

The

SUMMIT



GROSSMONT COLLEGE'S STUDENT NEWS MEDIA | APRIL 2026

Spring FOCUS



PHOTO BY LOGAN MURPHY

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The SUMMIT

A publication of Grossmont College's Media Communications Department.

Vol. 51 | Issue 5 | April 2026

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Happy Spring

FROM THE SUMMIT STAFF

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 print outlet. 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 news management for the students. **Please direct all inquiries, comments and letters to the editor to summit@gccd.edu.**

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Summit Staff

Which animal would you want for a pet?



OSCAR ALCON

I would like to have a liger as a pet. It's pretty cool that it's part lion and part tiger. It sounds very mythical, but imagine telling people that you have a pet liger. I would name it "Snorlax" since both of them weigh about the same.



TEAGAN SAUNDERS

Hands down, I would have a pet raccoon named Perihelion, because its wrath would be akin to the rays from the sun, formidable. Raccoons are pure evil. They're supposedly on track to be domesticated soon, because of their morphed cuteness and tendency to stick around populated areas, but they're still feral creatures. I love the energy of these creatures and how they take matters into their own hands. We should all be more like raccoons.



JAZMINE JONES

I am deeply fascinated by cats. It's hard to fathom how they can be cute, smart and stupid all at once. I would love to adopt two cats and snap amusing wide-angle photos of them on my phone, which I could look at whenever I feel down. I'd choose a Siamese and an orange tabby; I'd name the Siamese "Alum" (short for aluminum) and the orange one "Sherbet."



ALINA SIMONS

If I could have any animal as my pet, I would pick a dragon! I grew up with fantasy books, games and movies that have shaped my enjoyment of dragons. I think these mystical beasts are so cool, but also cute. They're essentially just big lizards with wings who can breathe fire. How amazing is that? I bet they'd be just like oversized puppies. And they'd guard my house pretty well, too; nobody would ever trespass or break into a house that is the territory of a fire-breathing beast. I suppose the greatest obstacle would be the size; I'd need to find room for such a pet!



ELIJAH WEAVER

If I could have any pet it would be a zebra, I would name him Lenny. A horse or donkey might be more practical but neither can hold a flame to the swag a zebra holds. It's also the ultimate conversation starter— are zebras white with black stripes or black with white stripes? Shoutout, Lenny.



ELYSE WAINSCOTT

I would want a capybara as a pet because they are funny-looking, and since they are super popular right now, I would have an Instagram and TikTok account for it. I would eventually want a few capybaras to open a Capybara cafe where people can pet the animals and get a coffee or sweet treat.



LOGAN MURPHY

I want a pet cheetah. If raised with enough space and alongside a golden retriever puppy they can become like a giant house cat without the urge to kill me like a tiger or panther would. I'd probably name it something dumb like "Shabingus" because if I got pet cheetah money, I can afford to do stuff like that.



ELIANN GRIFFIN

I have always wanted a bird as a pet. Specifically, I want an orange and green lovebird named Mango. I love birds, and I would get one right now if I could. The only problem is I have cats, and I have a feeling they would try to attack Mango... so I will have to hold off for now.



RIANNA ROMASOC

Penguin. They're always well-dressed and ready for any fancy event, because of their tuxedo coloration. They're friendly, loyal and playful. I would name my penguin "Doug" because they seem like fancy dogs to me.



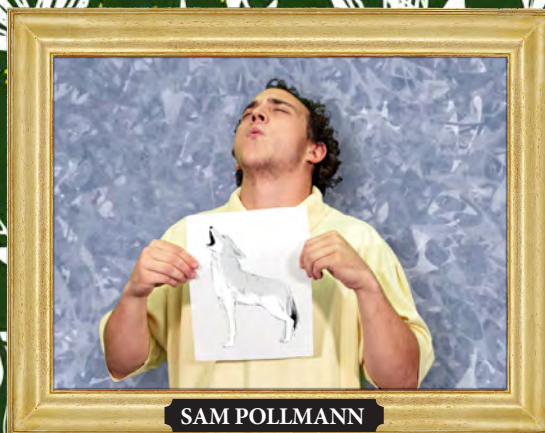
ASHLEY HARGROVE

A koala. They are cute, sleepy, and eat snacks all day. That's basically my dream life.



