

The

SUMMIT



GROSSMONT COLLEGE'S STUDENT NEWS MEDIA | HOLIDAY 2025

The background of the lower half of the page is a festive illustration. It features a large, stylized green Christmas tree made of geometric shapes. The tree is decorated with yellow stars and red circular ornaments. The background is a dark green with a pattern of lighter green and yellow stars. The text 'Festive Finish' is written in a large, white, cursive font with a red outline, centered over the tree.

Festive Finish

ILLUSTRATION BY MARIBELL FREGOSO

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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 and have completed an introductory news writing course. 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@gcccd.edu.



ILLUSTRATION BY LIZZETTE TREJO

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SUMMIT STAFF



WHAT'S IN YOUR LETTER TO SANTA?

L TO R: SAM POLLMANN, MIKAYLA ESTRADA, LILLIAN DAY, OSCAR ALCON.



POSTCARD

All I want for Christmas this year is a ticket to the World Series when the Angels win it all, since I don't remember the team winning it in 2002.

You know what, Santa? Scratch that. I want tickets for all of my teams winning championships so I can be there live and cry tears of joy when they win.



deliver to:

Santa

from: **Oscar Alcon**

POSTCARD

What I would love for Christmas this year is to catch a break, but that's probably in high demand right now with all that's going on. So, if you can't deliver that, I could use some new tennis shoes, a few board games to ease my spirits, and perhaps a screen-accurate replica of Mr. Pointy from the 1997 hit TV show "Buffy the Vampire Slayer."



deliver to:

St. Nick

from: **Lillian Day**

POSTCARD

Oh boy, not a bad year—not even a good year, a mix of both—but I certainly learned a lot by stepping out of my comfort zone. I'm glad I made mistakes. Anyway, this year, I want the Angels to win (extra support for Oscar's Xmas list!). And second and last on the wish list: Getting Hot Cheeto carne asada fries and returning to The Summit in Spring 2027!



deliver to:

The Xmas GOAT

from: **Mikayla Estrada**

POSTCARD

Howdy-do! What a year it has been. I hope this message finds you in good health. All I want for Christmas is an awesome northern swell so I can get pitted before 2026. I don't know if you and Poseidon are on speaking terms after the typhoon, but a good word would be greatly appreciated. Also, if you can drop me off a new water filter for my fridge, that would be great. I'll even leave some scones on the counter if you can get one of your elves to install it; I don't trust my roommates. Cheers.



deliver to:

Mr. Kringle

from: **Sam Pollmann**



FALL'S FINAL NOTES

Oscar Alcon

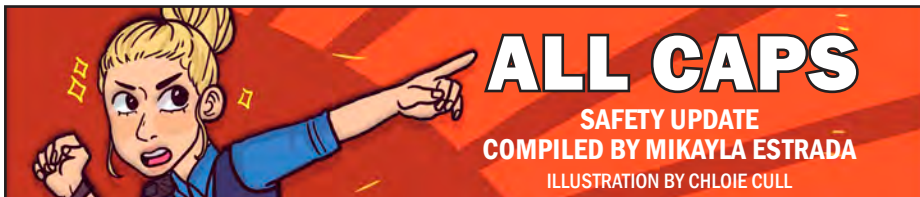
Oscar Alcon, Editor-in-Chief

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

At *The Summit*, we are concerned with the quality of our journalism. If you spot a factual error, please contact us at summit@gcccd.edu.

OCT. C&C

Page 14 Corrections & Clarifications: In a story about campus security, we wrote that security cameras were removed. However, according to Dr. Perla Lopez, the use of the sheriff's cameras within the district – as well as the conversation about installing cameras – has been paused. Lopez also clarified that there is no timeline for the installation of surveillance cameras and that the Chancellor has been in conversation with the San Diego Community College District to discuss a partnership with their campus police. Lopez also clarified that faculty have not personally conducted workshops, but have instead attended ones where former law enforcement officers share their expertise on de-escalating situations, including a seminar on active shooting training for faculty and staff arranged by the district before the start of Spring 2025 classes. She said she thought students should be offered the same type of training so they know how to respond to emergency situations.



Grossmont's Campus and Parking Services team, a.k.a. CAPS, handle campus safety concerns along with a sheriff's deputy from the San Diego County Sheriff's Office.

Grossmont's Campus and Parking Services team, also known as CAPS, is dedicated to ensuring safety among all students and faculty at the college. These events on campus were among those noted on the crime log* since our last issue:

- **Oct. 13:** A married couple, who were students, had an argument that turned into a physical fight. One student was arrested and sent to San Diego Central Jail, while the other was sent to the hospital.
- **Oct. 20:** A student who had previously been suspended from campus was seen on campus. He was detained by the campus deputy for trespassing and arrested by Santee and Lakeside deputies, who found a 5-inch fixed-bladed knife on the student following a consensual search. A Timely Warning Notification was sent out to the campus when the student was released because he had been carrying a concealed weapon on campus.
- **Oct. 23:** The mother of an underage student called to report an adult student asking her daughter inappropriate questions and making her uncomfortable. CAPS advised the student and mother to call for an escort to and from class.
- **Oct. 23:** An AOJ student was accidentally cuffed by a pair of handcuffs. Police responded and removed the handcuffs.

*The Clery Act is a federal statute requiring colleges participating in federal financial aid programs to maintain and disclose campus crime statistics and security information. A daily crime log is kept allowing the public to view the most recent information.

CAMPUS CALENDAR*

COMPILED BY LILLIAN DAY

NOVEMBER

- 18: Blood Drive**, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
(Main Quad) | **Monthly Food Distribution and Resources Fair**, 1 to 2 p.m. (Main Quad)
| **Pajama Jam!**, 5 to 7 p.m.
(MESA Center, 36-225)
24: Spring Registration Opens
24-28: Thanksgiving Break
28: Last day to drop with "W" for second eight-week session

DECEMBER

- 2: Blood Drive**, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
(Main Quad)
3: STEM Finals Study Jam, 2 to 5 p.m.
(MESA Center, 36-225)
10: Blood Drive, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
(Main Quad)
13: P/NP deadline

MUSIC (PVAC) \$

All events at 7:30 p.m.

