

The

# SUMMIT



GROSSMONT COLLEGE'S STUDENT NEWS MEDIA | SEPTEMBER 2017



# UNITY

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## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



I have multiple passions in life; one is writing and the other is to serve people in a beneficial way. As editor-in-chief of our campus magazine, *The Summit*, I am prepared to do both tasks to the best of my ability and do so proudly. I happen to be a double major in journalism and anthropology with aspirations of becoming an on-air personality for ESPN or traveling the world as a human interest writer. I think of my job at *The Summit* as a stepping stone toward that goal and I'm very pleased that you'll be walking across those steps with me.

I'd like to take the time to express how appreciative I am of all the faculty, staff, students and all other walks of life who have ever ventured on Grossmont's campus and turned the pages of our magazines. Your readership and input is appreciated, and I would love to hear what you all think of our magazine. *The Summit* staff will bring personality, quality and information to you, Grossmont Griffins. Again, thank you all and let's have an amazing fall semester.

*Vinny Lavaliti*

# The SUMMIT

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# THE SUMMIT FALL SEMESTER STAFF



**FRANK DE SANTIS, JR.** is a San Diego native who has been attending Grossmont College longer than some of the professors. After five years, he finally found a major he enjoys. Frank plans on transferring to SDSU and majoring in journalism and media studies. In his free time he enjoys playing video games, basketball and soccer. Frank aspires to become a sports broadcast news anchor for a major network.



**SYMON GORO** is on his third semester here at Grossmont, and is studying to improve his writing. In his free time he enjoys playing video games, watching movies and cartoons, and complaining about video games, movies and cartoons on the internet.



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**ANNIE SPARKS** is majoring in Media Communications. She is in her second year at Grossmont, and plans on transfer to a four-year college after getting her transfer degree. She has high hopes for making her mark in the film industry one day.



**BRIANNA TYSEILING** is in her fourth year at Grossmont College and plans on transferring to San Diego State and graduating with a degree in journalism. She enjoys hiking, playing tennis and hanging out with her dog in her free time. She hopes to someday work for *Vogue*.



The staff of *The Summit* is enrolled in an academic media news production course. A main function of *The Summit* is to provide a professional learning experience for students of any major classification who express an interest in journalism. To serve this function, *The Summit* is entirely student-run. Student editors are responsible for all editorial decisions, content and editing. The instructor/ adviser is available for training, guidance and advice, but has no control over the content or editing of the newspaper. Prior review is not exercised. These guidelines have been established to protect the First Amendment freedoms guaranteed to the student press, as well as a guarantee of valuable learning experience in all aspects of newspaper management for the students. Please direct all inquiries, comments and letters to the editor to [summit@gccd.edu](mailto:summit@gccd.edu).

# FREE-TIME FOOD FIGHT

## Where should you go to kill some time?

STORY AND PHOTOS BY FRANK DE SANTIS, JR.



Chipotle Chicken Wrap from The WrapShack

There will come a point in every student's college career where you will have an awkward amount of downtime in between a pair of classes. There may be enough time for you to take a breather and ready yourself for the next class. However, driving home and returning may prove too time-consuming.

What are your options? No one wants to arrive at their class an hour early. Instead, you can go to the library, Technology Center or Griffin Center. Another option is napping in the driver's seat of your car. Public napping has been all the rage among college students for years.

Now you are stuck in this awkward place wondering, "Is it worth going home and coming back? Do I really want to nap where people can take pictures of me as my drool seeps onto my shirt? Do I really want to wrestle with my steering wheel again?"

Maybe you just need a change of scenery that includes a bite to eat, even if it is only for an hour or so before your next class starts. There are a few places that are relatively close to campus that are great spots to get something to eat before you have to go back to class and mindlessly take notes on the different isotopes of carbon.

The WrapShack is a new eatery that opened in May in Santee. Thanks to Google Maps, we know that it is just a 12-minute drive from campus to its location at 9490 Cuyamaca St. The WrapShack has already starting making a name for itself due to their affordable bowls, wraps and burger wraps.

Justin Wiltz is a Grossmont College business student who works as a cook at The WrapShack. He has been working at The WrapShack since its grand opening.

"[The WrapShack] has a relaxed atmosphere with fresh and filling food," Wiltz said.

This is a perfect option for Grossmont College students who want to get a quick meal in between classes.

"We have cheap food, music, tables inside and tables outside with umbrellas," Wiltz said. Fret not, Wiltz also confirmed that The WrapShack has air conditioning and restrooms.

One of their most intriguing items on the menu is the burger wrap, a



concoction on which Wiltz was able to shed some light.

"It's a burger mashed up into crumbles, wrapped in a [tortilla-like] wrap with all the toppings wrapped in with it," he said.

If you decide to stop by The WrapShack, Wiltz suggests trying the chipotle chicken wrap. It comes with crispy chicken, house-made chipotle sauce, red onions, roasted red peppers, pepper jack cheese, lettuce and tomatoes.

Our next option is even closer: Trinitea Tea is only one and a half miles away from Grossmont's campus. It will take a 30-minute walk or a six-minute drive to get to 8680 Navajo Drive.

According to Trinitea Tea Assistant Manager Brandon Hernandez, this location "was designed for students to come in and study.

"[Trinitea Tea] fits in well with students who are coming and going whether they want a drink or want downtime to study," Hernandez added. "We play music that is acceptable for everyone. We also have Wi-Fi for the customers."

Trinitea Tea offers coffee, tea, gelato and boba. What is boba, you ask? They are chewy black balls that are put into iced teas, iced coffees or slushies. Since that description does not sound appetizing, nor does it do boba any justice, we asked Hernandez to give a better explanation. He has been working at Trinitea Tea for two years. Needless to say, Hernandez is much more qualified in the field of boba.

"Boba has a gummy bear-like texture," Hernandez said. "It comes from a cassava root. This cassava root produces little, fragile balls. When you put them in a pot after boiling water – once it's cooked perfectly after an hour or two hours – it will start becoming the little black balls that you see people chewing. It's vegan-friendly since it comes from the ground up."

Since boba may not be for everyone, all drinks can be ordered without boba. Hernandez recommends trying their coconut milk tea. It is by far Trinitea Tea's most popular item on its menu. It is made with black tea, condensed milk, coconut powder and sugar.

Trinitea gives 10 percent off of all purchases for students with a valid student identification card. Be sure to get a stamp card. After purchasing nine drinks you can score a free drink – with or without boba, of course.

Now, when you find yourself between courses with that awkward break, you can visit The WrapShack for a nice meal in the air-conditioning, or stop by Trinitea Tea for a delicious boba drink.



Thai Tea with Boba from Trinitea Tea

## OFF-CAMPUS RECOMMENDATIONS

### THE WRAPSHACK



**12-MINUTE  
DRIVE**

**9490 Cuyamaca St., Santee**

619-332-8319

[wrapshacksd.weebly.com](http://wrapshacksd.weebly.com)

**HOURS:** M-Sat, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.;  
Sun, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

### TRINITEA TEA



**6-MINUTE  
DRIVE**

**8680 Navajo Drive, San Diego**

619-337-2670

[facebook.com/triniteatea](https://facebook.com/triniteatea)

**HOURS:** M-W, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.;  
Th-Sat, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m.;  
Sun, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.



