

THE Grauer Gazette

No. 20

ENCINITAS, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2025

The Grauer School

What is Actually “Up to Interpretation?”

By Zoe Ba.

When you look at a piece of art or listen to a song on the radio, whether or not somebody likes it is often left “up to interpretation”. The artists can’t possibly make everybody like their work: there will always be people in support of and people against them. In the United States government, this idea of “interpretation” is often applied to the topic of immigration: whether or not a mother should worry about being separated from her child, or if said child’s citizenship status is even valid anymore.

This year, the current administration attempted to revoke the promise made by the 14th Amendment, which states that any child born on American soil is a citizen of the United States. They claimed that granting citizenship will promote illegal immigration and that their presence is a waste of resources. This claim is flawed historically, legally, and morally.

The 14th Amendment was ratified after the Civil War in 1868. The very nature of the law was to ensure nobody’s citizenship was denied due to their ancestry. The phrase “subject to the jurisdiction thereof” has been debated repeatedly, however, the result has always been in support of including anyone

born in the United States (excluding children of foreign diplomats). This objective has been endorsed for over 125 years, including the landmark Supreme Court case *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*. This Supreme Court case debated over the citizenship status of Wong Kim Ark, who was born in the United States to Chinese



immigrants and then, after a short trip, was barred entry back into America despite living there his entire life. The court ultimately ended up voting in his favor, continuing the ideology that citizenship is determined by birthplace not parentage.

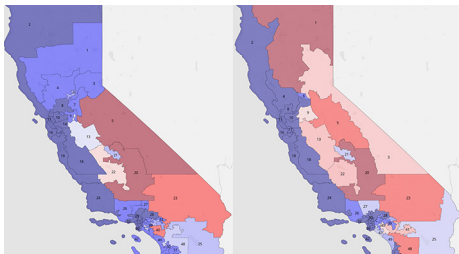
Denying citizenship simply because someone’s parents were born outside of the United States is only punishing them for something beyond their control. People opposed to birth-right citizenship will try to use fear-mongering terms such as “anchor babies” in order

to frame immigration and immigrants themselves as threats, when the reality couldn’t be farther from the truth. Immigrants make up the very fabric of this nation. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, immigrants make up 18% of the labor force despite accounting for only 14% of the United States population. The Association of American Universities states that nearly half of all scientists and engineers in the United States are immigrants. Blocking immigration and citizenship rights is not only immoral, it’s illogical.

If this country truly believes that all people are created equal, then this treatment must begin at birth. As of right now, the executive order 14160 has been blocked by the Supreme Court. However, this doesn’t mean the issue is resolved. Undermining the constitution and the country’s core values should not be overlooked nor should the fact that this was done by the current administration. Someone’s right to citizenship should never be “left up to interpretation”. This law should be protected by the people, and the core belief that equality should never end with a question mark.

The What and Why of Gerrymandering

By Zoe Br.



If you follow politics, then you’ve probably heard the word gerrymandering thrown around recently. Similar to many of the political maneuverings in the United States, it’s a convoluted and debated tactic.

Essentially, gerrymandering is the redistricting of areas with the goal of controlling votes and manipulating outcomes.

The Legislative Branch of the U.S. Government is broken down into the Senate and the House of Representatives. Each state has two Senators and a unique number of Representatives based on the population size. States have districts which each elect, ideally, a member of their community to represent them in the House. These districts can be divided in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons. In

the past they have been used to promote minorities electing good representation for themselves. Contradictorily, they have been used to divide groups so one has more sway than others. Because these districts affect the House of Representatives, they can be used to change the direction of Congressional votes.

ENCINITAS, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2025

Senior to Sevie

By MJ C.

First off—welcome! You’re officially the youngest in the building. Congrats! That might sound scary, but trust me, it’s also the most exciting spot to be in. You get to see everything with brand-new eyes and meet people you’ve never known before. You’ve unlocked Level One: you’ve got unlimited energy, plenty of chances to try things, and way more freedom than you did in elementary school. Though I do preach to do your homework, I do think there are more valuable pieces of advice that are a bit different from the usual lecture.

Be brave and talk to new people. I know the temptation is to cling to the same three people you already know, but middle school is full of future best friends you just haven’t met yet. One of my closest friendships today is with someone I never would



have talked to, and it all started with a random conversation. Don’t just limit yourself to your own grade, either. Talk to older students, too! We remember what it’s like to be new and can end up being great mentors (or just fun people to hang out with).

Teachers are more human than NPCs. Weird, right? They actually laugh at jokes, have favorite snacks, and sometimes even play video games (ask Paulina y’all! She’ll play with you if you ask, but beware, you’ll probably lose). Don’t be afraid to talk to them like people. If you build good relationships early, school gets much easier (and you might just get that extra day on an assignment).

Find your weird thing. Everyone has something. Maybe you’re the kid who loves skateboarding, or the one who can solve a Rubik’s cube in record time, or maybe you make the best hot takes about trends. Lean into it. Middle school isn’t about being the coolest, it’s about being the most you.

Don’t save your voice for later. Whether it’s joining a club, speaking up in class, or telling your friends an idea, say the thing! 7th

grade is the perfect time to try without the pressure of “perfection.” If it flops, guess what? Everyone forgets by lunch.