CALEB STOREY

I would love to be a sea otter. I think they are so cute and it would be awesome to be one, specifically the ones who know how to play basketball!



SAM POLLMANN

No offense to the Griffins, but I have always thought having a pet coyote would be pretty rad. They're not as big as wolves, so I don't have to worry about one eating my face in the middle of the night, but they're wild enough to have some personality. My huskies are just lazy and boring. They don't even talk to me.

PHOTOS BY SAM POLLMANN
ANIMAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY
JAZMINE JONES
AND ALINA SIMONS



RECHARGE & PROTECT

POLLMANN AT AGE 13 IN THE SALT FLATS IN DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK.

Hey Griffins! I hope all of you spent your Spring Break recharging and getting back to what matters in life. Something that I share with the spring flowers is that I need a little extra sun at the beginning of the year before I find my groove. Maybe it's the beautiful weather, or seeing influencers picking up their annual piece of trash, but when Earth Day rolls around, I make an effort to put aside the writing and get outside.

I have always loved being in nature, but when my dad showed me Yosemite through the photographs of Ansel Adams, I was driven to inspire a similar sense of wonder

through photography. I encourage you to spend some time in a park or a special place in nature this month.

It is my firm belief that once you fall in love with nature, you will want to protect it. People who contribute to protecting and preserving the natural world are the only hope to prevent greed from destroying it. As Ansel Adams said: "Once destroyed, nature's beauty cannot be repurchased at any price."

Samuel Pollmann

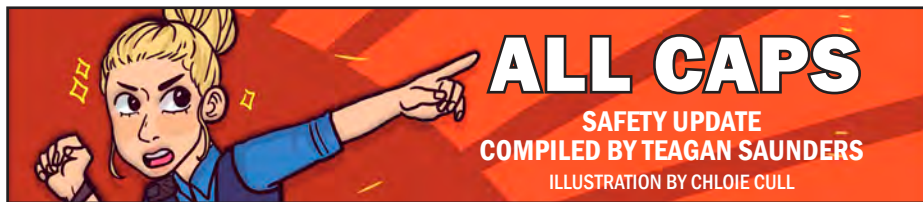
Sam Pollmann, Editor-in-Chief

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@gccd.edu.

MARCH C&C

Page 14 Clarification: In a story about the Stagehouse Theatre's production of *Urinetown*, we named Melissa Glasglow as sole choreographer. Glasglow actually co-directed and co-choreographed the play with Katie Banville.



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:

- **March 12:** A man entered Gizmo's Kitchen without checking in and caused a disturbance with campus staff. He left the area but was later contacted near a bus stop. He agreed to leave campus and was transported to the El Cajon Trolley Station.
- **March 18:** A man gathering signatures near the Student Center refused to leave when asked. Administrators responded and handled the situation.
- **March 24:** A student reported difficulty breathing and was transported to Grossmont Hospital with assistance from the fire department.
- **April 1:** Staff reported a monitor stolen, but no suspect information or surveillance footage was available.

*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 TEAGAN SAUNDERS

APRIL

- 20:** Stress Management, 2 to 3 p.m. (36-225)
- 20-23, 27-30:** enROLL into Fall, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. (FYE Office, 10-171)
- 22:** Earth Day: Sustainability Fair, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Main Quad)

MAY

- 2:** Last Day to Drop Full-Term Classes with a W
- 5:** Cinco De Mayo
- 10:** Mother's Day

ARAB-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

- APRIL 18-30:** Arab American Artwork and Photography, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Gallery)
- 18:** Arab American Artist Panel, 1:30 to 3 p.m. (Griffin Gate)
- 20:** Famous Arab American Women, 2:30 to 4 p.m. (PVAC)
- 21:** Screening of *Amreeka*, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (PVAC) | Tea Gathering, 1 to 2 p.m. (Career Center)
- 25:** *Sham el Nessim* Celebration, 11 to Noon (55-523)
- 27:** Arabic Music Concert, 3 to 5 p.m. (PVAC)

DANCE

Entrances and Exits

MAY 7-9, 26-28, 7:30 p.m. (PVAC) \$

HYDE ART GALLERY

MARCH 23 – APRIL 23, Second Nature, photographs by Alfred Pagano, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

APRIL 22, Artist Talk with Pagano, 1 p.m.

