingly agreed to pay the money in annual installments, the defendant, Chief Legal Officer C.J. Mahoney, explicitly denied any wrongdoing or liability. According to the BBC, terms of this agreement include a default two-hour time limit, hidden likes, muted notifications between eight a.m. and three p.m., and nighttime usage blocks from midnight to six a.m. Although these restrictions will hopefully reduce the risk of addictive teen users across Meta's social media platforms, it does not include lessening the danger of companies like Snapchat, TikTok, or BeReal. Some express that this is an advancement, but not a solid solution.

However, before this trial was

brought to court, months of intensive, carefully researched preparation were required.



Meta Picture from Alpha Film on February 4, 2023.

For instance, the case relied on leaked files from whistleblower Frances Haugen, which clearly outlined the risks of children using social media, specifically within Meta's applications. This study stated how Meta knew their company worsened body image issues for teenage girls by 32 percent, increased suicidal ideation for teenagers by 13.5 percent, and manually force-fed content including sexual imagery and videos promoting starvation and self-harm to middle

schoolers. Additionally, in a study performed by Columbia University's Irving Medical Center, researchers found that "Both high and increasingly addictive screen use were associated with worse mental health (e.g., anxiety, depression, or aggression) and suicidal behaviors and thoughts" (Addictive Use of Social Media, Not Total Time, Associated with Youth Mental Health).

Meta argued they already had sufficient safety features in place for younger users. With parental oversight, hourly reminders to leave the app, and age restrictions in use, Meta believed teens were adequately protected. Regardless of the social media platform, this settlement highlighted the challenges of social media use for those 18 and under. Poor mental health, body dysmorphia, and unsafe viewings are all possible risks teenagers and their parents should be aware of before utilizing any social media platform.

# More Than a Country Icon

By Ariana M.

Some artists are remembered for their songs, others for their actions to change the world. Dolly Parton did both. Parton is more than a country music icon; she is a songwriter, actress, businesswoman, and philanthropist who recently passed away at the age of 80. Born on January 19, 1946, Parton grew up with 11 siblings on a farm in Sevier County. At age eight, Parton got her first guitar, with which she started writing her own songs. As she got older, her music played on local radio stations and television. She graduated from high school in 1964 and moved to Nashville, where she jump-started her professional music career.

She started pitching her music to different record labels, and soon Porter Wagoner recognized Dolly's talent. They started releasing music together; however, Parton wanted to pursue a solo career instead. Once she started her solo career, Parton promptly produced hit songs that became well known worldwide, such as "Jolene" and "I Will Always Love You". She was named female vocalist of the year in 1975 and 1976. Another aspect of Parton's career was acting. In 1980,

Parton had a successful crossover into film, where she starred in multiple films such as 9 to 5, The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, and countless others. Parton's influence expands way beyond the country music world.



Photo of Dolly Parton by Timothy Wildey on September 24, 2011.

Parton was also known to have a caring and generous nature throughout her life, and always tried to find new business opportunities. In 1986, Parton collaborated with the original owners of a theme park in Tennessee and reopened it, calling it "Dollywood". She wanted to give back to her community because of her upbringing in a poor area. This park allowed her to provide job opportunities for the people and attract tourists to the area. Furthermore, in addition to providing jobs at Dollywood, Parton wanted to contribute more

and use her success to give back to the families and children in Tennessee. She founded the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in 1995. This charity first distributed books to children living in her home county; then, by 2004, books were being sent statewide. Shortly afterwards, due to the success of the program, millions of children's books were being mailed across the world, making the organization internationally renowned. Parton dedicated the program to her father and her lifelong love of reading. During COVID in 2020, Parton also contributed \$1 million to the Vanderbilt University Medical Center to help and support research for COVID-19. Two years later, Parton made another \$1 million donation to the Vanderbilt University Medical Center to assist in pediatric infectious disease research. She said to Vanderbilt, "No child should ever have to suffer, and I'm willing to do my part to try and keep as many of them as I can as healthy and safe as possible."

Through her music, philanthropy, and kindness, Parton has made a lasting impact on the world and left a legacy that will be

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## Spreading the Seeds for Change

By Dharma C.

On August 29, Oliva Rodrigo held a record-breaking music festival dedicated to women. Rodrigo brought together multi-generational female artists to help raise money for 10 different nonprofit, female-run organizations. Through the event, Rodrigo raised \$10 million, which Melinda French Gates matched, resulting in the festival raising \$20 million overall. It is still not fully clear how the money was divided, but all of the nonprofits have been thankful for the donations and for how the attention has been life-changing.