# THE FAIR-EST OF THEM ALL

Students got all kinds of info at a recent Info Fair, including tips on exploding gummy bears.

## STORY AND PHOTOS BY SYMON GORO

Hundreds of students crowded into the main quad Aug. 23 for the Information and Activities Fair, eager to learn what they could about future opportunities here at Grossmont.

For those who have never attended, the Information and Activities Fair gives students a chance to speak with representatives at tables set up in the quad to learn about any classes, clubs or campus services they might be interested in at the beginning of each semester. Of course, there were chances to have a little fun as well.

There was singing and dancing, a yoga session, games and the booths themselves also had some amusing activities. One booth that was garnering quite a bit of attention was the Science Club's demonstration of the "exploding gummy bear" reaction.

No real gummy bears were harmed in the experiment, as that would have been too sticky. A mixture of pure sucrose and sugar was used instead. How the experiment works is you ignite or heat up some potassium chlorate before dropping the gummy bear in it which results in the gummy bear bursting into flames.

They also taught attendees how to make silly putty: Stir a 50/50 mix of glue and warm water then slowly stir in some borax until you get your desired consistency. Add some food coloring if you want, and there you have it. Now you too can harness this powerful technology.

President of the Science Club and mechanical engineering major Illiana Douraghi took some time to talk about her experience at the fair. "We definitely had a much larger turnout than we've had in the past," she said. "There were a lot of people who stopped by who weren't STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) majors who were interested."

"It was nice seeing everyone out here and guiding people through the different booths," she continued. "I'm also a peer mentor and when I meet first year students I send them to other booths they might be interested in to sign up."

Douraghi also explained some of the other activities her club enjoys, including bottle rocket experiments, trips to places like the Griffith Observatory, California Science Center and planetarium shows. They've even taught and held a 3-D printing class.

That was all just one booth. There were dozens of other clubs and programs there. This semester was also the first time *The Summit* had a table. So why not stop by yourself next semester? You never know what you can learn after all.





# ASGC

## THE PLACE TO BE

The Associated Students of Grossmont College is the voice for all Grossmont students.

BY BRIANNA TYSELING

**T**he ASGC, Associated Students of Grossmont College, is the go-to place for all questions and concerns regarding Grossmont. ASGC is the student government for Grossmont College and is filled with hardworking students who are looking to improve the campus experience. The ASGC students can be found in building 60, room 110.

ASGC currently has more than 1,000 students on campus who have purchased a benefit sticker for just \$12. Amy Bianchi, the vice president of finance, put together the benefit sticker program and recommends it for all students. For more information on the benefits you receive from the sticker, visit the ASGC room or the student activities window.

At 20 years old, Skyler Delacruz, is the youngest president in ASGC history and is currently starting his second year at Grossmont College. As president, Delacruz assesses the ASGC staff and makes sure that they are educated, friendly and able to answer any questions students may have. He is the go-to guy for all things Grossmont; he knows the ins and outs of the campus, and is willing to help anybody that needs it. His goal as president this year is to "advocate on the student's behalf." The ASGC will hold

many events including a carnival, food drives and much more, including a Donuts with the Deans event on Oct. 10. More information regarding this event will be available as the date approaches.

Delacruz described the atmosphere surrounding the ASGC members as "lively" and "positive." He also said there is a "sense of community," and that he knows he will have lifelong friends because of ASGC.

Jennifer Gross, vice president of ASGC, said she is "a voice for all Grossmont students." Gross said she feels very passionately about helping and going the extra mile for students. She explained even though she is disabled, she wants to leave her comfort zone and "test her limits." Her positivity and personality make her an effective leader.

When asked how she would describe ASGC in one word, she said "family." The students at ASGC are dedicated and committed to Grossmont students and their friendly demeanor, and their helpfulness is apparent when you walk in the room.

ASGC member Mia Harris embodies what an ASGC student is all about. Aside from helping students, Harris saved six kittens on the Grossmont campus on Aug. 24.

The kittens were found outside of the ASGC building in a storm drain, and Harris was able to get all six kittens out. The kittens were only one week old. Harris spent hours trying to find a place for them to go. She even bought them bottles of milk and took them to her job.

After being turned down by the Humane Society, Bodhi, an establishment in North Park, finally agreed to take the kittens in. Fortunately, the kittens are safe and in good hands at Bodhi.

First-year members Duana Powell, director of board affairs, and Alexandra Ambrosio, director of website developments, both explain how being in ASGC has made them more organized, helped them gain leadership skills and made new friends. The overall feel of ASGC is extremely positive and welcoming. There are always members ready and willing to help with any questions or concerns regarding Grossmont.

ASGC currently has 13 members, but they are looking to get to 20 members. In order to join ASGC, you must hold a 2.5 minimum GPA and be taking six semester units at Grossmont College. If you're interested in joining this organization, visit the ASGC room for more information.



PHOTO BY BRIANNA TYSELING



PHOTO BY BRIANNA TYSELING



PHOTO BY MIA HARRIS

L to R: Skyler Delacruz, ASGC president. | Jennifer Gross, ASGC vice president. | A kitten saved by ASGC member Mia Harris.



THINKING ABOUT A CAREER IN

# Information TECHNOLOGY?

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# PEER MENTORS

## HOW TO SURVIVE

### GROSSMONT 101

You can get by with a little help from a peer mentor.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MATT OCHOA



**Above:** Administrator Irene Palacios runs the Peer Mentor Program.

**Below:** Iliyana Douraghi and Alexandra Alcantara are just two of the many peer mentors at Grossmont.

*Full Disclosure:* Vinny Lavalsiti, The Summit's editor-in-chief, is also a peer mentor at Grossmont.

**W**ith the flurry and rush of the fall semester in full swing, students may find it hard to focus. To all crazed, over-cafeinated collegians, fear not, for the Peer Mentor Program is here to help!

The program was started up by Grossmont administrators in the spring of 2016 to add onto the tutoring system that had been in place. The majority of the funding is sourced through Title V grants, with the target demographic being students coming from low-income families.

Students of Latino/a descent were also beneficiaries of the grant. The two groups combined to form over 70 percent of those who have received aid from the program. Newer students also have been encouraged to look into the program.

The process of receiving help from a mentor is simple. Many students, new and old, received an email from the administration before the semester started with freshmen given the opportunity to join up as part of the "Griffin Experience," a new addition to the enrollment process at Grossmont College aimed at helping new students. Meanwhile, returning students were given information for the process of joining the program as well.

The mentors, of which there are currently 26, were assigned students through a joint effort by professors and administration. Those individuals then underwent an interview process, and once approved by the proper authorities, were given two weeks of training in the rules of the program.

Irene Palacios, the administrator of the Peer Mentor program, became involved because of what many students have gone through while balancing work and attending classes. Palacios had to pay her own way through college without assistance, having worked multiple jobs to support herself financially.

When Palacios heard that Grossmont had been provided funding for a peer mentor program, she was immediately intrigued.

"Being a student myself, growing up, I always had to work for everything... that's like a lot of our students... struggling," Palacios said.

When asked about what was the main thing she enjoyed about running the Peer Mentor program Palacios said: "Students have a hard time asking for help... we all do... I like to think of the mentors as a personal trainer for college. I feel like I am giving back... making a difference."