CULINARY ARTS (60-173)

Fine Dining Series, \$

April 23 and 30, 5:15 to 7 p.m.

May 7 and 14, 5:15 to 7 p.m.

AMERICANS AND THE HOLOCAUST

Events in Griffin Gate unless otherwise noted.

- APRIL 22:** What Did We Know? Exploring Propaganda and Moral Choice, Noon | Austrian Victim Myth, 6:30 p.m.
- 23:** Surviving the Holocaust and Coming to America, 10 a.m. | Amit Peled's Musical Reflections on Americans and the Holocaust, 7:30 p.m. (PVAC)
- 27:** Poetry Reading with Jason Schneiderman, 11 a.m.
- 28:** Holocaust Survivor Lou Pechi, 11 to 12:30 p.m. | Film Screening: *The U.S. and the Holocaust*, 6 p.m. (PVAC)
- 29:** What Did Americans Know?, 6:30 p.m.
- 30:** Resistance and Survival in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 1 p.m.
- MAY 5:** The Intersection of Jim Crow and Nazi Germany, 9:30 a.m.
- 14:** The Church Struggle and American Response to Nazism, 10 a.m.

*Events subject to change; visit grossmont.edu for latest info.
\$ Indicates admission cost

SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 23

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WORD SEARCH: LET'S PLAY

Spring brings a full sports lineup. Can you find these in the grid?

BASEBALL
BASKETBALL
DODGERS
DRAFT
HOCKEY
LEBRON
MENDOZA
MVP
NBA FINALS
PADRES
ROLAND GARROS
STANLEY CUP

CROSSWORD: SPRING HAS SPRUNG

From longer days to blooms in full swing, this month brings clues with a springtime zing.

DOWN

1. Home of Chile's iconic stone head statues
2. Film about a drummer-dreaming rabbit
4. Day of the week Easter is celebrated
5. A bird lays this
10. Relaxing trip away from home
12. Exam held halfway through semester

ACROSS

2. Yellow spring flower
6. Seasonal hunt for hidden treats
7. Global holiday on April 22
8. Prank day
9. Easter's mascot
11. Annual springtime school break

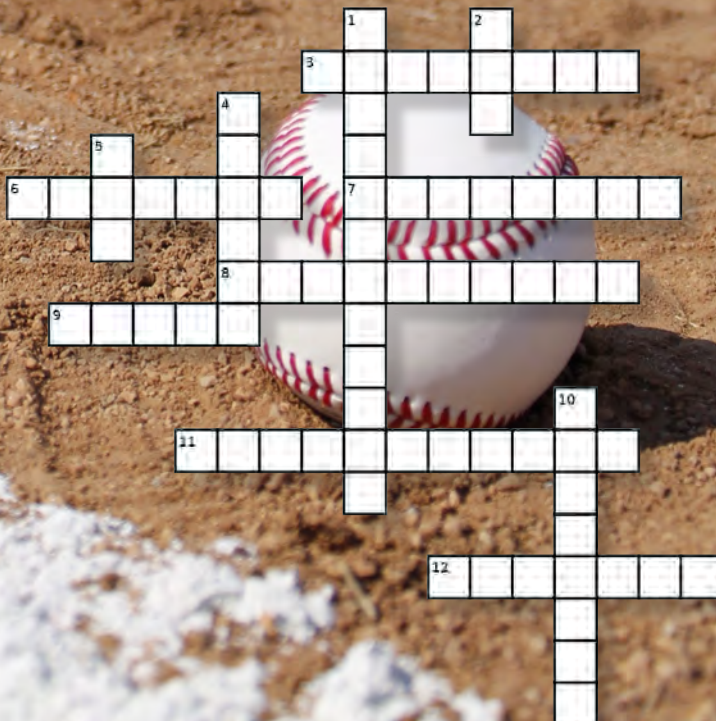


IMAGE BY ALICE ENGELBRINK

EARTHBOUND



Celebrate the planet by hiking some local trails.