The 10 nonprofits include Baby-2Baby, Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Center for Reproductive Rights, FreeFrom, Jhpiego, Johns Hopkins Center for Indigenous Health, National Domestic Workers Alliance, National Institute for Reproductive Health, The National Women's Law Center, and Planned Parenthood. Between performances, different representatives from these organizations came out and spoke about their different missions. The money that was raised certainly had a major impact on these organizations and allowed spread their missions on a much larger scale.

Around 45,000 fans showed up to help support the cause, not just to listen to music, but also to stand for women. On the

day of the event, the temperature was 93 degrees, but it felt even hotter due to the high humidity and lack of shade. Fans saw people passing out left and right, but the Daisy Chain staff made sure to help those in need. Even though the sun was blazing, it did not dampen the mood or the overall sense of community Daisy Chain created. Rodrigo stated that she was "picturing girls sitting under a tree making daisy chains, flower crowns, or friendship bracelets, and has spoken about the idea of individual links joining together into something larger than any single artist." (Forbes Magazine, Olivia Shalhoup)

Olivia's inspiration for the event was the original all-female festival, Lilith Fair. This festival took place in the 1990's and was created by Sarah McLachlan. McLachlan was annoyed that "you can't put two women on the same bill—people won't come". This led her to create the Lilith Fair, inspiring a movement for more female representation in music. It sent shockwaves through the industry and gave a voice to female empowerment never seen before.

At Daisy Chain, Rodrigo compiled a unique collection of female artists who stood by her mission. The notable names on the list include Chappell Roan, Sarah McLachlan, Doechii, Mitski, the Breeders, Alanis Moris-

sette, and Stevie Nicks. All of these iconic artists agreed to perform for free to help support the cause. During their sets, they spoke out about different issues they saw, with a 25-year-old trans artist named Eli even calling out billionaires. Eli stated, "The unethical and abhorrent inhumane nature of a world with billionaires possessing more than half the wealth of the entire world, while roughly 2 to 3 billion human beings on Earth live without all of their basic human needs met" and declared, "STOP EATING THE RICH, STOP." (Eli, Daisy Chain Fields). After that, Eli claimed she was donating \$30,000 of her record advance to different non-profit organizations.

At the event, there were multifarious female-owned brands and vendors throughout the venue. There was an Etsy Craft Village, which housed multiple female-run vendors. All the different booths had handmade creations that encouraged guests to get creative and crafty. The venue also held immersive experiences from Athleta, Depop, LEGO, and a museum dedicated to the Riot Grrrl movement.

Daisy Chain touched everyone there, spreading seeds of change throughout the venue and the music industry.

## Beyond The Game

By Jacob C.

It is no surprise that social media has become more prevalent in many aspects of our lives. Politicians routinely release their priorities and agendas on Twitter; entertainers promote their newest work and projects for the world to see on Instagram. Athletes are no different! Social media has become an integral part of building an athlete's image, from sponsorships to connecting with the fans.

In the past, television networks and newspaper front covers largely controlled an athlete's public image. Today, athletes have the ability to communicate directly with their fans through various social media platforms. This allows athletes to display their lives be-

yond the sport, giving fans a closer connection to them.

However, social media can also have negative effects on athletes. Since athletes are always in the public eye, one post, comment, video, or like can cause controversy. Within seconds, athletes can lose fans, receive media criticism, or, in contrast, garner respect, often not related to their performance.

Indeed, there have been many instances where athletes have had to take down posts. For example, Paul George, who was on the Pacers in 2014, faced significant criticism after he defended former Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice, punching and knocking out his then-fiancée, Janay Palmer. This

led Paul George to delete his tweets after facing harsh criticism. Former Pacers President Larry Bird had to get involved as well, causing controversy.

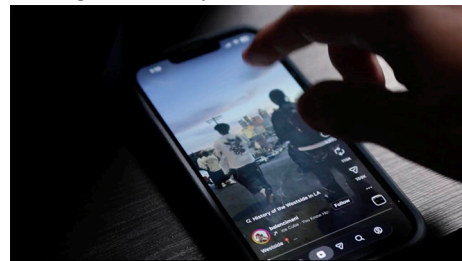


Photo of a Social Media Reel taken by Jacob Cooper.

As we can see, social media can be such a powerful tool, but it is entirely up to the user/athletes to use it well. As they say, think before you post!