Collect memories, not just grades. Yes, grades matter, but so does the memory of laughing way too hard during Spirit Week or the inside jokes you’ll create during break. Ten years from now, you won’t remember what you got on your bio quiz... But you will remember that time your class went surfing together, cheering each other on.

If I could go back, I’d tell my 7th-grade self to stop worrying about fitting in perfectly. Your job isn’t to shrink to match everyone else; it’s to grow into who you are. I promise you, nobody is judging the way you think they do. Walk tall, get lost once or twice, and create a year you’ll never want to forget.



Nonchalant Putin

By Leyton G.



On August 15, Trump met with Putin at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska. It was the first time Putin returned to U.S. soil since the start of the Russo-Ukrainian War. The meeting was set up to discuss the ongoing conflict that has been happening in Ukraine. Trump believed that Putin was ready to create a plan to end the conflict; unfortunately, that was not what happened. Trump had rushed into the meeting, due to a discredited claim,

believing that Putin was ready to negotiate. However, that was not the case. No truce or deal was created, and Trump would later go on to claim this meeting as a “diplomatic dud”.

Many media stations and officials are claiming that Putin used this meeting to provoke a certain image. This event was a high-profile optics win for Putin. He was greeted with a red carpet treatment and even military flyovers. This has created a more diplomatic image for a man feared by so many. The Russian media has remained skeptical of this ordeal, claiming that “Putin laughs in the face of Americans”. Putin projected a strong image and, in a way, controlled this situation. He has not agreed to any form of ceasefire and threatened to “cede territory”. Putin also broadened the agenda of this meeting, bringing up topics about technology, space, and even Arctic cooperation. Putin dismissed all questions

from reporters, showing disdain towards their inquiries.

Journalists aggressively fired questions at Putin, even though there was no official Q&A. Media stations described the scene as chaotic, some even claiming that Putin aggressively yelled back at reporters. When being asked about Ukraine, Putin’s response was, “Let it go, let it go”. Trump reportedly looked extremely uncomfortable and did not intervene.

On September 3, 2025, Putin showed up to another major event, this time in Beijing. Putin was alongside Xi Jinping and Kim Jong Un. This is the first time that 3 of them have appeared together in public, attending a military parade commemorating the 80th anniversary of Japan’s defeat in World War II. This displayed a threatening image to the West, that these three countries have been working together behind the scenes.

ENCINITAS, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2025

Is Niche the New Popular?

By Zoe Br.

At the height of the social media age, the world seems to be revolving around viral trends, music, and consumerism. Because a vast majority of people have access to platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, content is produced and viewed at nearly the same rate. The large audience of viewers allows for the existence of both mainstream content as well as niche corners of the internet. The issue with the more “popular” content lies in the repeatability of trends. As a generation that craves authenticity, trends have become much more short-lived. According to Forbes (a business magazine), social media trends rarely last longer than a couple of weeks. Having “popular” taste is no longer about relating to the most people, but singling yourself out as a unique individual.

Most adamantly, this shift can be viewed in the music industry. Social media has completely changed how artists can be discovered. For “niche” artists, this might mean

creating a cult-like following and a unique brand. For larger artists, it has become yet another method to garner attention for their music. Although social media has played a positive role, the nature of the algorithm causes people to view certain songs (and even musicians) as overplayed. This becomes especially more prevalent as many artists are creating songs meant to perform better on social media than on their own: making them catchy but not authentic. When songs become a trending audio, they also become at risk of growing stale. Even if you enjoyed the song at first, hearing it repeatedly on social media, in the gas station, or in the grocery store can make the music become unpleasant and even annoying. It is for that reason, when a song you originally liked becomes mainstream, you lose your personal connection to it. When it was niche, the song was yours; now that it is popular, the song is everyone’s.

Between the ages of 12 and 18 is when teenagers struggle the most with their identity.

According to Pew Research, around 90% of teens are active on some form of social media. It is natural for teenagers navigating the internet to diverge from the mass trends and explore other communities that align more with their evolving characteristics. In today’s world, having popular taste doesn’t mean aligning with what the masses support but remaining authentic to your genuine self.

That is not to say liking popular things makes you inauthentic. Enjoying popular culture does not make you any less genuine than someone who likes something less well-known. The question lies on both ends of the spectrum of whether you molded your taste to match what is “expected” (or unexpected). Popular or niche, the world has grown glaringly more responsive and perceptive to authenticity. It’s refreshing to see that in a world run by algorithms, staying genuine to your values is what resonates well with people.

The Balance of Athletes

By Zack H.

High School sports are more than just games; they are ways for students to work together, show school pride, and build lifelong skills. Although Grauer is known for academics, our campus also boasts athletes in football, tennis, and volleyball who work hard both in the classroom and in competitions.

The volleyball teams have been the center of attention of school sports this fall. The sport may look simple from the stands, but every serve, dig, and spike takes immense focus and constant hours of practice. Teamwork has been vital on the court, and players rely heavily on communication to win. One volleyball star, Elsa Cousin, says that “the bond that all of us have together helps us fight through our tough games.” This serves as a reminder that your connections built in any sport can be just as important as the score.