- DEC. 3: Guitar Ensemble**
DEC. 4: Concert Band-Winter Concert
DEC. 9: Cadence Vocal Jazz Ensemble
DEC. 12: Symphony Orchestra and Master Chorale *Handel's Messiah*

STAGEHOUSE THEATRE

A View from the Bridge

- NOV. 20-22, DEC. 4-6**, 7:30 p.m. \$
NOV. 22, DEC. 6, 2 p.m. \$

DANCE

Breaking Boundaries

- NOV. 20-22**, 7:30 p.m. (PVAC) \$

CAREER CENTER (60-140)

- NOV. 14: Critical Thinking/ Problem Solving**, 11 a.m. to noon
| **Unlock your Leadership Potential**, noon to 1 p.m.
DEC. 4: Exploring Major Workshop, 11 a.m. to noon (Online)

HEALTH PROFESSIONS

- NOV. 14: Cardiovascular Technology Previews**, noon to 1:30 p.m.
(34-210)
NOV. 19: Respiratory Therapy Program Review, 4:45 to 5:45 p.m.
(34-211)
DEC. 9: Occupational Therapy Assistant Previews, 11 a.m. to noon (Online)

*Events subject to change; visit grossmont.edu for online meeting logins and latest info. | \$ Indicates admission cost

SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 15

DOWN

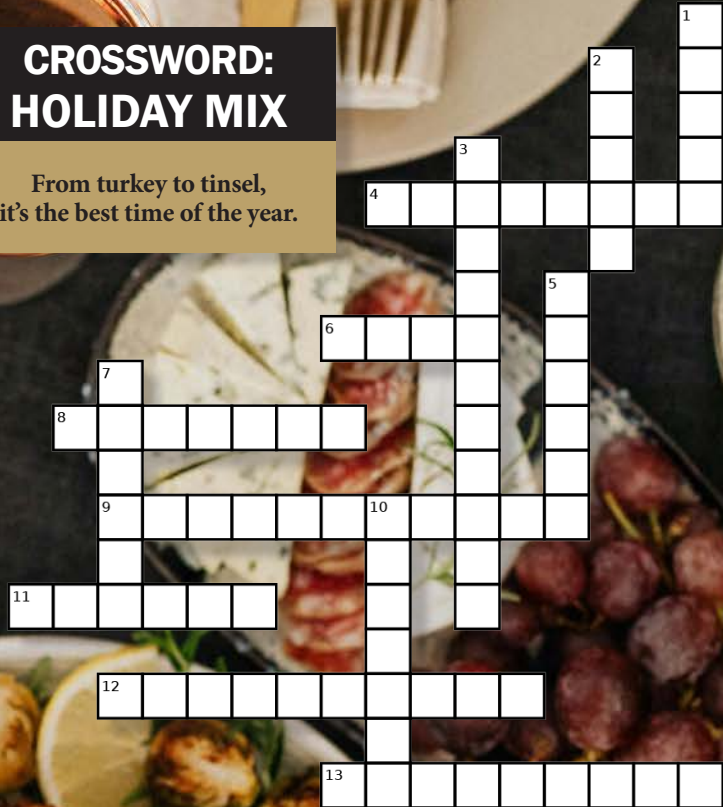
1. NYC Thanksgiving parade's main sponsor
2. One of two teams that host NFL Thanksgiving
3. Holiday on Jan. 1
5. What people eat on Thanksgiving
7. What turkeys say
10. ____ the red-nosed reindeer

ACROSS

4. What people open on Christmas
6. Where to hang ornaments
8. One of two teams that host NFL Thanksgiving
9. Day after Thanksgiving
11. Santa's ride
12. Another name for St. Nick
13. Holiday on Dec. 25

CROSSWORD: HOLIDAY MIX

From turkey to tinsel,
it's the best time of the year.



WORD SEARCH: I BEG YOUR PARDON?

Each Thanksgiving, at least one fortunate turkey gets a presidential pardon instead of a spot on the menu. In this puzzle, search for the names of some of the lucky birds who got to see another holiday.

ABE	CHEESE	MAC
BELL	COB	MAY
BLOSSOM	CORN	PEACH
BREAD	FLOWER	PEAS
BUTTER	HONEST	TATER
CARROTS	LIBERTY	TOT

ITCDNJHPBZFOMGJUAFGTIRLYD
 BXLXNQGPBTIFYECWJCTRABXCVQ
 WOCILSXJTOTMPEPTRXIMCTUWINP
 VRUGBBOVIAVOAVDJUDCETAZSD
 XPMVVENLOSYNHIOOXBZRTCSIQ
 OBJAIIHRGKCHXRWOHJNZFEHZTU
 BRPSYKQTFGQCXCDXATTDCKRAE
 LELZHOPRYUFAJQNHUODTGAKS
 OAXCAXJSMCCPZTPEACHTWNPGA
 SDRQBMZEHUMEBKVXFRWSEWOAU
 SZIQCHQNZPUSWGC SLRITOLHZV
 OANYTTTLLCCHONESTPCOBWUUF
 MGCWRQNSQOXRPBCFGHMYKDHIT
 WAVEBQPTNGRNNTHDRUFXLZALE
 OIFTCETXGQNWAE LFMFHYBAYC
 VVZRTYUBHCGBWIEVUHFWILREQ
 EPTTLIPKNVAHWBSSRGADWWKJO
 SRIQQRFOUCXRJYEKFVBTPQPPOQ
 XDZQJBLSNSOURDCNBTEPRJEET
 NTIKYROQOFMEPOFZQOHOOLZAZ
 KKEJDVWLNXBEDTYSMNWAATQS
 OJHMDTEAZHPENWSSANYXPXGKCG
 NTTGXRGHLHOLMACYYSJSNINWB
 BHTNRGLENEELCEFNWKOMP CGZJ
 GAHQSKSAHROYAHUBXGZKZZHBW

If you're looking to read something beyond textbooks this break, try these books that empower women and celebrate their stories.