ENCINITAS, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2026

# Film Photography: It's Back

By Jacob C. and Ilo N.

Before digital cameras, film photography was the way people captured visual memories. To take photographs on a film camera, someone would load their favorite analog camera with a roll containing a sheet sensitive to light that was called film. The roll could hold between 24 and 36 exposures. Once loaded, the photographer would press the shutter release to take a picture; then, the mirror blocking the light from the outside would flip for a fraction of a second, exposing the film to light and capturing the image. When the roll was finished, the photographer would take the film out of the camera and submit it to a local film laboratory for development and then send the photos directly to them within one to three days. Another option for a photographer looking to develop their photos is to go to a darkroom and undertake the complicated process of developing the film themselves.

Today, this process seems excessively technical just to obtain a few photos. With film photography, a photographer is limited to a maximum of 36 exposures before having to purchase another roll and load it again; not to mention, they are unable to review their images while the roll is in the camera, so an individual would have to wait

the entire duration that roll sits in the camera to see what their shots look like. There are many factors to consider with photography, both digital and analog, such as aperture, iso, and shutter speed. What if they had made a mistake while shooting some of their shots? These are the arguments people could use against film photography. Many could argue that film photography wastes time and money and that digital cameras are far more efficient and superior overall.



Film photo of a 1972 Corvette taken by Ilo Naumkin.

Despite these disadvantages, film photography is making a comeback, growing in popularity by leaps and bounds, particularly with younger photographers. In a world where people can take hundreds of pictures on their smartphones without thinking twice, film offers a completely different experience: limitation, exactitude, finesse. With film pho-

tography, people tend to be more selective and careful about what pictures they take. With a limited number of film exposures, people aren't just wasting photographs; they're shooting with purpose!

Another reason people are returning to film photography is the older medium's unique appearance. Film photography has a noticeable grain, different hues and colors, and a softer look that is very difficult to replicate with a digital camera. Many photographers prefer the raw grain film offers, which is why it remains a much sought-after effect. Shooting on film features a rawness that is one of the best feelings a photographer can have. The anticipation of waiting to find out what you have shot pains you but also draws you in! There is something very satisfying about having to wait for the results.

Photographers do not know what their image will look like, which only adds to the excitement and nervousness of shooting film. With all of these factors combined, shooting film draws many new people. There has been a recent shift in how people feel about using outdated methods, like vinyl, which has come back in the music world, and Super-8 filmmaking is on the rise as well. As they say, old is new again!

# Planets Shifting to New Signs

By Ariana M.

The year 2026 holds many planetary transitions that could affect this year's events. Astrologer Belinda Matwali says, "Looking to astrology allows us to see large themes and create meaning"

|                                                                                    |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |
| 22 Dec - 20 Jan                                                                    | 21 Jan - 19 Feb                                                                     | 20 Feb - 20 Mar                                                                     | 21 Mar - 19 Apr                                                                     |
| Taurus                                                                             | Gemini                                                                              | Cancer                                                                              | Leo                                                                                 |
|  |  |  |  |
| 20 Apr - 20 May                                                                    | 21 May - 21 Jun                                                                     | 22 Jun - 23 Jul                                                                     | 24 Jul - 23 Aug                                                                     |
| Virgo                                                                              | Libra                                                                               | Scorpio                                                                             | Sagittarius                                                                         |
|  |  |  |  |

Zodiac Sign Chart by Needpix.com.

In astrology, a "shift" occurs when planets move and change from one zodiac sign to another. This year is special because shifts are happening with slower-moving

planets that can remain in one zodiac sign for years before moving again and are considered big astrological events. Astrologers connect each planet to a theme, and the zodiac signs influence how these themes are expressed.

One shift happened on April 25, 2026. Uranus moved from Taurus into Gemini, where it's expected to remain until around 2033. In astrology, Uranus is associated with change and surprise. Astrologers believe its move into Gemini could change how we exchange ideas and information, as well as how we utilize communication and technology.

Another rare and important shift happened on February 20, 2026, when Saturn and Neptune formed a conjunction at 0° Aries. A conjunction means the two planets appeared in the same area of the zodiac; in

this instance, Aries, from Earth's perspective. Alice Smith, an astrology expert, says, "They only form a conjunction every 36 years.", therefore describing it as a "generational turning point." Smith portrays this as "ending a chapter while starting a new one". In astrology, Saturn is seen as reality, structure, and organization, while Neptune is seen as creativity, imagination, and dreams – exact opposites. Both planets meet in Aries, which astrologers associate with new beginnings, taking action, and independence. Later in the year, in June, Jupiter entered Leo, embodying growth, creativity, and confidence.