The football team shares a very similar sense of family. Every Friday night, under the lights, the team’s dedication

throughout the week is showcased. Players spend hours running drills, studying plays, and lifting weights. For many of our athletes, football is about much more than winning. It’s about building a brotherhood. Lochlan, the best wide receiver in the state, mentioned that, “we all push each other every single day to get 1% better,” showing how our determination to push each other plays a big role in our success.

Tennis, often viewed as an individually played sport, carries its own unique community. Single and double matches challenge the athletes to stay mentally sharp and physically fast. Unlike volleyball or football, athletes often are standing alone during games, but teammates on the sidelines play a big role in support. As student athlete Beatrix puts it, “You play on the court by yourself, but you always know your team is cheering you on, which makes a huge difference.”

What makes all these unique sports alike is the shared experience of per-



severance, pride, and commitment. Whether it’s the fast-paced rallies of volleyball, or under-the-bright-lights of a football game, or the precision needed in tennis, athletes continue to carry school spirit both on and off the football field. Student-athlete dedication inspires students on campus, reminding us that these sports are not just about competition but community, growth, and representing something bigger than yourself. As seasons continue, and athletes are hard at work, staff and students will have plenty to cheer for.

ENCINITAS, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2025

The Complexity of Overtourism

By Sadie S.M.

The weather was not the sole thing heating up countries across Europe this summer. From protests in Spain to the shutdown of the Louvre in Paris, civilians in tourism centers are taking a firm stance against overtourism.

For years, tourism has boomed across the continent. The appeal of traveling to visit historical cities filled with decades of rich, colorful history is immense. In 2024 alone, 724 million tourists were recorded traveling throughout Europe. However, when the whole world buys a plane ticket, locals are left with the swarming effects of overtourism. Overtourism is defined as a situation in which tourism puts an extreme amount of pressure on locals' day-to-day lives. Civilian lives are tremendously impacted by travelers, and as seen everywhere this summer, they are now taking a stance.

Across Spain, anti-tourist protests and rallies have been gaining momentum over the past two years. Specifically in Barcelona,

the water gun has become a prominent figurehead in the movement. Protestors were seen this summer spraying unexpected tourists while carrying signs that read: "One more tourist, one less resident!" A couple of hundred miles away, the local infrastructure on the Canary and Balearic Islands has also taken a beating from tourism. With only around five million people, both islands hosted a tremendous fifteen million tourists this summer, overwhelming the small societies past their breaking point.

On Monday, June 16th, the world-renowned Louvre in Paris was shut down due to a strike led by workers who were crashing under the pressures of overtourism. The premeditated strike began during a monthly internal meeting where various ticket-sellers, security guards, and gallery agents repeated their clear message: untenable conditions, continual overcrowding, and chronic understaffing need to be addressed. The Louvre previously closed for walkouts in 2013 and 2019; however,

this strike raised the eyebrows of many, particularly after President Emmanuel Macron released a recent plan to "rescue the Louvre." Issues and needs were promised to be met, but Louvre workers feel that pledge was far from being fulfilled.

At this point in our history, society as a whole has not conceived the effects of tourism on local populations. Nevertheless, the solution is not for tourists to stop traveling, but for everyone to become more aware of how to cope with the needs of both sides. In places like New Zealand and Amsterdam, establishing a fair tourism tax on certain districts or monuments has been the answer. In Barcelona, conflicts are resolved by designating specific spaces for locals and tourists to limit crowding altogether. Overall, cities are beginning to find strategies to prioritize their native citizens. While these coping mechanisms addressed many of the underlying issues, society still has a way to go to find the desirable balance to prevent the increase of perpetual overtourism.

Humble Beginnings

By MJ C.

The weather was not the sole thing heating up countries across Europe this summer. From protests in Spain to the shutdown of the Louvre in Paris, civilians in tourism centers are taking a firm stance against overtourism.

For years, tourism has boomed across the continent. The appeal of traveling to visit historical cities filled with decades of rich, colorful history is immense. In 2024 alone, 724 million tourists were recorded traveling throughout Europe. However, when the whole world buys a plane ticket, locals are left with the swarming effects of overtourism. Overtourism is defined as a situation in which tourism puts an extreme amount of pressure on locals' day-to-day lives. Civilian lives are tremendously impacted by travelers, and as seen everywhere this summer, they are now taking a stance.

Across Spain, anti-tourist protests and rallies have been gaining momentum over the past two years. Specifically in

Barcelona, the water gun has become a prominent figurehead in the movement. Protestors were seen this summer spraying unexpected tourists while carrying signs that read: "One more tourist, one less resident!" A couple of hundred miles away, the local infrastructure on the Canary and Balearic Islands has also taken a beating from tourism. With only around five million people, both islands hosted a tremendous fifteen million tourists this summer, overwhelming the small societies past their breaking point.