The Yellow Wallpaper

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

If you find yourself stuck at home for a day, *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman is an introspective, short story that will make your day anything but boring and leave you thinking long after you've finished. On the surface, it is about a woman forced to a "rest cure" by her doctor-husband in a room with sickly yellow wallpaper, but deep down it's an allegory of women's suffrage. It is the first story that comes to mind when I am asked for a book recommendation because it is perfect for readers and non-readers alike.



Atmosphere

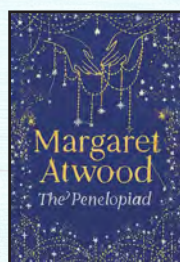
Taylor Jenkins Reid

Released over the summer, *Atmosphere* by Taylor Jenkins Reid depicts the struggles of pursuing a career in a male-dominated field while preserving familial and romantic relationships. The historical fiction romance tells the story of Joan Goodwin, the first woman to join NASA's space program, cutting between her life in the early 1980s and the momentous space mission of 1984. This is no ordinary love story; it's a queer love story. As someone who absolutely adored *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*, this might be a very close second among Reid's novels.

The Penelopiad

Margaret Atwood

With Christopher Nolan's adaptation of *The Odyssey* coming to the big screen next summer, it's important to highlight the leading woman of the epic poem, Penelope, Queen of Ithaca. In *The Penelopiad*, Margaret



Atwood gives women a voice. She retells the events through Penelope's eyes: her marriage to Odysseus, her life during his 20-year absence, weaving a shroud to avoid remarriage, and his return. Atwood also includes the tragic story of the twelve maids, giving them a voice through a Greek chorus. It is a beautiful extension of Greek mythology.

Magic Lessons

Alice Hoffman

Magic Lessons is the first prequel of the *Practical Magic* series by Alice Hoffman. The book follows Maria, the matriarch of the Owens' family, and her story as she is accused of witchcraft. Like any heartbroken woman, she turns to spells to ease her sorrows. Despite its release 25 years after the publication of the first book, Hoffman seamlessly connects the prequel to the overarching story, making it a great book to cozy up with, or the first of several if the magic pulls you in.



Wuthering Heights

Emily Brontë

A book truly perfect for rainy days and the isolation of winter is the Gothic novel *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë. The story presents love in unconventional ways, through themes of revenge, obsession, and hauntings. The orphan Heathcliff is consumed by his passion for Catherine Earnshaw, which ultimately fills his life with hysteria and tragedy. While many dislike the book for its lack of a traditional love story and its depictions of violence and vulgarity, these elements set it apart through time. My love for the novel comes from the unlikable protagonists; that's what makes them fascinating. A book that doesn't ask the readers to pity the character is worth reading. ♡

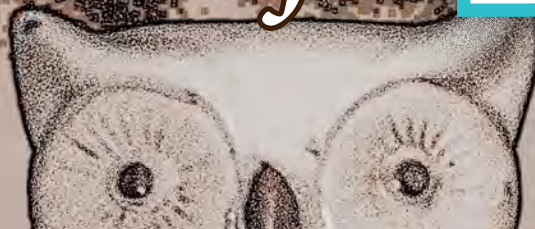


Books for Break

*Enjoy winter recess with
STORIES THAT*

CELEBRATE WOMEN'S VOICES.

BY LILLIAN DAY
DESIGN BY SARA SHAH



FINALS FUEL & COMFORT, TOO

From festive drinks to study-friendly corners, these cafés have you covered.

The holidays may be a specialty of big chain coffee shops like Starbucks and Better Buzz, but many others also welcome students with open areas to study and free Wi-Fi. And now they're unveiling holiday drinks, just in time for seasonal study jams.

LIGHTBULB COFFEE

8138 La Mesa Blvd., La Mesa

lightbulbcoffee.com

Right across the street from downtown La Mesa, seats are available at Lightbulb Coffee. The Lightbulb coffee shop has many items on its menu, from coffee drinks to milkshakes and food. Some of their seasonal beverages this holiday season include the Peppermint Mocha Latte, Gingerbread Latte and Snickerdoodle Latte. This coffee shop also has free Wi-Fi and couches for students to have homework sessions or Zoom meetings. Lightbulb Coffee shop is open Monday to Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sundays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

THE LIVING ROOM

5900 El Cajon Blvd., San Diego

livingroomcafe.com

One of the most popular coffee shops among students who enjoy studying away from home and off-campus is the Living Room Coffeehouse. A five-minute drive from San Diego State University, this coffee shop has a lot of food and drink choices, ranging from omelets to signature burgers. Their seasonal drinks will be released as Christmas approaches. It also has outdoor seating for students who prefer the fresh air. The Living Room is open daily from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.

LEMON GROVE COFFEE

7801 Broadway, San Diego

lemongrovecoffee.com

Right across the street from the Lemon Grove trolley station is Lemon Grove Coffee. One of the seasonal drinks the shop will be releasing is a peppermint mocha with whipped cream and candy cane sprinkles on top, and there are more yet to come. This place attracts a large number of students from SDSU, Grossmont and even Mesa College. Lemon Grove Coffee is open seven days a week from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m.