Palacios wasn't the only one who felt the need to leave an impact on their campus and fellow students. Peer mentors Iliyana Douraghi and Alexandra Alcantara have been part of the program since it began. Douraghi, in her fourth year attending Grossmont, said this of her

**"I like to think of the mentors as a personal trainer for college."**

**—Irene Palacios**

motivation to become a mentor: "I've always liked to work with people... it's my fourth year and I want to help people."

Alcantara, who looks to go into higher education as a career, agreed: "Pretty much the same thing as Iliyana. I want to help others."

The program, though having started small, has plans to expand gradually in the future. It is the goal of the mentors and administrators to have it as a part of every Grossmont student's experience when they enroll.

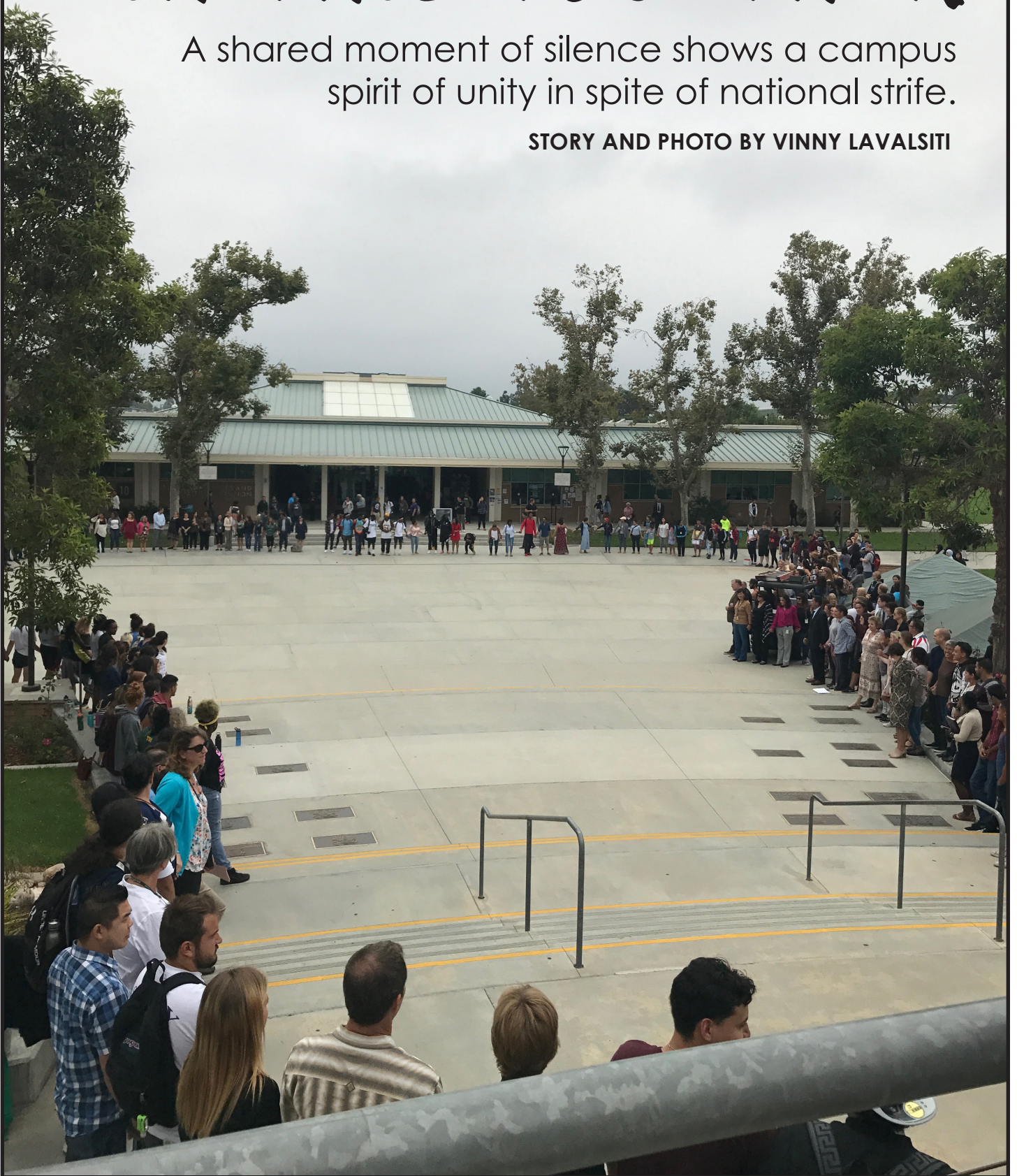
Those interested in either becoming a mentor or mentee may find Palacios or another administrator in Building 10, Room 120, visit the Grossmont website, or discuss the possibility with a professor.



# *IN THIS TOGETHER*

A shared moment of silence shows a campus spirit of unity in spite of national strife.

STORY AND PHOTO BY VINNY LAVALSITI





It was fitting that dark, gloomy and ominous clouds hovered over Grossmont College's campus on Thursday, Aug. 24. In response to the heinous acts and demonstrations committed in Charlottesville, Virginia, over the past couple of weeks, the college's president, Dr. Nabil Abu-Ghazaleh, felt compelled to lead an impromptu vigil in the quad out in front of the LTRC Building to hold a moment of silence to console any Griffin hearts that may be distraught by the events of the previous week. White supremacists and people of affiliation with neo-Nazism marched with guns and torches, chanting racist slogans in the streets of Charlottesville, where a woman was killed and 19 injured after a Nazi-sympathizer rammed a vehicle into a crowd of counter-protesters.

On Aug. 21, Abu-Ghazaleh sent an e-mail to students and faculty concerning the "acts of hatred and violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, and the vacillating response of our nation's president to ferocious fear mongering from within our country."

To express our college's reaction to these incidents, Abu-Ghazaleh invited everyone in association with Grossmont to join him in making a "visual declaration of concern and a silent moment of solidarity" three days later in the main quad. The ceremony was purposely planned so that there would be no speakers.

The following quotes, provided by The New York Times, came from U.S. President Donald Trump's initially address of the violence that occurred Charlottesville:

"I think there is blame on both sides," the president said in a combative exchange with reporters at Trump Tower in Manhattan. "You had a group on one side that was bad. You had a group on the other side that was also very violent. Nobody wants to say that. I'll say it right now."

"I've condemned neo-Nazis. I've condemned many different groups," he said. "Not all of those people were neo-Nazis, believe me. Not all of those people were white supremacists by any stretch."

There has been criticism from many that the comments blamed both sides equally instead of denouncing the actions from white supremacists and neo-Nazis more so than the counter-protesters. To sum it up, many believe that he should've done more, but in response to his criticism from news networks, all he had to tweet (because who actually says things anymore?) was "fake news" and that they are never satisfied.

It is a rare occurrence for Abu-Ghazaleh to address the school spur of the moment, but he said he felt that "wickedness should not be ignored regardless of its source or, worse, endorsed."

With only a three-day notice prior to the event, there was a substantial crowd of 200 to 300 people comprised of students, student-athletes, professors and faculty. Some professors, which include Joseph Braunwarth of the Political Science Department, let their students out of class early so they had the opportunity to partake in the congregation.