On Monday, June 16th, the world-renowned Louvre in Paris was shut down due to a strike led by workers who were crashing under the pressures of overtourism. The premeditated strike began during a monthly internal meeting where various ticket-sellers, security guards, and gallery agents repeated their clear message: untenable conditions, continual overcrowding, and chronic understaffing need to be addressed. The Louvre previously closed for walkouts in 2013 and 2019;

however, this strike raised the eyebrows of many, particularly after President Emmanuel Macron released a recent plan to "rescue the Louvre." Issues and needs were promised to be met, but Louvre workers feel that pledge was far from being fulfilled.

At this point in our history, society as a whole has not conceived the effects of tourism on local populations. Nevertheless, the solution is not for tourists to stop traveling, but for everyone to become more aware of how to cope with the needs of both sides. In places like New Zealand and Amsterdam, establishing a fair tourism tax on certain districts or monuments has been the answer. In Barcelona, conflicts are resolved by designating specific spaces for locals and tourists to limit crowding altogether. Overall, cities are beginning to find strategies to prioritize their native citizens. While these coping mechanisms addressed many of the underlying issues, society still has a way to go to find the desirable balance to prevent the increase of perpetual overtourism.

ENCINITAS, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2025

The Ten Commandments Blocked in Texas

By **Beatrix M.**

In May, Texas Governor Greg Abbott passed a bill to require a copy of the Ten Commandments in every public school classroom. Just a few weeks ago it was shut down in Federal Court. So, what is it, why does it matter, and how was it handled?

Senate Bill 10 (SB10) was a bill introduced by Texas Senators Phil King and Mayes Middleton. The bill outlines that in every classroom a 16" by 20" poster of the Ten Commandments shall be present. The state would be held financially liable for all lawsuits schools might face, and that schools were not required to buy them, however they could be donated. Many supporters of the bill argued that since the Ten Commandments were such a vital part of U.S. History, it would aid in the student's understanding of the country and its creation. In response, many who opposed the bill argued that U.S. history had nothing to do with math.

Naturally, that was not the only issue found, many stated that this bill forgoed the constitutional right of freedom of religion. In Texas, 67% of the popula-

tion is Christian, while 26% is religiously unaffiliated, and 6% practice other forms of worship. However, the U.S. operates under a majority rule, this is balanced by the protection of minority rights. Although majority rule can decide laws, the constitutional rights of the minority shall not be infringed. Nonetheless, the bill was passed by the House 82-46, and was set to be put into effect on September 1st. Public response was swift, with sixteen families banding together in a lawsuit against the State Board of Education.

The case went to trial nearly immediately under the jurisdiction of U.S. District Judge, Fred Biery. Attorneys that argued against the bill expressed that it would seek to alienate students that weren't Christian. Many concerns were also raised over the separation of church and state, and how blurred that line is becoming. Ultimately the judge blocked the bill, stating that the law "...crosses the line from exposure to coercion." The case only covered 12 districts, but with a firm ruling, attorneys hoped that the districts not included would follow suit with a federal ruling. However, Texas Attorney General

Ken Paxton had other plans for the excluded districts, saying that they must continue in accordance with the bill. Paxton has a lot to say about the bill, claiming that "The woke radicals seeking to erase our nation's history will be defeated," and promising to appeal the bill.

Texas is not the only state to have tried this. In fact sixteen other states, including Louisiana and Kentucky, have tried and failed to pass similar laws (all of which have been blocked by a federal judge). On a similar note, this is not the first time Texas has tiptoed the line between education and the church. Only a few years prior did they attempt to pass a bill requiring banners stating "In God We Trust" in classrooms. Back in 2023, they permitted schools to hire under-qualified chaplains in place of counselors as a reaction to a recent school shooting.

Unfortunately, this kind of behavior is expected. The only thing to do is fight this kind of manipulation tooth and nail. It is vital that the American people defend their constitutional rights in the face of oppression, and remember that the truth is on their side.

Playboi Carti for Supreme

By **Leyton G.**

Playboi Carti has broken another boundary within the fashion industry. On August 21, 2025, it was officially announced that Playboi Carti will be featured as the face of Supremes iconic Fall/Winter 2025 Photo Tee. This was first confirmed in an instagram post by Supreme. Many are extremely excited for Playboi Carti to have the opportunity to be featured on the item. Supreme's Photo Tee is not just an ordinary article of clothing, it is a major part of not only Supreme's culture, but for the fashion world all together.

The Supreme Photo Tee reigns all the way back to 1994, not long after James Jebbia founded Supreme in New York. The idea was to blend streetwear with pop culture, by photographing celebrities, musicians, and other cultural figures

wearing a plain white supreme shirt. The first person to be featured for the Supreme Photo Tee was rapper Raekwon from the Wu-Tang Clan. The shirt features him eating ice cream while wearing the notorious Supreme Logo Box tee. This tied into Wu-Tang's influence on hip hop in New York City's street culture and fashion. This paved the way for many other influential figures that have varied from Mike Tyson, Kermit the Frog, Kate Moss, and Nas to just name a few. Each of these figures has had a major impact on pop culture in their own unique way, and this is exactly what these shirts represent.

The reason Supreme has chosen Playboi Carti for their most recent Photo Tee is because he represents the future. Playboi Carti is undoubtedly one of the most influential figures of our generation.