THE DAILY GRIND CAFE

6695 El Cajon Blvd, San Diego

the-daily-grind-cafe.res-menu.com

The Daily Grind Café gives off old-school IHOP vibes, but it feels like home the moment you walk through the door. Located

outside of the SDSU area, this cafe has its own breakfast and lunch menu, plus free Wi-Fi, so students can do homework and study while having some great food. When the calendar turns to December, the cafe will unveil its own seasonal drinks to get into the holiday spirit. The Daily Grind Cafe is open seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

DARK HORSE COFFEE ROASTERS

4350 Palm Ave, La Mesa

darkhorsecoffee.roasters.com

One of the smallest coffee shops on this list is tucked away in La Mesa. Called the Dark Horse Coffee Shop, it has a unique vibe being located in an apartment complex, but its specialty is its self-roasted coffee. It's great if it's just a solo study in an area that's not crowded. Some of their own seasonal drinks will be released as the holidays approach. The Dark Horse Coffee Shop is open every day from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

BREW COFFEE SPOT

6101 Lake Murray Blvd., La Mesa

brewcoffeespot.com

The largest coffee shop on the list is Brew Coffee Spot, which located in the Lake Murray area. Sporting a typical coffee shop vibe inside, the cafe offers a variety of indoor and outdoor seating options; it also host its own events, including a live jazz band and an open mic night. One of their seasonal drinks for sale is the Eggnog Latte, with other options coming soon. The Brew Coffee Stop is open Sunday to Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Saturday, from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

KAFFEE MEISTER

9225 Carlton Hills Blvd., Santee

kaffeemeister.com

Lastly, in Santee outside of Mission Gorge Road, there is Kaffee Meister. The cafe offers many drinks and food, like acai bowls and bagel sandwiches. One of its seasonal drinks is a peppermint mocha, and more will be coming soon. This shop has indoor and outdoor seating with free Wi-Fi, and many students come here to study or just have a cafe vibe they love. Kaffee Meister is open Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on the weekends from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. ☕



BY OSCAR
ALCON



Persistence and teamwork drive the Griffins to their best season in recent memory.

STORY BY OSCAR ALCON & SAM POLLMANN | PHOTOS BY SAM POLLMANN

This season has had its share of ups and downs for Grossmont's football team. The Griffins started out running through the gates to a 4-1 record in the first two months, including a combined score of 106-15 in the first two games, and finished the next two months 2-3, including a dominating win over the Glendale Vaqueros 37-17 in their last home game of the season to finish with a 6-4 record.

It has been a long road to success for Head Coach Mason Mitchell and his staff, as Grossmont ended the 2024-25 season with a 1-9 record and finished 0-10 the year before.

After finishing this season with a winning record, Mitchell said, "It's a breath of fresh air."

The key difference in this year's success compared to prior seasons has been the depth of talent on the roster, according to Mitchell. "We knew we had the potential last year, we just were missing some key pieces," he said.

"Now we've got a more complete team, with a great coaching staff, and I couldn't be more grateful for these young men; they're great young men," he added. "They love the hard work and they're fully dedicated, so I couldn't be more thankful."

Mitchell said that although the team struggled with numerous injuries this season, he attributes the returning success to backups accepting their roles as starters. "Now our twos are ones, now the next guy's got to pick up the rifle and be ready to go," he said.

In the last home of the season against the Vaqueros, Quarterback Melvin Spicer IV put up some big-time stats. Spicer completed 15 passes out of 26 attempts, 223 yards for four touchdowns, including a rushing one.

"I feel amazing right now, you know? I love this group of guys," Spicer said after the game. "Hats off to everyone; hats off to the coaches, even trainers, I know they don't get enough love, but it feels amazing to come here and get out with a winning record."

When asked if he would return for the Griffins next season, the freshman quarterback said, "We shall see," perhaps alluding to a future beyond Grossmont. "I'm open to it," he said. "We'll see what happens."

After the Griffins went up 14-10 in the second quarter, Defensive Back Jonathan Smith made a crucial interception, leading to yet another score.





Though it was Smith's first interception of the season, he said his focus was on his team. "I'm just, you know, just trying to do what's best for my team, you know, trying to let my sophomores end out with a good note," Smith said.

The icing on the cake for the Griffin victory came late in the fourth quarter when freshman Offensive Lineman Christopher Osorio trotted out to attempt a field goal.

Despite the relentless call from the visiting crowd to "block that kick," Osorio sent the ball straight through the uprights to settle the final score at 37-17.

Though he seemed unfazed by his moment in the spotlight, Osorio said he was somewhat nervous going up to attempt the kick. "It really was a little nerve-wracking, you know, just seeing the people, opponents in front of me," he said.

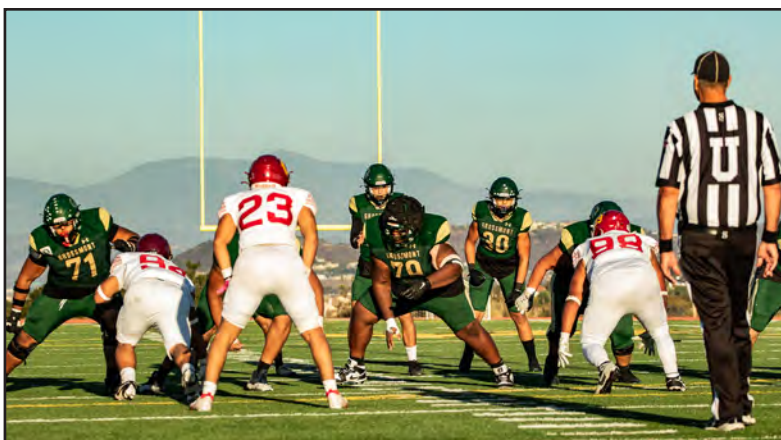
For some coaches and players, representing Grossmont well is their number-one goal. "Our goal is to honor Grossmont's legacy," Mitchell said. "As long as we're making our campus proud, our student body proud, our presidential cabinet, like everybody proud, that's all we care about."

Mitchell discussed how the team got in a slump in the middle of the season before bouncing back. "We started to taper off on the back end because we lost some of our key offensive guys," he said. "That's why our firepower wasn't as big as the front end of the season, but we found our guys, got our groove on."