As the time drew closer and Abu-Ghazaleh made his appearance, participants separated from a cluster to form a circle and then started reaching for hands, locking arms to express their unity and solidarity against the riots and quotes from Trump. It was truly a moving scene to see a crowd of such diverse backgrounds, beliefs and cultures, not caring whose hand they had grabbed and gathering in a fight against atrocities — and doing so in such a peaceful manner.

A moment of silence passed to reflect on the loss of life, injured victims in Charlottesville and the distraught minds of those facing racial persecution across the globe. Cheers, clapping and hugging commenced as the silence ended. The Grossmont women's basketball team was present at the event and erupted into a chant of "G-HOUSE!... G-HOUSE!" in which students joined in to show that Grossmont College is not a place that is accepting of such

activities occurring in the Old Dominion State.

Abu-Ghazaleh stayed after the event to field questions from any student who desired to do so.

When asked what prompted him to hold this ceremony, Abu-Ghazaleh said, "Today's message was that even through our silence, because there were no speeches or formal statements, we were raising our voices collectively to object to radicalization and the hatred and fear mongering being utilized that we are seeing around the country."

He added: "At a place of higher education, a college, it is our place to encourage all voices to speak, debate, dialogue, as well express indifference. All such speech should be welcomed and protected.

"We defend the ability of (students) to say who they are and what they believe without fear and oppression," he said.

In response to the actions in Charlottesville, Abu-Ghazaleh said he believes the protesters (white supremacists and neo-Nazis) are making an effort to "develop a fear of speaking and develop a pattern of silencing through violence of voices and preference of one voice over another."

He made sure to emphasize the belief that students disagreeing on opinions is a fantastic thing and that he encourages it as long as "they are doing it without threatening or scaring or disrupting.

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***"I THINK THAT SENDS THE MESSAGE  
THAT NOBODY IS ALONE AND THAT  
THERE ARE PEOPLE AT ANY RANDOM  
MOMENT WHO WILL ACCEPT AN  
INVITATION AT ANY RANDOM TIME  
TO EXPRESS THEIR CONCERN AND  
SUPPORT FOR THEIR  
FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS."***

—Dr. Nabil Abu-Ghazaleh  
Grossmont College president

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"I would love to see debates with people who disagree with one another vehemently but do it respectfully and do it with reason, supporting it with fact and without fear of repercussion," he said.

Seeing that immense an amount of students get together for one purpose — to support each other — displays the courage of Grossmont and why the students here are some of the most caring one could ever come across.

"We saw about several hundred people get together at a randomly selected time," Abu-Ghazaleh said. "I think that sends the message that nobody is alone and that there are people at any random moment who will accept an invitation at any random time to express their concern and support for their fellow human beings."



**Teamwork and enthusiasm are in the playbook for Grossmont's women's soccer.**

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY VINNY LAVALSITI**

**A**s I stood out in the El Cajon mid-August heat and watched Women's Soccer Coach Jason Aldous address his team after practice, one thing was made clear: His players cherish the opportunity to play for him.

Although their faces were flushed and breaking a sweat from sprinting across the field over and over again, they still had grins and listened intently to what Aldous had to say in the post-practice huddle.

This is what Aldous appreciates about coaching these Griffins—they make it easy for him.

Aldous has been coaching in the San Diego area for 16 years, and has only been coaching the Grossmont women's soccer team for four years. He's no stranger to coaching club teams as he runs a youth soccer organization called "Liverpool Soccer Club," which caters to kids from the ages of 3-18. Aldous also coaches boys' and girls' soccer at Patrick Henry High School.

Despite there being a decade-plus drought

of a league championship for the Griffin women's soccer team, there is an aura of confidence surrounding the squad heading into this season.

Since the women's soccer program had its run of success in the late 90s, there has not been much to shout about. That is until Aldous took the coaching reins and steered his team toward multiple winning seasons. There are three elements of success Aldous and his players preach each time they step foot on the pitch: "Our three things that we focus on are number one; teamwork, two; coach-ability, three; a never-give up attitude. If we can achieve those three things then the rest will fall in place," Aldous said.

This has proved evident following last year's finish which was nothing short of remarkable considering how the program was when he first started coaching at Grossmont. From an abysmal 1-6-1 league record in 2013 to an 8-1-1 finish last year, Aldous said he still feels like his team left some opportunities out on the table.

"We switched sides of the league last year

from the North to the South because they added two more colleges (to the PCAC)," he explained. "I thought we did really well considering we relocated. We tied San Diego Mesa College after being ahead 1-0 with 30 seconds left to play, but they knotted it up, and if we would've won that game we'd be co-champions. I think we could've achieved more, but we overachieved at the same time. We had a few injuries take some players out early in the season, and we needed some girls to step up and they did a fantastic job."

Switching sides of a conference can be a big deal, and it shouldn't be overlooked. San Diego Mesa College has been the perennial leader of the South Division of the Pacific Coast Athletic Conference (PCAC) and has served as one of Grossmont's major contests, but Grossmont women's soccer is up for the fight.

"I think we'll be fighting for the league (championship) again this year. We have a much tougher schedule, but we've definitely picked up quite a few more girls





with even more impressive talent. It's going to be quite the competitive season for us," said Aldous, adding that this is no facile task. "Women's soccer is outrageously competitive. If you are not a freshman or sophomore in [high school], D1 schools aren't even looking at you anymore because they've already looked at everyone in that age group. Anything is possible, definitely."

According to Aldous, one of things that troubled the soccer team last year was that they were snake-bit by injuries. "A lot of the games last year were closer than they should've been and in my opinion that's due to the fact that we had injured players that weren't playing. They would've helped the score line tremendously, and as a result, we were playing in too many close games, and some of those didn't go in our favor when they should've."

"Now, since we have such a large amount of girls, hopefully that will prevent injuries from coming back to haunt us," he continued. "When you're playing two games a week of 90-minute soccer games, you need 72 hours of recovery time to be fresh for the next game, and we don't get that opportunity."

Having that large amount of soccer players (28 this season) can be a huge benefit to a coaching staff, but it can be a detriment as well if there are conflicting personalities or ideas. Luckily, these players don't have that issue.

"You don't see a group of girls that get along as well as these do. There are no issues at all. These girls are fighting each other for (playing) time and are getting along at the same time and are happy when their teammates succeed," said Aldous with a sigh of relief because it makes his job a whole lot easier. If the girls have the mindset of "playing for the girl ahead of me and behind me," as Aldous puts it, then they will make their teammates look better as well as themselves.

One of those teammates is second-year forward Viviana "Vivi" Aguilera, a

kinesiology major for whom soccer has always been an outlet. "It's the only thing I've been good at it. It makes me feel good to know that I don't suck," she said with a laugh.

The chief reason Aguilera came to Grossmont was Aldous, who's had a compelling impact on her athletic life.

"The fact that I've known the coach since high school (PHHS) and I already knew some of the girls, I didn't feel too uncomfortable... I didn't feel excluded and I felt that we were a team already. (Aldous) brought me to Grossmont since I knew him. I tore my ACL twice and he was the only one who knew what I was capable of and no other coach would take me... He was so patient with me and brought me back into soccer. He's so accepting of who players are and will show you if you are doing something wrong. He actually teaches you the game and shows you what to fix," Aguilera said.