Whether astrology is believed in or simply fascinating, astrologers say 2026 is the year of new beginnings, focusing on transitions, new realities, and change.

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# The Disaster That Ripped Through Nepal

By Sadie S.M.

Global climate crises are becoming more apparent in everyday media. This sparks the question: Are more things actually happening, or is the media only beginning to accentuate them? While it can be interpreted differently, the main point is that people are more aware of catastrophes as they happen, and last month, an event in Nepal was at the forefront of people's minds.

In the early hours of August 26, 2026, locals noticed the first indication of the upcoming disaster. That realization came when the earth began shaking around the Nepal-China border at 8:37 a.m. Initially, the United States Geological Survey recorded this event as a magnitude 4.4 earthquake; however, it later stated, "Additional analysis of nearby seismic stations, long period seismic waves, and satellite imagery led to the determination that the seismic event was instead a glacial collapse and debris flow, and that no earthquake had occurred." The section of the glacier plummeted about 7,000 feet into the Lhende Khola River below, triggering a wave of water, pulverized rock, and ice traveling at an average speed of 100 mph.

The effects of this catastrophe became insurmountable in an instant. Within seven and a half minutes, the first rush of water demolished Chinese border facilities

at Rasuwagadhi. Caught on camera, this moment circulated globally on news networks, media platforms, and personal devices, making it the world's first insight into the mass destruction. After that, an unfathomable amount of water charged through the Trishuli River valley, picking up more debris and infrastructure, before eventually stopping around 62 miles downstream.

By the end of the havoc, little was left in the valley. Specifically, Dharma Raj Upreti, chief of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, told Reuters a few weeks ago, "Nepal will need □to rebuild around 20,000 houses in flood-ravaged areas...with at least 7,500 of those homes destroyed." Those estimates are only part of the total reconstruction cost, though, which currently ranges from four to five billion dollars, or around a tenth of the country's annual economic output. Moreover, SBS News states, "At least 1,252 people were killed and more than 4,200 remain missing" at this time, making the country's priorities scrambled and resources spread thin.

All things considered, the event's obscurity grabbed researchers' and analysts' attention. For many, one question stood out: Is this truly a rarity, or is it climate change's fault? While landslides and glacier disen-

agement involve multiple factors, scientists do say that climate change plays a role, especially in this region. Since 2000, glaciers across the Hindu Kush Himalaya have rapidly lost ice mass, with ice depleting by double every year. This concerns professionals, as around 2 million people live downstream of various glaciers in this area, and this recent event heightens their worries that disaster may strike again soon.



Wikimedia Commons captured prior to flash flood on 12 August 2026.

In the weeks to come, remembering the catastrophic event of August 26 will be vital to how the world understands and supports those involved. Beyond solely being a notification about the ever-changing state of the climate, the Nepalese disaster calls for global unity. Currently, organizations such as UNICEF and Project Hope are assisting on the ground; however, their efforts can only extend so far. To amplify their assistance, people around the globe should consider staying aware and informed, as it can change others' lives and keep this mind-boggling

## On This Day in History: September 18

By Nathaniel T.

Every day has a story. While September 18th may be just another day on the calendar for most people, this date has been the setting for several important and surprising moments throughout history. In this article, I hope to share three things that happened on this day.

Firstly, on this date in 1793, President George Washington laid the Cornerstone for the U.S. Capitol building in D.C., a building many Grauer students who have gone on the DC Expedition have visited. The laying of the Cornerstone was a momentous occasion, which was performed by Washington and the Grand Master of Maryland, Joseph Clark. One interesting fact is that the original Cornerstone and the inscribed silver plate

placed with it have never been found.

The second event was technically less monumental than the first but tied more closely to the Grauer Gazette itself. The first issue of the New York Times was released on September 18th 1851. This first edition cost the low price of one cent. Two journalists, Henry Jarvis Raymond and banker George Jones, created the New York Times. This first issue covered a wide range of topics. Some topics included infrastructure, local politics, public executions, local wildfires, and the upcoming Boston Jubilee. It is inspiring that a publication that started so small grew into such a wide-ranging newspaper.