A prime example of Carti's popularity can be seen in the streets of New York. The way supreme markets their Photo Tees is by plastering posters around New York of Playboi Carti. People are going around and peeling the posters down off of buildings. If that is not dedication to an artist, I don't know what is. Playboi Carti is just one of many artists that have paved the way for pop culture and many are excited for what comes next.

Type 1 Fun

By Isabella M.

There are many stereotypes about Type 1 diabetics: about what they can or cannot do. Now that there are four of us on campus, I figured it would be the right time to explain some of the basics and ways to support your friends who have Type 1 Diabetes (T1D).

Type 1 Diabetes is a genetic auto-immune disease where your own body attacks the cells in your pancreas that produce insulin. Insulin allows your body to absorb glucose into the cells from your bloodstream, and without it, your body cannot regulate its own blood sugar/glucose levels. Glucose is produced from the food you eat and your liver. The cause of Type 1 Diabetes is currently unknown, but it is hypothesized to stem from either genetics or exposure to certain viruses. It is most commonly diagnosed in children, but some people develop Type 1 later during adulthood. There is currently no cure.

So, how do we manage it? Well, there are many factors that go into it. A lot of the management involves manually keeping your sugar in a set range (70 mg/dL (milligrams per deciliter) -180mg/dL). For most people, your body will automatically keep you between 100-120mg/dL. For T1Ds, you are constantly adjusting to either bring your sugar up, down, or steady

it out. To keep your sugar steady/bring it down, you will use insulin and exercise. To bring it up, you have to eat carbohydrates. For everyday management, you will most likely be using two types of insulin (unless you are using an insulin pump, in which case there is a variety for each type): long-acting and short-acting. The long-acting you would take once a day, usually in the morning or at night. This is meant to keep your blood sugar levels steady throughout the day. Short-acting has several purposes, but the main ones are either to bring your blood sugar levels down, or to allow your body to absorb food. When eating food, you must give yourself insulin in proportion to the amount of carbs in your meal.

But what happens when you are out of this “range”? It depends on which side of the range you are “out” of. When your sugar is high, you tend to be more irritable, tired, thirsty, and have blurred vision. Some symptoms of a low blood sugar include: feeling shaky, dizzy, nauseous, experiencing mental confusion or disorientation, and in severe cases you can even pass out, experience seizures, or die. To treat lows, you have to eat carbs, some examples being: honey, dates, candy, or juice. Your body usually takes around 30 minutes to recover from either a high or low, and during

this time your brain will be working at a lower capacity as it is focusing on life-saving functions.

Managing diabetes can be overwhelming, and often a T1D has to make about 180-300 extra decisions a day. From keeping an eye on your sugar to reacting to it, it can lead to decision fatigue. Something as simple as eating an apple is no longer simple: you start questioning what your blood sugar level is at, when was the last time you used your insulin, how big of an apple is it, how many carbs are in it, how much fiber, and am I about to exercise? All of these thoughts can be overwhelming and are unfortunately unavoidable. In addition, you never get a break from managing your disease, even when you are hanging out with friends, doing homework, or even sleeping. This puts a lot of stress on kids who have diabetes.

So, what can you do to be supportive of these friends? Honestly, sometimes the best thing you can do is to learn about it. Learn about the differences between Type 1 and 2 (Yes, we can eat that, and no, we are not diabetic because we ate too much sugar), what the different symptoms are for highs and lows, and what their favorite low snack is. These little things can mean so much more than you see, and always show an incredible amount of support.

Student Spotlight: Charlotte Johnson

By Chiara C.

When Charlotte isn't busy keeping up with schoolwork, you can often find her behind the counter at Chipotle. Balancing a job and academics can be a struggle, but Charlotte does it with a smile. She says that working at Chipotle has taught her time management, teamwork, and the importance of patience during a busy dinner rush.



What she enjoys most, though, is connecting with customers and co-workers: “I’ve met so many different people, and every day feels a little different,” Charlotte shared. Whether she’s rolling burritos or studying for exams, Charlotte’s dedication shines through in everything she does. Charlotte believes that these experiences are preparing her for the future by practicing communication skills, responsibility, and adaptability. With her strong work ethic and adventurous spirit, Charlotte is a true example of dedication and balance in our school community.

ENCINITAS, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2025

Pali the Pup

By Isabella M.

We have a new puppy on campus! Over the summer, Alyce adopted Pali! After the loss of their two dogs last year, they are excited to have a new puppy in their lives. An interesting fact about Pali is that she loves to swim. On Pali's first day in her



new home, she immediately jumped into the pool. When asked how Pali is doing on campus, Alyce replied, "It's been great. She loves it here, she loves playing with the kids." Students have loved having Pali just as much, and it is exciting to see bonds forming between students and the puppy!

Period Poverty and the Pink Tax

By Charlotte J.

In the 40 years, on average, that a person menstruates, they will spend \$13.25 a month and \$6,000.00 total on menstrual products before tax. As of September 2022, 22 states still tax tampons, and there are issues with cities and counties having their own sales tax. Over a lifetime, the accumulated cost of pads and tampons can be significant, potentially reaching \$9,000 or even more.