Following the win against Glendale, the Griffins became eligible to play in the annual Beach Bowl against West Los Angeles on Nov. 22.

"Now we need to focus, get some good work these next two weeks, and then that bowl, you know what I'm saying?" Smith said.

After the last few years of Grossmont football, this season could be the starting point of many more successful ones to come. Perhaps the Griffins could ride this momentum to more winning or undefeated seasons, and even bring a conference championship home to Grossmont. 🐾



MAKING MOVES



Two student choreographers share what it's like to create for *Breaking Boundaries*.

STORY & PHOTOS BY LILLIAN DAY

Breaking Boundaries is the annual concert choreographed and performed by students that showcases their creativity and discipline through dance.

Among the many choreographers and dancers featured in the concert are Mileigh Nelson and Talia Castellanos, who each bring two distinct styles to the stage. Nelson will showcase a pom piece combining elements of cheer, hip-hop and jazz, while Castellanos will take the stage with a fusion of modern, jazz and Latin dance.

Nelson said she was inspired by the UDA National Dance Competition for her piece, which showcases high-energy, precise technical movements. With a background in high school pom, she said she always wanted to choreograph the style.

Using her trained jazz skills, she combines many technical elements in her pom dance, including “really sharp movements, quick jumps, fast turns,...super sharp arms,” while also incorporating occasional fluid movements—a signature of the pom style, according to Nelson.

Castellanos was introduced to dance through salsa at Majesty in Motion Dance Studio in San Diego. There, she acquired many skills by participating in classes and dance teams, while also assisting with teaching and directing.



This background in Latin dance is highlighted in her piece; however, it is not the focal point.

Castellanos said she was drawn to modern as the main style for her piece after taking a class at Grossmont. She said she felt modern would be able to convey deeper emotion, as using it communicates the theme of “conforming” to societal expectations and the idea that it is possible to break free. “Maybe some of us do break out, but then we always find a way back to these patterns that we’ve created as a society,” Castellanos said.

While the two choreographers have differing inspirations and backgrounds, they share a similar approach to beginning their choreography process through musicality.

Nelson said she listened to her piece’s song on repeat until every little detail of the music was ingrained into her brain so she could visualize her choreography and write notes anywhere. “For this piece, I just had to almost hallucinate my ideas,” she said.

Similarly, Castellanos said she begins her choreography by listening to the song. “I have a lot of musicality in my choreography, and I usually will listen to the song a lot, until I can actually find a time where I can like dance to it,” she said.

Castellanos added that when conveying



emotion or choosing a theme, journaling helps her decide precisely what she wants to say in her piece, “and maybe find ways within my body to say it too.”

As Nelson moved through rehearsals teaching choreography, she said it became a collaborative effort, sharing the floor with her dancers to interpret her notes. “They put up with all my crazy ideas,” she said.

Nelson said she carries a more direct teaching style, knowing what she wants and how she wants it. However, she added that she tries to mix a part of her process with the dancer’s process.

She described her direct teaching style as “loud,” using sounds instead of counts while rehearsing, which she said she hopes encourages her dancers to enjoy the process, whether they are in the playful or serious part of rehearsals.

Lexie Alva, a Grossmont student and dancer with Nelson, said Nelson brings a lot of energy to rehearsals and “gets everyone pumped up.”

During the summer, Castellanos said she worked on a version of this dance with friends, which provided a foundation for the finished dance she will showcase at the concert, allowing her more time to play with different choreography.

Now, she said, “we’re just cleaning it, running it, feeling comfortable doing it, without the mirror.”

Castellanos noted her love for planning each rehearsal and teaching her choreography and intention to the dancers. She added that she feels “very lucky” to be working with her group of dancers.

“They’re ready to learn all the time, and they’re super positive,” Castellanos said. “I feel like I’ve been learning from them as well.”

Nelson said the biggest challenge she faced was maintaining her momentum throughout the week planning choreography, and not repeating it while still preserving the overall theme.

“Once you just start choreography, even if you don’t like it, just keep going, and then it slowly evolves and gets better,” Nelson said.

During the process, Nelson said she learned she can come up with choreography spontaneously, and she loves working with big groups of people because it gives her the space to share her expertise and skills with other dancers. She said she also doesn’t feel the need to

enforce rules like a “drill sergeant” because her dancers are responsible and self-sufficient.

Castellanos said she has faced an internal battle to feel satisfied with her choreography, but added she has had support through the entire process, from her dancers and from Gina Sorensen, her modern dance teacher and co-chair of the dance department.

“I feel so supported by [Sorensen] in terms of expressing any creative concerns, and she just provides a lot of helpful feedback that keeps me going,” Castellanos said.

Both Nelson and Castellanos said they see a future for themselves in dance and choreography.

“I definitely want to keep dancing in any capacity. I love it,” said Nelson, who is on track to graduate in the spring and said she would love to join a dance company in the future.

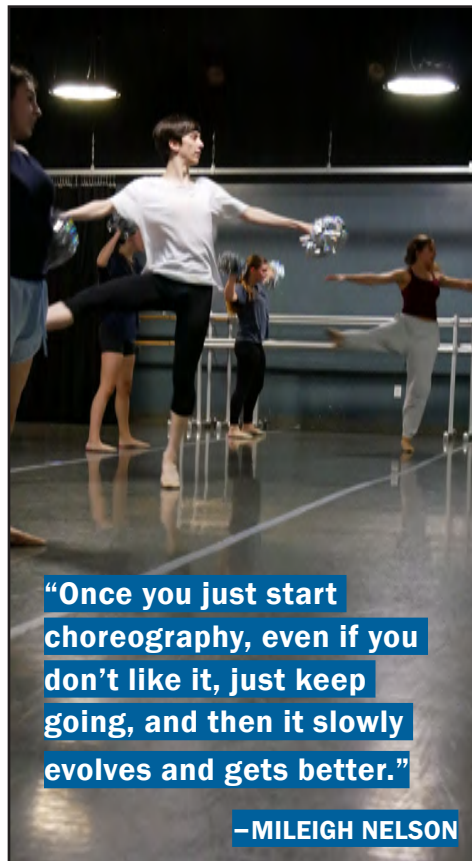
Nelson said her experience with choreographing a dance at Grossmont has prepared her for a future in choreography. “Now I have more confidence in myself that I’m not gonna create something that I hate,” she said.