STORY & PHOTOS BY LOGAN MURPHY

AERIAL VIEW OF LAWSON PEAK

Earth Day is an annual global event, celebrated on April 22, that encourages everyone to get outside to appreciate, protect and maintain their natural environment.

The event was first proposed after the “1969 Santa Barbara oil spill”, where an oil drilling operation off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, ruptured and spilled around four million gallons of crude oil over a period of 10 days. The black oil flooded the water around the drill and made its way to the Santa Barbara beaches, killing thousands of birds, as well as dolphins, seals and sea lions in its path.

The spill received national media attention and quickly drew massive teams of volunteers who worked in various ways to remove the oil from the beach and ocean, while also trying to save any animals still found alive.

On April 22, 1970, the first Earth Day was held as an international day of appreciation of our natural environment and understanding the importance of preserving it. To this day, many take this day to volunteer, pick up trash or to plant trees, but those are just some of the ways to take part in this annual event. I like taking this day to go on a hike along trails with exceptional sights and features, to remind myself of the value of what nature has to offer and the importance of keeping it all alive and well-maintained.

San Diego and its many mountains provide us with a great deal of hiking opportunities, so I will share four of my favorite spots. These trails are listed in order of increasing distance from Grossmont College.

TORREY PINES BEACH TRAILS: FLAT ROCK (EASY)

Torrey Pines Beach is a nice destination on its own, but for those looking for an adventure before reaching the shore, the Torrey Pines Beach Trails are an amazing place to look. The trails feature multiple paths taking you to various viewpoints along the peaks of these mountain cliffs, and eventually down to a section of the beach that is usually only occupied by others who hiked there.

The path down to this section of the beach can be reached in multiple ways, such as following the path conveniently labeled “Beach Trail” and following the markers to “Flat Rock”—or if you are coming from the trail’s south end, by

Earth Day can be celebrated in many different ways, but nature preservation is not limited to this one day a year. Getting sun on the skin and fresh air in the lungs has many benefits for both mental and physical health. Come April 22, we should all try to get outside and experience what the planet has to offer.



TORREY PINES BEACH TRAIL



CEDAR CREEK FALLS GIVEN LITTLE HELP ON A LOW-FLOW DAY.

following either Fork or Broken Hill trails.

The walk there will let you see large sections of preserved trees and bushes, some brave-but-curious wildlife, and smooth, layered sandstone mountains.

The trail is around three to four miles round trip, depending on where you start, and with some moderate sections of incline, it's definitely very welcoming and beginner-friendly. Free parking options exist near the trail, but designated trail parking costs between \$10 to \$25 depending on the day and their "demand-based pricing" system.

LAWSON PEAK (HARD)

Lawson Peak is a destination that, while physically gorgeous, carries an additional layer to its appeal in its frequent solitude. The trailhead is in Jamul, far enough from the main roads to leave them quiet, with the trail pretty calm and empty. As you reach the peak, you will enjoy an increasingly panoramic view of Jamul's other mountain ranges, as well as lots of greenery surrounding you as you weave up the mountain's side.

The hike begins with a nearly two-mile steep walk up the side of a mountain. Once that is completed, there is a large flat section of rock to rest on and enjoy the scenery before you continue to the true top.

The final push to the peak will have you scramble over some boulders and go through some thick sections of bushes for around a quarter mile. Finally, all that's left is a nearly 20-foot climb up the side of a mountain — which is doable, but definitely nerve-racking — that sometimes has a rope to help you pull yourself up.

When you reach the peak, you will be rewarded with a

360-degree mountain top view that lets you see green mountains for miles off into the distance, and immerse yourself in the environment around you as you take in the noises of the wind blowing and the bushes rustling.

At around five miles round trip, this hike is very rewarding, but also physically demanding. I recommend going with someone, as even just a second set of hands will help you get over the bouldering segment far more than what's possible alone.

Parking is not marked very well, but it is available along the side of the road next to the trail start. For those looking for a decent challenge, Lawson Peak awaits.