Period products are expensive due to a combination of factors, including sales taxes, gender disparity, limited competition, and the impact of inflation. Many states in the US, as well as other countries, classify period products as non-essential luxury items and levy a sales tax, adding to the cost for consumers. The menstrual products industry is dominated by a few large manufacturers, which, according to a Citron Hygiene article, can lead to less price competition and potentially higher prices. Rising costs for materials, shipping, and other factors have contributed to a general increase in the price of all goods, including menstrual products.

Women worldwide struggle with the expense of period products due to a combination of factors, including the "pink tax", societal stigmas, lack of education, and economic inequalities, leading to what's known as period poverty. Low-income individuals and marginalized communities are particularly vulnerable to period poverty. The health and hygiene risks that these communities face include depression, anxiety, urinary tract infections, bacterial vaginosis, toxic shock syndrome, and multiple other fatal illnesses. The lack of open discussion often experi-

enced everywhere contributes to the shame and embarrassment associated with period poverty, making it harder for individuals to seek help. Girls also experience their period with confusion and fear due to this lack of communication, as they do not receive the right education to understand what is happening to them.



The "pink tax" refers to the phenomenon where products and services marketed towards women are often priced higher than similar products and services marketed towards men. This price disparity is not due to differences in quality or functionality, but rather a gender-based pricing strategy. Tampons, pads, and other feminine hygiene products are often subject to sales tax, while similar products for men are not. Women's versions of razors, shampoo, and deodorant may be priced higher than men's versions, even when the quantity and quality are the same. Women's clothing, especially items like dresses and skirts, may be priced higher than comparable men's clothing, even when made of the same materials. Women may be charged more for services like dry cleaning or car repairs, possibly due to assumptions about their knowledge or experiences.

Period products are not free in schools nationwide in the United States.

Some states provide funding to help schools stock period products, while others have unfunded mandates, meaning schools are responsible for covering the costs. Laws vary in terms of which grades or types of schools are covered, with some including elementary schools and others focusing on middle and high schools. Not only are these products expensive, they are difficult for a girl to access on a daily basis. This is not how it should be, especially when we have made it a norm to keep our periods and everything about them hidden.

Making period products free can be achieved through various approaches, including government initiatives, school policies, and community-based programs. The government can allocate federal grants, which are funds provided to an organization to complete a specific task without requiring repayment, to states, allowing them to fund free period product programs in schools, prisons, and homeless shelters. States can exempt menstrual products from sales tax, making them more affordable for individuals. Organizations like Period.org and the Alliance for Period Supplies are working to raise awareness about period poverty and advocate for policy changes. Educating the public about the issue of period poverty and the benefits of free period product access can help build support for policy changes. If we stay knowledgeable and speak up about the Pink Tax and the issues relating to period poverty, we can make a vast difference.

I want to thank Grauer for providing these resources. It is such a huge help and saves so much stress. I am very grateful to feel comfortable with my period at school.

Toxicity of Colonialism in the Business Industry

By Sadie S.M.

Racist beauty standards continue to echo their presence in our society today. Formed from the colonialist beliefs that lighter skin represented higher personal worth, these standards derive from the systems set up by these countries' predecessors. Over time, society realized the drastic effects of these ideals. The physical and psychological well-being of those affected by these standards is surfacing, and the immediate call for action from professionals is immense.

Since the Civil Rights movements in the US and UK during the 1960s, groups of people have repeated the phrase "black is beautiful" in an effort to fight the prejudices toward Black skin, hair, and culture. Sadly, the emphasis behind this phrase is lacking in countries across the world as skin-lightening creams become a prominent product of purchase. In various African countries, studies estimate that 25-80% of women use skin-lightening or bleaching products, with only around 10% being aware of the catastrophic side effects. Effects of these products range from sporadic skin thinning to skin and breast

cancer, all tracing back to the destructive ingredients within the products.

Unfortunately, people of African heritage are not the only ones affected by



these atrocious standards. Communities across Asian countries have also faced years of societal pressures to look a certain way. The effects of the caste system in India to colonization in the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia can all be traced back to the root of the dilemma at hand. The colonialist beauty standards grew to be a global predicament, as the skin fairness industry continues to profit off uninformed individuals. In 2024, the industry was estimated to be worth roughly 31.2 billion dollars, and that price evolves every day.

Throughout the course of history, unjust prejudices towards minorities and their natural beauty have forged a path of demolition. The question now is, what can society do to prevent these heinous events from lingering much longer?

At the moment, marketing has shifted society as technology has wildly de-

veloped. As social media became the target marketing strategy for companies, influencers frequently promote skin-lightening and bleaching products without disclosing the downsides. Professor Ncoza Dlova, from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in South Africa, believes that it is up to public health campaigns to put an end to this outrage. In her eyes, regulation will not be enough to prevent havoc from prevailing. If society flips the script to recognize colorism and colonial legacies, there may be a chance to reverse these tragedies.

Perpetuating and ending years of socioeconomic and racial divide will not be simple. Victims of these colonial policies are not even aware that they have been victimized, so reversing the generational uses of misinformation will take a duration of time. However, beginning with a discussion about years of prejudice and unjust behaviors will position society in the right direction. If society makes adjustments to educate individuals in diaspora communities, an end to years of division will subsequently be achieved. These changes will not only benefit individuals now but will also facilitate the prevention of prejudice towards those in the future, creating a more progressive world.