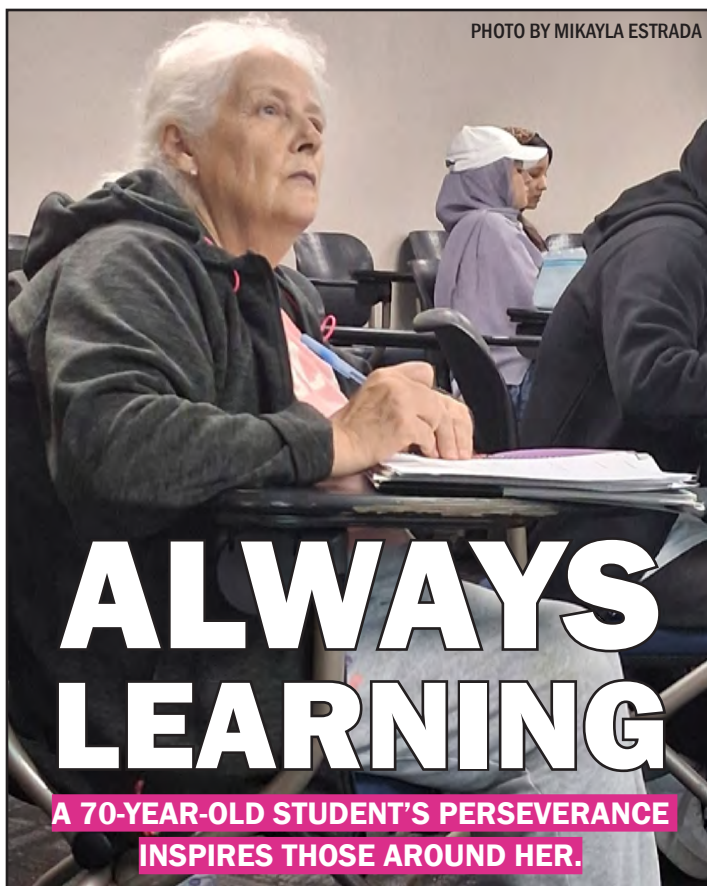
Castellanos, who is currently pursuing a master’s degree in dance and choreography, said she would like to teach in any collegiate setting. She said this experience has prepared her for her future in dance by helping her come out of her shell and interact with a large group of dancers. She said this confidence grew from experience problem-solving in front of her dancers and taking charge without nerves overwhelming her.

“The whole process of it and the people that are involved have made it so that I can feel dedicated, can feel like I want to show up,” Castellanos said.

The annual *Breaking Boundaries* concert has provided students like Nelson and Castellanos an opportunity to showcase their dedication to learning and growing—as dancers, choreographers and individuals—while also offering a space to creatively express themselves.

See *Breaking Boundaries*, Nov. 20-22 at 7:30 p.m. in the PVAC. Tickets are available at gcccd.universitytickets.com or at the door the day of the show. 🐦





ALWAYS LEARNING

A 70-YEAR-OLD STUDENT'S PERSEVERANCE
INSPIRES THOSE AROUND HER.

STORY BY MIKAYLA ESTRADA

In her home country, giving up was not an option. Staying resilient through hardship has remained essential for Tetyana Ostroushko to thrive in her life, even now that she lives in San Diego.

Ostroushko was born in Ukraine on Oct. 21, 1955. She worked as a nurse in a medical clinic for 26 years, helping children with mental and physical health needs, and also providing support to families. She and her husband had three daughters, and was surprised with her fourth daughter at the age of 46.

She left her homeland and her two oldest daughters to come to San Diego. In a new country, there was faced with a variety of choices, including schooling.

ADAPTING WITH HEART

Ostroushko enrolled in college in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic struck nationwide. She said that her primary goal was to learn English.

Natalia Aylett, an Grossmont professor who teaches English as a Second Language, first met Ostroushko during Spring 2022. She Ostroushko was a diligent student who was responsible for her assignments, despite the challenges of taking ESL and dealing with new technology like Canvas.

"She would invest time into trying new things. And I remember her when I would give out printouts of the readings... And the next time that we met, I could see she had tons of notes all over the margins of the paper, and she had underlined and highlighted," Aylett said. "I could really tell she was investing her time in the class and that it was important to her."

Ostroushko is still known for her perseverance in her classes. Annette Aagard, who teaches ESL-122, an advanced class Ostroushko is currently enrolled in, said she admires her attitude.

"I appreciate Tetyana," Aagard said. "She's very positive, has a positive attitude, and doesn't give up."

Aagard said the ESL class uses Canvas and other technologies in person; however, Ostroushko has improved with the help of tutors and her daughter, "The first project was making a blog post on Blogger," she said.

Ostroushko's blog post was about her cooking experience in her culinary class and how cooking plays a massive role in her life. "I'm proud of her accomplishing that project," Aagard said, "because a lot of people have never made a blog post before."

LEADING WITH GRIT

Ostroushko has gained a reputation for her perseverance among her classmates as well.

"In the beginning, she struggled," recalled Rafoat Kamalova, an ESL-122 classmate who helped with translation. "And I told her, maybe you will quit, because it's hard on you." She said, "No, I'm not used to quit."

Kamalova highlighted Ostroushko's uniqueness and shared her life and family experiences with her classmates and professors.

"She's interested in to learn what is curious," Kamalova said. "She had a sharing post. It was good. She talked about traveling with her family, about her daughters, and that was interesting."