CEDAR CREEK FALLS (MEDIUM)

A scenic 13-mile drive past Barona Casino will bring you to a trail starting at the top of a mountain and going three miles downhill to a waterfall you can swim in.

On the descent, you will be able to see far down valleys between mountain ranges full of luscious trees holding a vivid green color. As you reach the end of the trail, you'll walk through sections of the forest, giving you a chance to cool down before you reach the main attraction: the waterfall.

The waterfall flows most after it rains and fills a natural pool for you to swim in, but jumping into the water is not allowed at any time.

Planning your hike following days of rain will give you the best experience. However, it should be noted that day passes for groups of up to five people must be purchased for \$6 before starting the hike, helping prevent the trail from becoming overcrowded while also funding its conservation. Tickets can be purchased from [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) by searching for Cedar Creek Falls.

The hike starts with three miles downhill, which is very easy, but remember that a three-mile uphill hike still lies ahead. Making sure you don't burn all your energy or drink most of your water on the way down is crucial, especially on hot days when the beating sun will leave you thirstier than you would initially expect.

THREE SISTERS FALLS (MEDIUM-HARD)

The trail starting near Julian, on the opposite side of the mountain from Cedar Creek Falls, features a series of waterfalls that flow into and collect with one another, with multiple spots available to swim and cool off in.

Your journey begins with a downhill hike of around two miles on a steep-but-straightforward path to the waterfalls everyone wants to see. Once you get to the first waterfall, you'll find it's not too deep, but some slight scrambling up the side of the waterfall will take you to the next one up, where you're able to swim and cliff jump, provided the water level is high enough.

The hike is beautiful and offers many great mountain views off into the distance, as well as shaded paths through thick sections of trees as you make your way down. Similar to Cedar Creek, though, the hike up will be harder than the hike down. Bring plenty of water and be careful of the temperature. Going after a period of rain will offer the best experience at the waterfalls, as well as provide better weather conditions than a dry, hot summer day.

Parking for the trail is free, but reaching the trailhead does require some off-roading, so make sure your car is able to handle that before going, as having your car break down on that road is not ideal (speaking from experience).

Additionally, using Google Maps to reach the trail is ideal over Apple Maps, as Apple does not have the trailhead in its system, while Google does. 📍



GRIFFIN GROOVE



Engage with the music on campus during Jazz Appreciation Month.

STORY BY ASHLEY HARGROVE AND SAM POLLMANN | PHOTOS BY SAM POLLMANN

CADENCE VOCAL JAZZ ENSEMBLE: MICHAELA DOLANSKY, BASS; SILAS SICK, DRUMS; NICK CALDWELL, TENOR SAX.

Even if you are a musician or jazz lover, you may not know that April is Jazz Appreciation Month, a global event created by the Smithsonian National Museum of American History to celebrate the “extraordinary heritage and history of jazz.” From jazz club jams to an array of performances hosted by the music department, there are so many ways Grossmont students can engage with the art of jazz this month.

JOIN A JAM

Austin Galbreath, a jazz pianist and president of the jazz club at Grossmont, said his club has grown into a large community of students from Grossmont and beyond who come to appreciate jazz.

Club meetings are held every Thursday at 3:30 p.m. in building 26-220, offering musicians the chance to improve their skills and listeners a live jazz experience.

On some weeks, the club hosts dedicated jam sessions at 7:30 p.m. Jams typically feature a set from a house band, followed by open sessions where club members come and play rehearsed material with a full band.

Galbreath said he wants first-timers to know, whether they are listeners or musicians themselves, that there aren't any expectations.

“If you're coming as a musician and you

want to get into it, no one's going to force you to do anything,” he said. “If you're



AUSTIN GALBREATH PLAYS WITH THE LOWER EAST SIDE.

coming to listen, we're having fun, like, with you in the moment.”

Info for upcoming jams can be found on the club's Instagram account @jazzatgrossmont.

LISTEN LIVE

Another way for students to appreciate jazz this month is through the events hosted by the Grossmont Music Department.

Galbreath said the best way to experience jazz is through live performances.

“Listen to the music live because jazz music is a living, breathing music,” Galbreath said.