As far as the atmosphere surrounding their team's charisma, Aguilera had nothing but good things to say: "It's family. They



brighten my day because once I am with them, I relax. They know who I am, and I don't have to act different. They've seen me at my worst and at my best."

One thing Aguilera said she wants her team to know is that they need to show passion and care for winning. "I get nervous when I'm about to play and that's a good sign," she said. "It shows that you truly care, and that's all I want the other players to know. Know that we are counting on them and this is something serious that we all care about."

Despite having her ACL injuries, Aguilera still has the ambition to become a better soccer player and takes pride in her level of play. That's what is most admirable of her both on and off the soccer field and I'm sure her players don't take that for granted.

"Even after two surgeries, I didn't give up," Aguilera said. "After the first surgery they (doctors) usually tell you to stop playing, but I was like 'nah' and then after the second surgery I was like 'nah'. I have a lot of drive."

That drive is directed toward "making Grossmont history" and bringing the school its first PCAC Woman's Soccer championship in 12 years. In the words of

the Patrick Henry High School graduate, the goal is to "make Grossmont known and that we are the team to beat."

But how are the Griffins going to make themselves known? How are they going to strike fear in their opponents across the sidelines? "(Our) defense and offensive line is crazy," Aguilera said. However, Grossmont, like every other team in any sport has its weaknesses. The mid-field is a point of emphasis for the soccer team and an area that they will need to work on. "The mid-field is the ventriloquist of the team, and they are a huge part of our team," said Aguilera, adding that she has the utmost confidence that things will pan out.

One of those members of the strong defensive line Aguilera referred to earlier is second-year player Vanessa "Nessa" Reyes, who is transitioning to the position of center-back. Reyes laces up her cleats because it keeps her in shape and happy. "Originally soccer was something I was just thrown into but now it's something I just want to keep getting better at," Reyes said. Coming to Grossmont gave Reyes a "fresh start" from her time over at Southwestern College.

Adding on to Aguilera's statement about the charisma between teammates, Reyes had this to say about playing at Grossmont: "There's an environment here. Everyone is so coachable and welcoming. It just feels right here."

It seems that coach-ability and keeping a level head is the recurring theme with these Griffin players. "I appreciate it because when I'd like to give my input in, even if it could be wrong, they'll take it into consideration to make the team better," Reyes said. "It's not about their pride or ego. If they don't start they know it's for the good of the team and they know if they do start they better work their butt off. It's not about any certain individual."

Reyes said that attitude from your peers will do nothing but serve to benefit you. "This

[ SOCCER CONT. ON PAGE 14 ]



one (pointing to Aguilera) motivates me the most to get better. I've been playing with her for four years now including club. Even though she doesn't say much, I know that if I mess up, it would let Vivi down. Just knowing that motivates me. She knows I can do better and how much potential I have," Reyes said.

When asked about what she was looking forward to this upcoming season, Reyes nearly leaped out of her shoes in enthusiasm. "Oh man, I cannot express how excited I am! There is so much I expect. There is so much fire in these girls, I expect to win league. There is skill that I see on this team that I did not see last year. We could've been champs last year but with these girls now, I feel like we could definitely take home the title."

Reyes agrees with Aguilera about their strong point— their defensive and offensive lines.

"We've got really good strikers and forwards," she said. "You're looking at one right there (points to Aguilera). Our back line is super strong and trustworthy, which is something I've never had to deal with. I've never trusted my back line until this year. I know my team has my back if someone beats me."

As you can see, there is nothing but energy and limitless potential encompassing Aldous and his soccer program this fall. If you are able, try to walk down to the football field – or the "women's soccer field" as Aldous likes to call it – and watch some matches. Due to schedule complications with the football team, the women's soccer team is forced to play its games at 1 p.m., so if you have time between classes, try to stop by.

Aldous can guarantee one thing without hesitation: "Entertaining soccer. We move the ball around, we are not a kick and run team. Consistently last year we'd create four to five legitimate goal scoring opportunities, it was whether or not we would put them away (in the net) that would frustrate me and creating a goal scoring opportunity is the most difficult thing to do in soccer."

These Griffins are going to put on a good show and play great soccer for their fans that show up. You better tell the athletic department to make a spot on the mantle for the Women's Soccer PCAC championship trophy.

The schedule can be found at grossmontgriffins.com. The next home game will be against Fullerton on Tuesday, Sept. 12, at 1 p.m.

# GRIFFIN GAMES

It's a busy semester for sports. Come support G-House!

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE GROSSMONT ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT\*\*



## WOMEN'S SOCCER

Head Coach: Jason Aldous

Sept. 8 at Victor Valley (3 pm)  
**Sept. 12 vs. Fullerton (1 pm)**  
 Sept. 15 at Citrus (1 pm)  
**Sept. 19 vs. City (1 pm)**  
 Sept. 22 at Mesa (4 pm)  
**Sept. 26 vs. Imperial (1 pm)**  
**Sept. 29 vs. Cuyamaca (1 pm)**  
 Oct. 3 at Southwestern (1 pm)  
**Oct. 6 vs. Desert (1 pm)**  
 Oct. 10 at San Bernardino (3 pm)  
**Oct. 13 vs. Miramar (3 pm)**  
 Oct. 17 at MiraCosta (3 pm)  
**Oct. 20 vs. Palomar (1 pm)**  
 Oct. 24 at Mt. San Jacinto (1 pm)  
 Oct. 17 at City (1 pm)  
**Oct. 31 vs. Mesa (1 pm)**  
 Nov. 3 at Imperial (1 pm)  
 Nov. 7 at Cuyamaca (1 pm)  
**Nov. 10 vs. Southwestern (1 pm)**



## MEN'S BASKETBALL

Head Coach: Doug Weber

Nov. 24 - College of the Desert Tournament  
 Nov. 10 at Cypress College (5 pm)  
 Nov. 17-19 - San Bernardino Tournament  
**Nov. 22 vs. Compton College (5 pm)**  
**Dec. 1-3 - 46th Annual Grossmont Invitational**  
 Dec. 7-9 - Santa Barbara Tournament  
 Dec. 29 at LA Harbor (5 pm)



## WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Head Coach: Jamie Ivers

Sept. 8-9 - SD Mesa Classic (TBA)  
 Sept. 15 vs. College of the Canyons (1 pm at El Camino)  
 Sept. 5 at El Camino (3 pm)  
**Sept. 20 vs. Saddleback (6 pm)**  
 Sept. 22-23 - LA Pierce Tournament (TBA)  
 Oct. 4 at Cuyamaca (5 pm) +  
**Oct. 6 vs. Mesa (6 pm) +**  
**Oct. 11 vs. Southwestern (5 pm) +**  
 Oct. 13 at Imperial Valley (5 pm) +  
 Oct. 18 at City (5 pm) +  
**Oct. 20 vs. Cuyamaca (6 pm) +**  
 Oct. 25 at Mesa (5 pm) +  
**Oct. 27 vs. Southwestern (6 pm) +**  
**Nov. 1 vs. Imperial Valley (6 pm) +**  
**Nov. 3 vs. City (3 pm) +**  
 Nov. 8 - PCAC Crossover #1 (TBA) +  
 Nov. 14 - PCAC Crossover #2 (TBA) +  
 Nov. 18 - Regionals Playin Round (TBA)  
 Nov. 21 - 1st Round of Regionals (TBA)  
 Nov. 25 - 2nd Round of Regionals (TBA)  
 Dec. 1-3 - Final 8 State Championships (TBA)  
 + Pacific Coast Athletic Conference Match