Teacher Spotlights of the Summer

By Chiara C

Teacher Spotlight: Alicia

For Alicia, this summer was all about family and friendship. She says her most memorable moment was traveling to the East Coast with her family, where they explored new cities, visited historic landmarks, and enjoyed time together away from the usual routines of daily life. In between sightseeing, Alicia made time to catch up with old friends, creating memories that she says will stay with her long after the trip. She returned feeling refreshed and grateful for the chance to spend her break surrounded by loved ones.

Teacher Spotlight: Patricia

Patricia's summer adventures kept her closer to home, but no less exciting. She spent time in San Francisco with her family, where they explored the city's vibrant neighborhoods, cultural landmarks, and breathtaking views. From strolling along the waterfront to discovering hidden corners of California, Patricia enjoyed the chance to play tourist in her own state. She says these experiences gave her a new appreciation for the beauty and diversity of California, as well as the joy of sharing it with family.

Teacher Spotlight: Paul-Michael

For Paul-Michael, the summer break was an unforgettable journey across Europe. He spent his days discovering historic cities, exploring cultural treasures, and taking in the beauty of new places. A highlight of the trip was trying food from a wide variety of different cultures. Each meal comes with its own story. Beyond food, Paul-Michael connected with different communities, learning how culture, history, and tradition shape people's lives daily. He says the experience broadened his perspective and gave him countless stories and lessons he looks forward to sharing with his students.

ENCINITAS, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2025

To Be Free

By Luke W.

This article is dedicated to the
Class of 2026.



After 5 years, we are finally at the top of the school. We are the Seniors. With less than ten months until graduation, it's essential to go into this year with the right mindset and make the most of it, especially since this is the final chapter in childhood.

There is a song that evokes the bittersweet feelings of fleeting adolescence. An artist by the name of Dylan Gossett, out of Austin, Texas, wrote one of my favorite songs of all time, called "To Be Free." This song expresses the bittersweet feelings of growing up.

The song begins with the innocence of childhood. Gossett describes a scene with teenagers having a bonfire and skipping rocks on the lake in the fall, utterly unaware of their limited time. For me, this rings a bell with expeditions: specifically, the Boundary Waters. Then he goes on to say one of the most powerful lyrics of the song, "So, save your time while it's cheap," meaning youth is when you have the most free time. So spend it with people you value and experience the things you genuinely want to, since later in life you won't have this time.

Remember playing dress up? Or building cardboard forts? Legos? Gossett pays homage to this part of growing up in these lyrics: "Cardboard houses are up for sale. Grass is green and the flowers smell. Don't you dare be quiet, let me hear you yell. Let's build a staircase to the stars! Take a trip around Mars. We can't get there if we never start." These lyrics are supposed to dust off old memories from early childhood. I can, and I am sure you can, picture those nostalgic memories with either your

parents or old friends. I remember feeling invincible, as if it were just my parents and me against the world. Gossett wants us to appreciate the time spent with our loved ones and remember simpler times.

Then the mood changes. The beat gets much faster. You can hear the raw emotion in Gossett's voice. Because in this moment, the idea of "To Be Free" becomes real. He says, "Well, I still recall what you said. With

every inch of your breath." This is supposed to bring the listener back to a time when someone you had a deep connection with shared something so meaningful that it changed the way you go about life. He then says, "Forget about the noise." So many times in life, we worry about what others think. So much so, it consumes us. This is your life. Who cares about others' opinions? Since you only live once, do what you truly desire. "Let's run until we're dead." This lyric calls back to intimacy. Whether it is with a parent, a friend, or a significant other, I am sure we can all think back to a moment when it felt like it was you and them against the world, that you guys would last forever. Here, Gossett is grappling with the fact that relationships end. This lyric strikes a profound, and often hidden, part of the heart, which is the yearning for a relationship that will last forever—something every human desires. When you put these last two lyrics together, Gossett is telling us: What does it matter what other people think? Find that person who makes you whole. Who cares what other people think about it? Do what makes you happy. He then says, "And we won't fall for second best. Til we've been

to all the rest."

Never settle for anything less than what you deserve. In life, people will try to push you down, but you owe it to yourself to try your best and never settle. You aren't a "second best." Try everything that you can do; you only live once. Gossett is urging us all to chase our dreams. You can hear the authenticity in Gossett's voice as it shifts one last time. "Who knows where we will be? Or what will grace our silhouettes?" No one knows where any of us will be in fifty years. The reality of life is that the future is unknown. Some people are fearful of the unknown. When he is trying to tell us we don't need to be afraid of it. We must embrace it. Life has a way of figuring itself out in a beautiful way.

As the song concludes, you can hear Gossett's voice finally at peace. "When the sun is bright, and the breeze is kind, you've got what it takes to be free." When we walk on graduation day, every decision, every lesson, and every event has led up to that moment. In this moment, it will finally be easier to appreciate all the beauty and struggle that have been felt until this moment. Since at this point it will all be a memory. At this moment, everything from being a child until now will start to make sense. As I close this article, I encourage any seniors, or anyone else for that matter, to listen to what Dylan Gossett is saying. We all have limited time, so live your life to the fullest, with no regrets. All I know is that on graduation day, the sun will be bright, the breeze will be kind, and we will all have what it takes To Be Free.