Cadence Vocal Jazz hosted its first concert at the end of March, featuring performances from Upper West Side/Lower East Side Jazz Combo Ensembles.

One of the highlights came during “Love Me or Leave Me,” when Charlie Velis stepped forward for a vocal solo. The performance also featured improvised solos from Ella Cooper, Bronson Serrato and Miska Dolansky, each bringing their own style and creativity to the stage.

Another standout moment was “Doralice,” led by vocalist Kenna Gilbert. The song featured strong support from the band, including a piano solo by Galbreath and an instrumental solo by Brendan Hilgeman. Together, the group showed impeccable timing and communication.

Special guest tenor saxophonist Nick Caldwell added even more excitement to the show. His confident playing and smooth

tone earned loud applause from the audience.

Caldwell said his love for jazz started early. “Jazz was always on the radio when my parents put me to sleep,” he said.

He first learned classical piano because his mom wanted him to play an instrument, but he eventually switched to saxophone after his teacher’s husband introduced him to it.

During performances, Caldwell said his focus is listening to the musicians around him.

“It’s a conversation,” he said. “What did they just say, and how do I respond to it or add to it?”

Caldwell described the night’s concert as “music that gets you thinking without having to be complex,” saying jazz is “music for everybody.”

Director Justin Grinnell, a San Diego-based jazz bassist and longtime music educator, said the concert is designed to help students grow both individually and as a group. He said much of what the audience heard was improvised but built on a foundation that the students practice together.

“Most of it’s all improvised,” Grinnell said. “There’s a certain format that we practice. It’s not totally open-ended. There’s a foundation they all get used to, and then they improvise over that foundation.”

Grinnell said part of the fun is watching students figure things out in real time.

“I’ve been directing them a little bit but also leaving them on their own to figure out what they’re doing,” he said. “They’re getting a chance to be creative and come up with their own ideas.”

For those who missed the March and April shows, the next Jazz Combos performance will be Thursday, May 14, at 7:30 p.m. at Performing & Visual Arts Center stage in Building 22. Tickets are \$15 for general admission, \$10 for seniors and military, and \$5 for students.



TAKE A CLASS

A great way for students to learn about the start of jazz in America and its evolution is through the History of Jazz course here on campus. The course is three units and is a hybrid class, allowing students to choose between in-person participation and joining virtually via Zoom.

The class is taught by Derek Canon, who has been with Grossmont’s Music Department since 1993. A seasoned trumpet player, Canon has been featured on several jazz records and has performed at prominent jazz festivals, including the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland and the Montreal Jazz Festival in Canada.

While Fall 2026 sections have not been posted, but previous classes have been held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30 to 1:50 p.m. Registration can be done through Self-Service when sections become available. 🐦



TOP CENTER (L TO R): PAUL ROHEN, DALE RANDALL, ZANDER GOLD & RALPH MINASHIRO. | TOP RIGHT: SOLEIL RUIS ON PIANO. | BOTTOM RIGHT: NICK CALDWELL ON TENOR SAX. | BOTTOM CENTER (L TO R): ELLA COOPER, CADEN GILBERT, BRONSON SERRATO & BRENDAN HILGEMAN.



WHAT’S BEHIND THE EGG? BY RIANNA ROMASOC

Some Easter origins are surprisingly un-Christian.

Easter is recognized globally as a Christian holiday. Many Christians cite the Bible’s account of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a cause for celebration.

Given its religious importance to Christians, it may seem strange that on this day, the widespread custom of using eggs and bunnies as decoration evolved. Yet, there does not seem to be Biblical origins for this supposed “Easter” phenomenon.

The rabbits and eggs came from European spring customs, originating in the 1500s to 1700s. A few centuries ago, people combined European spring rites with Christian resurrection themes. *Encyclopedia Britannica* says the word *Easter* parallels the German word *Ostern*, which is of uncertain origin, with one interpretation that “it derived from *Eostre*, or *Eostrae*, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring and fertility.”

This goddess is represented similarly in different regions, but goes by different names: Isis in Egypt, Astarte in Phoenicia, Aphrodite in Greece, and Venus in Rome. In Hebrew, her Biblical name is “Ashtoreth.”