Kamalova said Ostroushko motivates many of her peers to persevere in their studies. "She's such a good example for everyone in our class," Kamalova said. "She's like a role model for us."

According to Aylett, Ostroushko would share wisdom with other students who also previously lived in Ukraine.

"These three students are from the same country," Aylett said. "You might have an idea what their life experience is like, but really, you need to get to know the person you know, because they have different stories. Ostroushko had much wisdom to impart to two students who came to America from Ukraine. She would share her experience with the new arrivals."

Both Aagard and Aylett agreed that Ostroushko is an outstanding student.

"She's really trying to stand on her own two feet and just keep going, you know, and get better at the language," Aylett said.

"I love her because she loves studying and learning, because sometimes some of her classmates are 50 years younger than her," she said.

Aagard agreed: "She doesn't feel bad. She doesn't mind the age difference or skill difference."

LEARNING FOR LIFE

Although she doesn't currently plan to transfer or graduate, Ostroushko said she intends to continue learning on campus, focusing on English and various other subjects, including cooking and yoga.

She said her classmates around her are smart and friendly, adding that she loves college and the support of the school, including EOPS,



L TO R: RAFOAT KAMALOVA, TETYANA OSTROUSHKO AND ANNETTE AAGARD. | PHOTO BY MIKAYLA ESTRADA



PHOTO COURTESY OF TETYANA OSTROUSHKO

which has helped her with her own schooling.

Ostroushko is a grandmother of four grandchildren, with two cats. She said she plans to use her culinary skills to cook for her daughters, and to utilize many of the skills she learned in other classes, such as doing yoga to stay healthier and making jewelry because she enjoys working with metal.

“Every class is very interesting,”

Ostroushko said. “Mistakes are normal. Yes, it motivates me to grow and (gain) knowledge.”

She offered this advice to her younger peers: “Don’t be afraid to go to college, homework, another language, mistakes, have a positive attitude.” 🐦



MAKING WAVES

Japanese instructor dives from the classroom to the world stage.

BY MIKAYLA ESTRADA

Makiko Maemoto is known at Grossmont as a dedicated Japanese instructor. However, outside her role as a professor, Maemoto is also a competitive swimmer in the World Aquatics Master Championships.

Raised in Japan, Maemoto said she developed a passion for swimming as a form of exercise. She continued it later in life casually, but as she pursued success, she became more competitive.

In 2018, Maemoto moved to San Diego to train for swimming and compete in local competitions. Along the way, one of her acquaintances introduced her to the World Aquatics Master Championships, an event that includes swimmers 25 or older competing with others across various countries. Maemoto’s first-ever advanced competition was in 2023 in Fukuoka, Japan.

She said her most significant achievement was placing in the 2025 Singapore event. Although she said she was excited for the races, she admitted to being nervous; however, everyone was supportive of one another. The races she did were tiring, and her lower body was sore, which led to some doubt, according to Maemoto. However, she told herself to focus on her race and not on other swimmers.

Maemoto finished 14th in the 400-meter individual medley (IM) race, in which the swimmer uses all four competitive strokes for 100 meters, for her age group. She also placed 22nd in the 100-meter butterfly and 27th in the 200-meter IM for the age group 45-49. Maemoto said placing 14th made her proud to participate.

For her regular training, Maemoto practices early in the morning, typically from 6 to 7 a.m., before teaching Japanese classes. Although she said she feels nervous during her training sessions, she always has fun and, by the end, feels good. Her motivation is to practice while enjoying the process.

Maemoto’s goal is to compete in Budapest, Hungary, in 2027. 🐦



BUS UPDATE

BY MIKAYLA ESTRADA

Bus passes are now available at the Cashier’s Office.

Students who don’t have access to a motor vehicle can now drop by Building 10, where the Cashier’s Office is located, to get bus passes, according to Melissa Murphey, assistant college cashier for Grossmont.

Students can apply for a bus pass for a monthly fee of \$72; however, students with seven or more units are eligible to pay \$57.60 per month. The price for a whole semester was originally \$360, but the district has lowered it to \$172 this semester.

If you can’t afford the price, don’t worry— certain Grossmont programs can help students enrolled in them get funds for a semester bus pass, according to Murphey. These programs include Basic Needs, CalWORKs, Veterans Care, EOPS, Transition to Success, FYE, Puente, Umoja, Mesa and Nextup.

Additionally, students under 19 can use any MTS bus or trolley for free. While students can use the MTS buses and trolleys outside of school hours, it is prohibited to use rural area routes such as 888, 891, 892 and 894. Students can access their card by using the mobile app PRONTO, along with a physical card, if needed, which is available for \$2 at the cashier’s office. 🐦



COLD WEATHER, HOT WAVES

Winter weather means surfs up for San Diego.

STORY & PHOTOS BY SAM POLLMANN

With coastal water temperatures dropping as we head into the winter season, you may think it's time for all those surfers to find a new hobby, but peak surf season is just getting started. Some of you may know that winter has the potential to bring good surf to San Diego, but what's the science behind it?

Ultimately, it's the strong winds from winter storms that fuel the season's best surf. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the powerhouse generating many of these storms is the polar front, a boundary where cold, dry air from the Arctic meets the warm, wet air from the mid-latitudes. The resulting winds, in addition to the force from Earth's rotation, create a whipping belt of winds known as the polar jet stream. As temperatures drop across the United States during the winter months, the polar jet extends down from the Arctic and into the North Pacific, driving many of the North Pacific's winter storms.

These storms create what is known as a "swell" or waves that travel outward from the storms until they reach coastlines in the form of organized, consistently breaking waves. According to the administration, the continental United States is expected to see La Niña-type conditions, leaving warmer and drier conditions due to the polar jet lingering north. By contrast, El Niño conditions mean an amplified Pacific Jet, which brings lots of precipitation-producing storms to the Southern United States. *The Inertia*, a surfing magazine, said when these storms bend south, California receives "much-needed" precipitation, but when they stay north, the weather stays clear while still delivering swells to the California coast.