## MEN'S WATER POLO

Head Coach: Ty Lackey

Sept. 8-9 - Citrus Invitational  
 Sept. 22-23 - Mesa Tournament  
**Sept. 27 vs. Palomar (2:30 pm) +**  
 Oct. 4 at Miramar (3:30 pm)  
 Oct. 6-7 - Riverside Invitational  
 Oct. 11 at Mesa (3:30 pm)  
 Oct. 13 - Riverside Mini  
 Oct. 14 - Fullerton Mini  
**Oct. 18 vs. Southwestern (2:30 pm) +**  
 Oct. 21 - Orange Coast Invitational  
 Oct. 27-28 - Saddleback Invitational  
 Nov. 3-4 - PCAC Championships  
 Nov. 9-11 - So-Cal Championships  
 Nov. 17-18 - State Championships

## WOMEN'S WATER POLO

Head Coach: Larry Larsen

Sept. 8-9 - Saddleback Tournament  
 Sept. 22-23 - Mt. Sac Tournament  
**Sept. 27 vs. Palomar (1 pm) +**  
 Sept. 29-30 - Mesa/Miramar Tournament  
 Oct. 4 at Miramar (2 pm)  
 Oct. 11 at Mesa (2 pm)  
**Oct. 18 vs. SWC (1 pm) +**  
 Oct. 20-21 - Long Beach Tournament  
**Oct. 37 - Alumni Game (6 pm) +**  
 Nov. 3-4 - PCAC Championships  
 Nov. 9-11 - So-Cal Championships  
 Nov. 17-18 - State Championships

+ Home games are held at the Joan Kroc Center, 6845 University Ave.

**BOLDFACE INDICATES HOME GAME.**

**SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT ANY TIME.**



## VOLLEYBALL UPDATE

Grossmont's volleyball team is coming off a perfect 10-0 regular-season record last year. Will they be able to do it again?

One thing that will definitely help is having 2016-2017 PCAC Female Head Coach of the year Jamie Ivers standing on the sidelines, encouraging her athletes. Ivers is the head coach of both the indoor and beach volleyball programs.

Last season, the indoor squad made it all the way to the semifinals in the state

championship tournament. This should come as no surprise, as Ivers' indoor volleyball team has won the PCAC division seven years in a row, has had its third consecutive undefeated regular season, and has made it deep into the playoffs over the past several years.

The team has started out this young season with a 3-1 record. Its next home contest will be on Sept. 20 against Saddleback College at 6 p.m. in the gym.





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# LEVEL UP

The Griffins prep to take their place in “the best conference in the country.”

BY KYLE HARKER

**G**rossmont’s football team is looking to improve after going 5-5 in non-conference play and 1-4 in conference play last season. I sat down with second-year Defensive Coordinator CJ Arnold to ask him a few things about the upcoming season.

In response to what is the biggest thing he wants to improve on from last season, he said, “I think the biggest thing for us is fixing the mental mistakes.”

The coaches are here to teach these young guys how to play smart football. To help out these junior college football players, they “made the defense more simple.”

Last season did not go to well for the Griffins. Arnold said that is due to playing in “the best conference in the country,” but said he knows that’s no excuse.

“We’ve got to get that level this year,” he said.

If you watch this team practice, you can see how much they want to get better. They work their behinds off. “We have implemented a new weight room system and I’m really looking forward to seeing results of the hard work my boys have put in,” Arnold said.

It’s not going to be easy since Grossmont is having to replace a couple star players who have moved onto new schools this season. Quantarius Boone, defensive end, moved onto Delta State, a Division 2 school in Mississippi. Boone had 44 tackles and six and a half sacks last

season. Kurtis Brooks, a defensive back, moved onto Virginia State. Kurtis had 72 tackles, one interception and one fumble recovery last year.

The Griffins are counting on Trey Schemke, a sophomore linebacker from Valhalla High School. Trey had 31 tackles and four sacks last season. We also expect big things from sophomore defensive linemen Chris James. Hailing from Chaparral High School, James had 19 tackles in just six games last year. Grossmont will also be counting on Logan Baker, a sophomore linebacker, to replace some of the production of the players that left.

When asked what he’s looking forward to this season, Arnold responded: “I know how much work my guys put in this summer, and I can’t wait to get on the field and see the results of all that work. I get goose bumps just talking about it.”

There is a lot of optimism surrounding this football team. They’ll try to stay on track with a “week-by-week” approach, meaning they will look at what the next challenge is rather than just looking forward to the big games. With that said, if there is one game to look forward to, it would be Palomar, the Griffins’ toughest competition. Another goal of Arnold’s is to get to a bowl game.

There are a lot of talented players on this team, now we want to see the results. The Griffins had a rough season opening, falling 32-7 against Mesa. The team’s next game will be at home versus LA Harbor.



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## GAME SCHEDULE\*

**Sept. 9 vs. LA Harbor (1 p.m.)**  
 Sept. 16 at El Camino (6 p.m.)  
 Sept. 23 at Chaffey (6 p.m.)  
**Sept. 30 vs. Canyons (3 p.m.)**  
**Oct. 14 vs. Fullerton (1 p.m.)**  
 Oct. 21 at Orange Coast (1 p.m.)  
 Oct. 28 at Saddleback (6 p.m.)  
**Nov. 4 vs. Golden West (1 p.m.)**  
 Nov. 11 at Palomar (6 p.m. at Escondido High School)  
 Nov. 18 - Bowl Games/Playoffs  
 Dec. 9 - State Championships

\*Boldface indicates home game







# THE LOOTING DILEMMA

The gaming industry's most recent business model is getting out of hand.

BY SYMON GORO

**A**llow me to pose a hypothetical situation for you. Imagine walking into a store because you saw a nice shirt you wanted on display. Normally other stores would sell you something like this for let's say, \$5.

Except you're not allowed to purchase it for \$5. Instead, you have to spend \$10 for ten mystery boxes. Each box has a 3 percent chance of containing the shirt you want. The other 97 percent is a pair of socks or maybe some stickers. Welcome to what is quickly becoming the standard for purchasing content in video games.

It wasn't too long ago that when a developer released additional content for their game, players had the option to directly purchase whatever they wanted, but things are quickly changing. Players are now often being forced to obtain what are commonly referred to as loot boxes to attempt to get things like alternate costumes, weapons or in some cases even abilities to use in-game. Players are usually given the option to either earn loot boxes by playing the game or buy them outright.

It doesn't sound like too bad a deal at first. They're free, after all, but therein lies their dangerous nature. The rate at which you earn free loot boxes starts off well at first, but slows down considerably as you play more of the game. Meaning you go longer without getting any rewards or the satisfaction that comes with them.

This is what's called "Operant Conditioning" or the "Skinner Box," a term coined in an experiment by Burrhus Frederic Skinner where he studied the changes of one's behavior via reinforcement.