“Easter isn’t a Christian or directly biblical term, but comes from a form of the name Astarte, a Chaldean (Babylonian) goddess ... by the Hebrew form of her name, Ashtoreth,” according to *Good News Magazine*, a Methodist publication. So ‘Easter’ is found in the Bible — as part of the pagan religion God condemns.” [EASTER, CONT. ON PAGE 23]



The Griffins close out their campaign and look to the next chapter.

Grossmont College wrapped up its men's volleyball season Friday night with a packed gym, a loud student section, and a well-earned celebration of the team's sophomores.

It was also the first season under new head coach Andrew Shiheiber, a Grossmont alum who played for the Griffins before returning as an assistant coach in 2022.

"A year ago, I interviewed for this job, and now I'm here," Shiheiber said.

Last season, the Griffins finished 3–22. This year, they ended at 7–15, a jump Shiheiber said reflects what the team has been building.

"Our goal coming in was to make a difference and get more wins," he said. "We ended 7–15, and that's something to be proud of. It's a winning record in the sense that we picked up some big wins when we needed them."

Shiheiber inherited one of the largest freshman classes the program has had in years, while also coaching sophomores he previously worked with as an assistant.

"But the biggest thing for us is confidence," he said. "If we have guys who show up, are coachable, and want to grow, we're going to thrive."

For the sophomores honored Friday night, it was an emotional setting— a mix of pride, nostalgia and the realization their time in green and gold is coming to an end.



Noah Kircher, who has been a steady presence on the court, said the season was full of moments with his teammates he won't forget. He described the year as "interesting," shaped by both challenges and growth.

"There were a lot of hardships, but we still had a lot of fun," Kircher said. "As a player, just playing with better people makes you

improve. And the coaching this year really helped us get better."

Kircher said he appreciated Shiheiber's balance of intensity and joy.

"Coach still wants to make it a fun environment, but he can be serious when he needs to," he said. "All the friends I made— that's what I'm gonna miss."

Sophomore Joaquin Velasco said he'll miss "the atmosphere" most— the energy of the gym, the bus rides to away games and the feeling of competing with teammates he's grown close to. When asked how he's grown as a player, he said he has "definitely learned to control my emotions better."

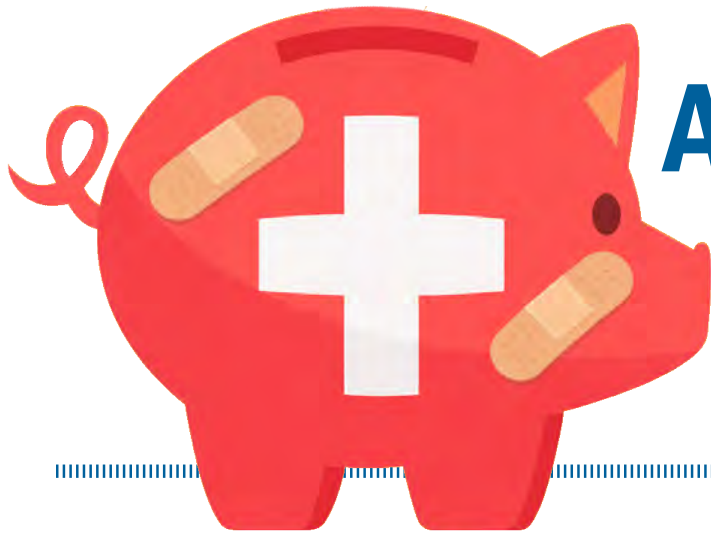
Even with the season ending, Shiheiber says the program is trending upward. "I'm very excited about where we're headed," he said.

He emphasized the foundation built this year with the team's confidence, chemistry and willingness to work is what will carry the program forward.

With a strong freshman core returning and a coach who's deeply invested in the program's future, the Griffins leave this season with something that will only help them continue to thrive: momentum.

And if sophomore night made anything clear, it's that the players who helped spark that momentum are leaving the program better than they found it. 🐾

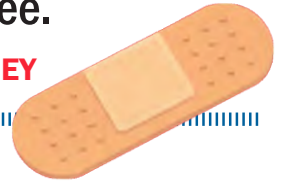
Oscar Alcon contributed to this story.