Meet Your ASB

By Zoe Br.

Every school year, members of the Leadership Studies Class take up roles in Grauer's Associated Student Body. While all the vice presidents can be confusing, here is a concise list of the roles, elected students, and responsibilities.

President

Who: Zoe Brisbois

What: Runs the ASB class, divides committees, and helps everywhere.

Vice-President: Operations

Who: Luke Wachtel

What: Assists the President and runs class in their absence.

Senior Class President(s)

Who: Zoe Baxter, Beatrix Monday-Yankus, and Mia Bresnan

What: In charge of all senior events and fundraising for grad night.

Vice-President: Finance

Who: Jonah Lukens

What: Keeps track of ASB's money and budgeting, cashes checks, and mentors the Assistant to Finance.

Assistant to Finance

Who: John John Garner

What: Learns how to do the responsibilities of and is the next VP: Finance.

Vice-President: Records

Who: Esme McCrary

What: Keeps notes of what happens in ASB meetings.

Vice-President: Public Relations

Who: Oliver Blakespear and Will Latson-Combs

What: The faces of ASB! Run assemblies and keep everyone entertained.

Vice-President: Events

Who: Lochlan Church, Inder Chhokar, and Mikayla Barsness

What: Plan, organize, and run events (ex. dances, carnivals) for the student body.



Vice-President: Social Media

Who: Elsie Williams and Thea Hillyard

What: Create social media posts for ASB—for advertising and fun!

Vice-President: Advertising

Who: Kat Ginsburg and Jolie Etheridge

What: Create posters and fliers for events, fundraisers, intramurals, and more!

Vice-President: Fundraising

Who: Kiki Colombo

What: In charge of fundraising for the ASB: raise money for various events.

Vice-President: Intramurals

Who: Davin Skillens, Oliver Blakespear, Will Latson-Combs, and Lochlan Church

What: Organize and run intramural competitions for the student body.

Vice-President: Middle School Relations

Who: Elsie Williams

What: Keeps a connection between the high school and middle school ASBs.

Spirit Officers

Who: Elsa Cousin and Ava Mendoza

What: Plan Spirit Weeks and have the most school spirit ever!

Sergeant-at-Arms

Who: Beatrix Monday-Yankus

What: Maintains peace and decorum within the ASB classroom.

Liaison to the Head of School

Who: Esme McCrary

What: Keeps Dana up to date with what the ASB is working on.

Liaison to Clubs

Who: Nathaniel Tillyard

What: In charge of the Club Calendar and keeps an open dialogue between the ASB and the many campus clubs.

Liaison to Yearbook

Who: Mikayla Barsness

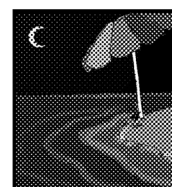
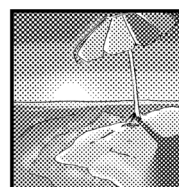
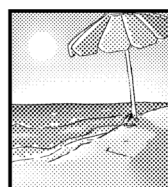
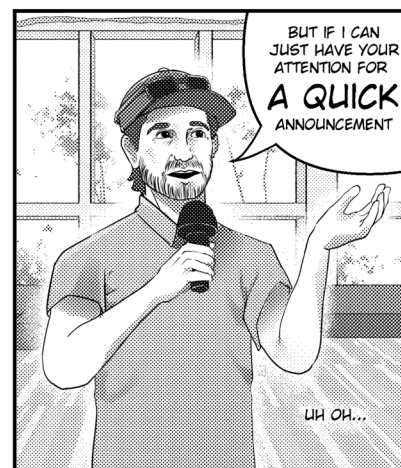
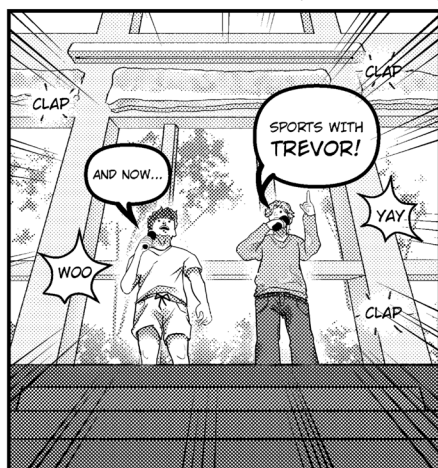
What: Maintains communication between the ASB and the yearbook committee.

ENCINITAS, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2025

SPORTS WITH TREVOR

COMIC BY BRANDON DIEP

PEOPLE DEPICTED: TREVOR OLSEN, LUKE WACHTEL, LEYTON GLEESON



The Team



MJ C.
Co-Editor-in-Chief



Zoe Br.
Co-Editor-in-Chief



Chiara C.
Column Writer



Zoe Ba.
Column Writer



Beatrix M.
Column Writer



Leyton G.
Column Writer



Luke W.
Column Writer



Zack H.
Column Writer



Isabella M.
Layout Editor, Column Writer



Sadie S.M.
Layout Assistant, Column Writer