Hungry rats would be placed in a box with a lever. Eventually the rats would accidentally hit the lever, which would produce a food

pellet. The rats quickly learned that hitting the lever meant getting food and would immediately go for it whenever placed in the box. Through reinforcement, he was able to manipulate the rats' behavior.

This has been used to great effect within the gaming industry to get players coming back to play more of a game. Particularly in massively multi-player online games like *World of Warcraft* or *Final Fantasy XIV*, which require monthly subscriptions to keep playing.

**The rats quickly learned that hitting the lever meant getting food and would immediately go for it whenever placed in the box... This has been used to great effect within the gaming industry to get players coming back to play more of a game.**

Loot boxes take full advantage of this reinforcement. Play more game, get more rewards. Unless that's too time consuming. In that case you can just pay to get that satisfaction.

It doesn't help that some developers lock players out of earning certain pieces of content either. *Overwatch*, for example, holds multiple events throughout the year where players can earn content exclusive to that event. Meaning you only have a few weeks out of the entire year to get them. Essentially forcing players to either spend hours grinding out loot boxes or paying money for the chance to get those rewards.

Notice I said a chance to get what they want, because like I mentioned in the beginning, there's a slim percentage of whatever it is you want to appear actually appearing. Getting duplicate or much less valuable items are not uncommon in loot boxes. Meaning you could spend a lot of time and money on loot boxes and not even get what you wanted.

Some games give you an in-game currency for duplicates or selling items you don't want, but the amounts given are often incredibly small. This requires you to still grind out or purchase many loot boxes to purchase a single thing even when the system allows you to circumvent the random chance.



In his article, “Middle-Earth: Shadow of Mordor Feels Like the Moment Loot Boxes Went Too Far,” Paul Tassi commented on how prevalent this has become in the industry: “We are slowly turning every game into a slot machine, even ones where this kind of system makes zero sense, and in addition to extracting money from wallets, it’s important to recognize how this may affect players who do not pay.”

There’s also the adverse effects loot boxes can have on the game’s balance. *Overwatch*’s loot box rewards are purely cosmetic. They have no impact on the game play. *Middle-Earth: Shadow of War* includes better gear in its loot boxes, and the rebooted *Star Wars Battlefront 2* is going to have upgrades and abilities, giving paying players an advantage in the game.

Tassi went on in that same article to say, “When you introduce loot boxes as a revenue mechanic, especially when you’re literally

selling power, there’s a good chance that actually affects how the game itself plays.”

With the success of titles like *Overwatch*, which generated more than \$565 million in 2016 according to “SuperData’s 2016 Year in Review: Report on Digital Games and Interactive Media,” it looks like this trend is going to be around for a while. The simple solution to this would be to stop buying loot boxes, but that’s easier said than done considering their addictive nature and being the only way to get certain rewards.

Loot boxes can be improved though. After listening to a year of criticism, game developer Blizzard changed the loot boxes in *Overwatch*. One of them is adjusting the system so players would get fewer duplicates and be given more in-game currency for any duplicates they do get. If we can’t change the system, we can at least try to improve it.

# DON'T GO IT ALONE

A free crisis text line is available for you.

The Office of Student Affairs recently introduced a free, text-based, confidential Crisis Text Line for students. This service, specifically aimed at California Community College students who may be experiencing a mental health challenge, is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To receive text-based support from trained Crisis Text Line counselors, students can text “COURAGE” to 741741.

## Need help?

Text: “**courage**” To: **741741**

FREE. 24/7. CONFIDENTIAL.

Many of us will experience a mental health challenge in our lifetime. All of us have a reason to speak up.

PROVIDED BY

**CRISIS TEXT LINE |**





## Who's got your back on campus?

BY ANNIE SPARKS

**G**rossmont takes the safety of its students very seriously. To ensure safety of faculty and students, the college put in place policies to try and prevent any harm done on campus. This means that this campus is prepared for any emergency, from a power outage to a possible active shooter.

On campus, we have a sheriff sergeant and four deputies. If there is a need for more assistance, Grossmont and Cuyamaca Colleges have access to the sheriff's department that specializes in crimes involving anything from illegal drug sales and auto theft to domestic violence.

Not only does the campus have sheriffs here at all times when school is in session, but it also has Campus and Parking Services (CAPS). Yes, they are the people in the bright yellow and black attire that give us parking tickets because we were running late for class and didn't buy a parking pass. Sure, that is what they are mostly known for from the students, but CAPS does much more for the students than we think. For example, many students take night classes, when walking to your car can feel unsafe or scary; one main thing CAPS does is escort students to their cars to ensure safety. Also, if a student, faculty or staff member's car battery dies, CAPS has the tools and resources to jump-start the car.

You will see them throughout the semester roaming campus, and remember they do a lot more than give parking tickets. They are a big part of keeping our campus safe.

Sheriffs are always roaming our campus too. In fact, deputies have been patrolling Grossmont and Cuyamaca Colleges for about four years now. Deputy Zachariah Adams is one of the four deputies here on campus, and has been working on the campus for little over a year now. He was in patrol for nine years before going into specialized positions here on campus. Adams is one of the deputies here to help keep Grossmont a safe learning environment for everyone, including students, faculty and staff members.

The deputies work Monday through Friday, and there are two shifts-- from 6:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., and from 1 to 10:30 p.m. Not all deputies are on campus all at once, but there is always at least one deputy on campus. CAPS and the sheriff's deputies have direct communication through their walkies.

Grossmont is dedicated to the people on campus getting more informed about safety on campus. For more information, visit [grossmont.edu](http://grossmont.edu), click on the "Find People" drop-down menu and choose "Public Safety."

## LATINO HERITAGE MONTH Sept. 15 – Oct. 15



It's a packed agenda for this year's celebration. Don't miss a beat!

### LATINO FILM FESTIVAL

On Tuesday nights at 5:30 p.m. from Sept. 19 through Oct. 10, enjoy movie screenings in 26-220.

### LATIN FOOD FESTIVAL

On Wednesdays, from Sept. 20 through Oct. 11, experience foods from Cuba, El Salvador, Argentina and México in the Sodexo Cafeteria. Pozole will be served every Wednesday.

### UNDOCUMENTED LATINO YOUTH – REALITIES AND STRATEGIES

Dr. Marisol Clark-Ibañez, associate professor of sociology at Cal State San Marcos, will be speaking on Sept. 21, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., in Griffin Gate.

### SALSA UNDER THE STARS

The Grossmont College Music Department is hosting a scholarship fundraiser and CD release celebration on Monday, Sept. 25, at 6:30 p.m. in the main quad. The events will feature the talents of The Manny Cepeda Orchestra, Derek Cannon, Fred Beneditti, the Grossmont Master Chorale and more. Free salsa lessons will be given from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. General admission is \$20; student admission is \$10.

### GABE ELTAEB

Art illustrator Gabe Eltaeb will give a presentation about his art and his career path in the comic book industry on Sept. 27, from 1 to 2 p.m., in Griffin Gate.

### MARIANELA DE LA HOZ

"Tiempos Complicados," the work of Mexican painter Marianela De La Hoz, will be on exhibit at the Hyde Art Gallery from Sept. 25 to Oct. 10. Meet the artist on Sept. 28, from 4 to 7 p.m., in the gallery (Building 25).