The final exciting event that happened today was a leap forward in techno-

logical advancements. On this date in 1894, George Edward Alcorn, Jr., an African-American inventor and physicist, filed a patent for the X-ray spectrometer, a piece of technology that revolutionized humanity's ability to read X-rays. This invention allowed scientists to see the exact chemical composition of what was in the X-ray. This would revolutionize modern medicine.

Today, September 18th, has been the site of many famous events, from the laying of the Cornerstone of the Capitol building to the first issue of The New York Times, and finally modern advances that revolutionized the world. Remember, every day of the year may hide an untold story.

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# The Next Dangerous Trend

By Ilo N.

Kalshi, Polymarket, and Prizepicks. These are a few of the top names in the prediction market space today. Prediction markets are digital platforms that anyone 18 and over can use to purchase a contract priced from \$0.00 to \$1.00, which promises the user a sum of money if their prediction is correct. Hypothetically, if someone bet on an upcoming sports game and predicted that a certain player would score a certain number of points, and the contract was worth 70 cents and paid a \$1 reward, this means the outcome has a 70% chance of happening. The individual puts in a certain amount of money, and if they are correct, they would be rewarded 43% of however much money they invested. However, if that individual did not predict correctly, they would face the consequences and lose that money.

Although these markets seem to

have only recently emerged, they have existed behind the scenes for years. Three economists created the first prediction market in 1988.



Charts Photo by Traders Union taken on September 14, 2026.

It was called “The Iowa Political Stock Market,” and it started with just one contract at the University of Iowa. The contract predicted whether George H.W. Bush would win against Michael Dukakis. The three economists gained traction by encouraging students and staff members to purchase contracts on their digital platform. By doing so, their first published contract was a success and had around 200 participants. What

started as a harmless academic experiment in a small city has evolved into our present-day multibillion-dollar market capitalist companies that have hundreds of thousands of traders every day.

Prediction markets operate on the assumption that everybody has equal information. However, this is not true in real life. These prediction markets make insider trading a bigger issue than ever before. For example, someone working for the government, a specific company, or a group that may grant them nonpublic information has an advantage over other regular people. While laws do cover insider trading on these platforms, prosecuting an individual suspected of insider trading may be difficult. While the regulations around insider trading on prediction markets are still in their infancy, society must question the safety of these platforms.

## Can Encinitas Stand Up Against ICE?

By KC G.

Encinitas just won up to \$33.6 million in federal funding for major railroad crossing safety improvements. The money could fund new gates, pedestrian and bicycle crossings, and an undercrossing along the LOSSAN rail corridor. The city would contribute a 20% local match, roughly \$8.4 million.

On its face, it sounds like a major win for Encinitas. However, buried in the federal grant requirements was a condition that should concern anyone who believes in local control, civil liberties, and larger government transparency.

When the Encinitas City Council voted in October 2025 to authorize the city manager to apply for, administer, and accept the funding, the federal grant language required “recipients to comply with federal policies and specifically to cooperate with and not impede Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE.” That is an extraordinary condition to attach to a railroad safety grant.

Transportation funding should be about transportation, and a safer pedestrian crossing should not depend on whether a city

agrees with the federal government’s immigration enforcement agenda.

The timing of the decision adds to the questions surrounding the case. Just weeks earlier, Encinitas had been consumed by large-scale controversy over ICE activity in the community. Hundreds of residents appeared before the council and council members debated measures responding to federal immigration enforcement. Then, on Oct. 22, the council unanimously authorized the city manager to pursue and accept a grant whose written conditions included cooperation with ICE.

It would be inaccurate, however, to say that Encinitas has now singed away its right to protest ICE. A federal judge later struck down the Department of Transportation’s immigration-enforcement condition and ordered it vacated from the DOT’s grant agreements. The public’s First Amendment rights to protest ICE were never surrendered either.

The repeal, however, does not eliminate the larger questions about how aware city council members were regarding the ICE language. Deputy Mayor Jim O’Hara has been among the award’s most enthusiastic

supporters. After the grant was announced, O’Hara called it “a great win for the people” and told The Coast News, “I lobbied every person I could get the ear of”.

That makes the unanswered questions more significant. If city leaders were deeply involved in pursuing the grant, were they also aware of the federal conditions attached to it?

The Grauer Gazette asked Jim O’Hara for comment regarding the ICE language and the conditions attached to the grant but did not respond to the request to comment.

The \$33.6 million may ultimately benefit Encinitas residents. However, residents deserve to know not only how much money Encinitas received, but what city leaders understood they were agreeing to when they pursued it.