The administration said La Niña does not mean there won't be any storm activity this winter. During last year's La Niña event in December, the resulting swell brought long-period waves in excess of 15 feet at Black's Beach.

According to San Diego Surf School, Black's is one of the spots that flourish when swells from the North Pacific hit California. Due to their geography and the facing direction of the beaches, the surf school says La Jolla Shores and Sunset Cliffs are also prime spots during northern swells in the winter. ♪

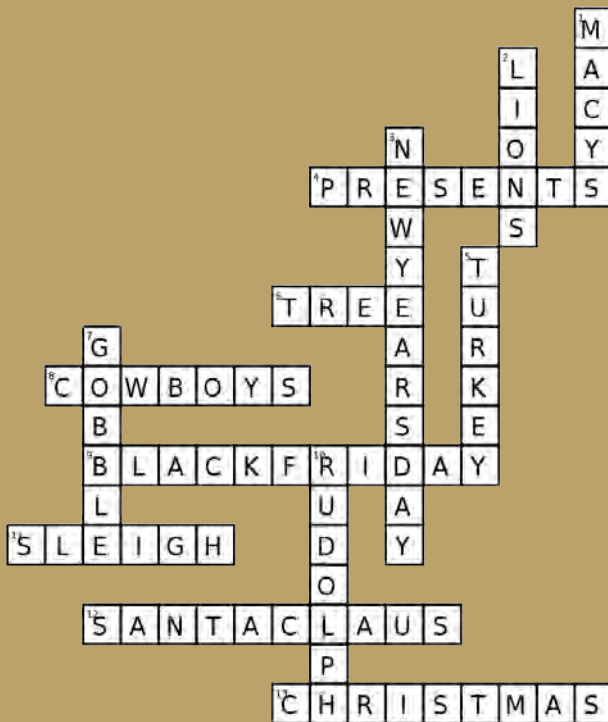




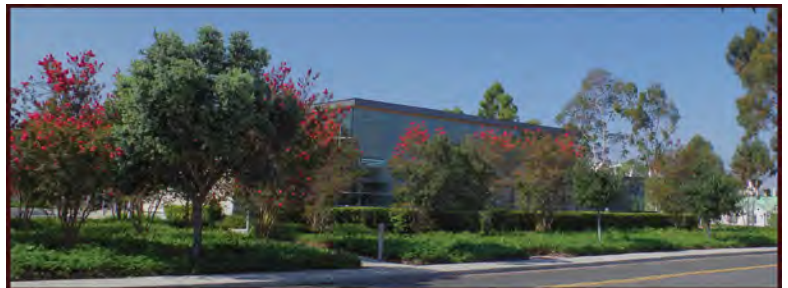
BRAIN BOOST SOLUTIONS

[PUZZLES FROM PAGE 5]

CROSSWORD: HOLIDAY MIX



WORD SEARCH: I BEG YOUR PARDON?



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REEL TALK | HOLIDAY LINEUP

Press play: There's a whole season to get through.



THANKSGIVING

| Review by Sam Pollmann

Directed by Eli Roth, *Thanksgiving* begins in Plymouth, Massachusetts, with Jessica (Nell Verlaque) and her group of friends sneaking into a supermarket to score some Black Friday deals before the crowd. Unfortunately, they are met with an angry mob of customers who burst into the store, leaving a few dead in the frenzy. A year later, paranoia lingers from the tragedy, while a man dressed as a pilgrim and a John Carver mask begins a gruesome killing spree. This 2023 film follows a trend of holiday horror movies in recent years, trying to keep the gravy train running from the Halloween season. Aside from some occasionally humorous gore and the murder mystery plot twist at the end, this film ultimately lacks a captivating story and fails to deliver a true scare.



EIGHT CRAZY NIGHTS

| Review by Mikayla Estrada

Why must a beautiful animation go to a terrible story? *Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights* is a 2002 animated musical that follows Davey Stone (Sandler), a troubled middle-aged man known for troublemaking in his town. Davey is faced with a 10-year prison sentence, until his former basketball referee Whitey Duvall (also voiced by Sandler), convinces the judge to let him participate in community service instead, with the caveat that if Davey commits a crime, he will go to jail. The movie had a story, but focused way more on disgusting jokes rather than on Davey's trauma and a better connection with other characters. Only two of the songs on the soundtrack were likable. Overall, it was a waste of time; I tried not to gag throughout the movie.



THE HOLDOVERS

| Review by Oscar Alcon

Every year at Barton Academy, everyone leaves for a two-week winter break, but a few students have no place to go for the holidays. These students are known as "the holdovers." *The Holdovers* follows a student named Angus Tully (Dominic Sessa), a teacher named Mr. Hunham (Paul Giamatti), and the school chef Mary Lamb (Da'Vine Joy Rudolph) who spend the holidays together. Directed by Alexander Payne, this 2023 movie feels like *The Breakfast Club* met *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*. It also teaches people that while some professors can look very strict at first, once you get to know them, they can be surprisingly kind and warm-hearted.



Y2K

| Review by Lillian Day

Y2K is A24's 2024 disaster-comedy that takes place on the final night of 1999. The movie follows two loner best friends, Eli (Jaeden Martell) and Danny (Julian Dennison), as they crash a New Year's Eve party that turns into the Y2K nightmare everyone predicted but no one prepared for. Eli battles the slicing and dicing of the evil tech while attempting to win over the girl of his dreams, Laura (Rachel Zegler). The entire movie is so ridiculous in the best way; it doesn't take itself seriously. It's hilarious and a thrill because it's so dumb. Plus, this movie does not take Limp Bizkit lightly. If you're hard to please, you may not want to waste your time—but if you're the opposite, you might get a kick out of watching this on New Year's Eve for a chuckle and a bit of nostalgia.