### DR. EDUARDO "KIKI" OCHOA

Community activist Dr. Eduardo "Kiki" Ochoa will discuss strategies for overcoming educational and personal challenges that affect people of color in higher education. This lecture will be held on Oct. 12, from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m., in the main quad.

## GROSSMONT BRIEFING

### CHANCELLOR'S COLLOQUIUM

Dr. Cindy Miles is holding a Chancellor's Colloquium on Sept. 13 from 3 to 4 p.m. in Griffin Gate (Building 60). Miles is inviting students and staff to join her in a discussion about the national, state and regional trends affecting higher education and the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District.

### NEW NAME, SAME SERVICES

DSPS has a shiny new name! Formerly known as Disabled Student Programs & Services, the support center is now called the Accessibility Resource Center.

ARC – pronounced “A-R-C,” not “arc” – provides support to students who have documented disabilities, including acquired brain injury, deaf or hard of hearing, intellectual, learning, mobility, psychological, speech or language, and visual.

In an email announcing the name change, Dr. Patrice Braswell, ARC coordinator, said the change was “years in the making” based on feedback from students, faculty and staff. Braswell said they hope the change “will reduce the stigma that students experience in accessing these services.”

ARC is located in the Griffin Center (60-120).

### IF YOU LIVED HERE

Don't miss the final week of “If You Lived Here: West Coast Drawing” on exhibit at the Hyde Art Gallery through Sept. 14. The show features a Southern California collective of 25 artists who work primarily in two-dimensional media to showcase facets of California life.

Located in Building 25, the Hyde Art Gallery is open Monday to Thursday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and on Fridays by appointment only. Admission is free. For more information, visit [hydeartgallery.com](http://hydeartgallery.com).

### CLUB FAIR

The Inter-Club Council Club Fair will be held on Sept. 19-20 in the main quad. Come find out more about clubs on campus.

### CAREER EXPO

Plan ahead! A career expo will be held on Oct. 11 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the main quad. For more information, visit [grossmont.edu/studentempservices](http://grossmont.edu/studentempservices) or call 619-644-7612.

### SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District's Sustainability Program made big gains in the last two years. The program, which focuses on saving energy and resources, has helped to save energy equal to removing 365 cars from the road or planting 43,751 trees.

To help in the effort, students can keep an eye out for energy waste by reporting equipment left on or malfunctioning, water leaks and dripping faucets. For more information or to get involved, contact Jacqueline Hall, sustainability specialist, at 619-644-7761 or email [jacqueline.hall@gcccd.edu](mailto:jacqueline.hall@gcccd.edu).

## LISTEN LIVE TO GRIFFIN RADIO

[grossmont.edu/  
griffinradio](http://grossmont.edu/griffinradio)

REQUEST LINES: 619-644-7287, 7725



## FIGURE IT OUT

CAN YOU SOLVE THIS PROBLEM  
FROM THE MATH DEPARTMENT?

Look at the Roman numeral IX.  
How can you add one symbol and  
make the number 6?

[ SOLUTION BELOW ]



## FALL 2017 SEMESTER TRANSIT PASS

**Exclusive student discount. Unlimited rides all semester.**

**\$177**

**On sale until September 29 at the Activities Window**

Cash only. Current, valid college student picture ID required.  
No replacements for lost, voided or stolen stickers.

[sdmts.com/college](http://sdmts.com/college)





# REEL TALK

BY  
MORGAN  
RAY

## DUNKIRK Directed by Christopher Nolan. Produced by Emma Thomas, Christopher Nolan.



In Dunkirk, France, in 1940, 400,000 British troops are trapped on a beach so close to their homeland, yet so far away. German bombers are picking them off one by one. Will help arrive in time?

*Dunkirk* doesn't tell everything in a straightforward, linear structure, and it's all the better for preserving every bit of raw, nerve-wracking energy. There are wonderful performances throughout *Dunkirk*: Fionn Whitehead's portrayal of the young soldier protagonist, Harry Styles' surprisingly great debut performance and Cillian Murphy's shell-shocked trooper among many others. Cinematographer Hoyte van Hoytema, who previously worked with Nolan on *Interstellar*, uses camera-work to turn the bleak and barren sand and sea into works of art, and the minimal dialogue script only pulls the audience deeper into the soldiers' peril. *Dunkirk* is a minimalist masterpiece and truly one of the best films of the year.



## WONDER WOMAN Directed by Patty Jenkins. Produced by Charles Roven, Zack Snyder, etc.

Amazonian princess Diana (Gal Gadot) lives a life of safety on the hidden island of Themyscira— that is, until an American pilot (Chris Pine) crashes onto the island and draws her into the human world, then in the throes of World War I. Convinced that the war is the doing of Ares, the god of war, Diana rushes headlong into the fight only to discover a few things about the human race, as well as herself.

Gadot is the perfect Wonder Woman, conveying a sense of strength and naiveté that's both inspiring and heartbreaking. The movie itself is yet another superhero origin story (with awesome slo-mo battle scenes), but it's more than just Wonder Woman's origins. *Wonder Woman* is about the heartbreak one experiences when they realize that the world isn't just black and white, that saving the world isn't so easy and the "bad guys" aren't that easy to identify.

The DC Cinematic Universe still has a long way to go, but the sheer triumph that is *Wonder Woman* is enough to make fans believe again... even if you side with Marvel.



## ATOMIC BLONDE Directed by David Leitch. Produced by Charlize Theron, etc.



The year is 1989. MI6 agent Lorraine Broughton (Charlize Theron) is sent to Berlin for a seemingly simple extraction mission, but discovers that not everything is what it seems... and not everyone can be trusted. *Atomic Blonde* contains visceral performances from Theron and James McAvoy and some top-notch, if not brutally realistic and breathtaking, bloody fight scenes.

Except that's the movie's problem. What *Atomic Blonde* has in appearances and aesthetics, it lacks in plot coherency. Clearly the fights are the main focus, but that same passion doesn't carry over to the script, which can't decide which plot point to follow. The soundtrack threatens to overpower the film at times, and the product placement is about as subtle as a punch to the face, but for all of its flaws, *Atomic Blonde* is an icy, neon-framed, Tarantino-esque spy thriller that's a suitable time killer. It just relies too much on its looks.



## GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2 Directed by James Gunn. Produced by Kevin Feige

Peter "Star Lord" Quill (Chris Pratt) is still doing what he does best, saving the galaxy with his squad (Zoe Saldana, Dave Bautista, Bradley Cooper, Vin Diesel) one job at a time. That is until he finally meets his long-lost alien father, Ego (Kurt Russell). Will he abandon his friends for a family he barely knows?

This film was coming off of an amazingly hilarious movie, so it's understandable that people weren't going to like this one as much (Marvel movies can build skyscraper-high expectations), but *Vol. 2* holds its ground as a sequel. The jokes are just as rampant as the first movie, and the dynamic between Pratt and Russell is incredibly fun to watch. What separates *Vol. 2* from the first *Guardians* movie is its emotional heft. It goes deeper into the concept and bonds of family and how some families are chosen rather than born into; in other words, whether you're laughing or crying, keep a box of tissues handy.