A train passes through the Chesterfield Drive crossing in Encinitas. The city is set to receive up to \$33.6 million in federal funding for railroad crossing safety improvements.

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# The Lindsay Clancy Case: Part 1

By Kian H.

*To preface this report, the information presented below is intended to educate, not persuade. Furthermore, there is no ambivalence as to the tragedy of this murder case; it is, put simply, a horrific and regrettable situation that should be handled sensitively and with respect to the victims.*

On January 24, 2023, Lindsay Clancy made a series of decisions in her home in Duxbury, Massachusetts, that would not only permanently affect her life and her family members' lives, but would also evoke feelings of hatred and sympathy on a global level.



Photographed by Greg Derr for The Patriot Ledger on August 23, 2026.

Lindsay spent the first portion of the day caring for her daughter's stomachache and doing regular activities with her three children—Cora, Dawson, and Callan—such as art projects and building snowmen in their backyard. In the afternoon, after assessing the distance and time required to complete the tasks, Lindsay asked her then-husband of six years, Patrick, to pick up over-the-counter medication from CVS for their daughter, and then arrive home with takeout from the restaurant ThreeV. Patrick began his drive at 5:15 P.M. and returned home at 6:09 P.M.—surveillance footage corroborates his arrival at both of these locations, and it was established that he stayed in contact with his wife while gone. Upon returning home, he noticed the house was unusually quiet, and discovered a blood splatter on the floor adjacent to an open window of their second-story bedroom. He later found his wife lying in and out of consciousness in the backyard below the window, with nonfatal lacerations to both her wrists and neck, and paralyzed from the waist down. He testified to having asked her what had happened, to which she replied, “I

tried to kill myself.” To his question concerning the whereabouts of their children, she responded, “they’re in the basement.” Further elaboration will be given. At 6:11 P.M., Patrick dialed 911 and first responders arrived within four minutes. As they were attending to Lindsay’s immediate injuries, Patrick descended the stairs to the home’s basement where he discovered all three of his children lying on the floor, left unconscious from asphyxiation by means of exercise bands. They were then rushed to emergency care, but all revival efforts were unsuccessful.

Lindsay Clancy was transported, in critical condition, to a hospital and thereafter a medical center providing psychiatric care. In February of 2024, Patrick Clancy filed for divorce. Lindsay was scheduled to appear before superior court in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on July 29, 2026, represented by criminal defense attorney Kevin Reddington, and before the trial’s commencement, did not dispute murdering her three children in a postpartum psychosis-induced panic.

Lindsay’s decisions and the disputed intentions behind them have prompted a six-week-long murder trial, involving dozens of medical professionals, psychologists, and law enforcement. It also received extensive media coverage, subsequently warranting an enormous sociopolitical response.



A photo of the Clancy children posted by Lindsay Clancy on Facebook.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the party responsible for prosecuting Ms. Clancy, has done so with the intention of

disavowing the claim of postpartum psychosis. They contended that, because of medical inconsistencies in the audible hallucinations that Lindsay later articulated as driving the murders, among other potential indications of criminality, it was an act of intention rather than of mistreated and undiagnosed psychological deterioration. In addition, Patrick and Lindsay Clancy have sued the medical personnel responsible for caring for Lindsay on the grounds of malpractice.

For several months leading up to the murders, Lindsay expressed, on multiple occasions, that she was dealing with intense thoughts of self-harm and was periodically admitted to psychiatric care facilities and prescribed an array of medications. Regarding the aforementioned elaboration, as first responders testified that Lindsay was unable to form coherent dialogue after her deliberate fall from the second-story window, Patrick, having communicated that Lindsay spoke to him before the police arrived, was claimed to have either misremembered or miscommunicated their interaction.

The jury’s inability to reach a unanimous decision after roughly six weeks led to the temporary termination of the trial. In the case that Lindsay is absolved of criminal responsibility beyond a reasonable doubt, she will likely be sentenced to remain hospitalized for the time being. If the murders are found to have been premeditated, she would face a life sentence with or without the possibility of parole given the degree of murder.

It is without a doubt that the loss of innocent life that occurred is a tragedy and should be met with sympathy and mourning. Given the rise in advocacy for maternal mental health, the range of possibilities in relation to Ms. Clancy’s decisions, and speculation about the details of both the trial and case, this is no single right answer. This remains, in its entirety, a complex and multidimensional question of parental responsibility, women’s mental health, medical transparency, and the cost of allowing psychological distress to survive in a household longer than is safe.

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