ALL PATCHED UP

The district gives the Health and Wellness Center a much-needed funding boost by raising the student health fee.

BY SAM POLLMANN & CALEB STOREY



The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District Governing Board approved an increase in the student health fee at a recent meeting to cover deficits at Grossmont's Student Health & Wellness Center. The center, funded solely by student health fees, provides critical health services to promote student wellbeing.

According to Health Services Supervisor Su Pradhananga, the center was around \$200,000 in debt and could no longer offer laboratory bloodwork services to students at the start of this semester. The board approved increasing all health fees by \$6 during its March 24 meeting, bringing fees to \$28 each for Spring and Fall semesters and \$23 during Intersession.

Pradhananga said the increase in the health fee had resulted from months of meetings with various departments. She said the increase could not only secure the current nurses and facilities, but also expand the center's services.

"We are relieved," said Pradhananga. "This has been a project that we've been working on since last year."

Elaine Adlam, registered nurse for Health Services, said the center's services go far beyond Band-Aids and ice packs. "The majority of what we do is getting outreach to help students understand health literacy, which in America is the lowest in the world," Adlam said. "We're spending time with people to also improve self-worth and belonging."

While "wellbeing" is often viewed only as physical health, nurses at the center emphasize that it also includes mental health and other factors impacting students. The influence of nurses and counselors can play a huge role in a student's success. Many health counselors at the wellness center lead workshops on self-worth and belonging. Adlam said, "If you don't have a sense of belonging and community on campus, why would you go here?"

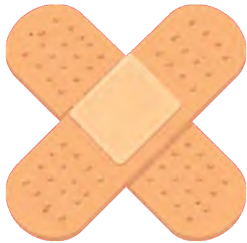
She said much of the center's work focuses on "holistic" care and on connecting students to Basic Needs and other necessary departments.

The health fee also includes accident

injury insurance, which covers all medical expenses for on-campus accidents, according to Pradhananga. Adlam added that a large portion of the revenue gathered from student health fees goes toward providing insurance.

While the nurses at the center are relieved to see more financial support for student care, some student leaders have expressed reservations. Most members of the Governing Board agreed that while increasing fees would mean a heavier financial burden on students, reducing operations at the center would be a far greater loss.

However, ASGC President Lu Tri Vi Huynh was adamantly opposed to the fee increase. A sensitive moment during the meeting was a



"The majority of what we do is getting outreach to help students understand health literacy, which in America is the lowest in the world.

We're spending time with people to also improve self-worth and belonging." —ELAINE ADLAM

discussion of whether the state was responsible for reimbursing the college for health fees that had been waived under the California College Promise Grant. This amount exceeded \$250,000 in lost revenue.

Huynh said it was unfair to shift the financial burden to students if something could be done at the district level to address funding issues. He shared these concerns with his fellow board members during the meeting slated to approve the increase: "I don't feel confident enough to raise the student health fee while knowing that there's \$264,000 somewhere that doesn't flow back to the Health and Wellness Center, and I fully object the fee hike."

Following Huynh's comment, District Chancellor Lynn Neault corrected him, noting that although the Promise Grant can waive the health fee for Grossmont students, the state

does not subsidize fees that are not waived. She said when fees are waived, it is a complete loss for the center that is not compensated for by the state. Ultimately, Huynh's objections did not sway the board's decision to approve the fee increase.

With all the concern about rising student fees, some at the center wonder why more consistent state funding couldn't be secured to eliminate the burden on students.

Adlam said that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the state was more willing to provide one-time funding for mental health services at community colleges to help students readjust to life on campus after quarantine. With one-time funds running low

and changes to the state budget coming, "that funding is in jeopardy," according to Adlam.

"Our funding isn't reliable, and it depends solely on the priorities of the state and federal [governments], because that's impacting us as well," she said.

Long-term issues aside, the fee increase has allowed nurses at the center to focus on what its employees say matters most: student wellness. Pradhananga said the real measure of sustainability will be when the revenue bump from the fee increase starts next semester.

"[We] hope we're not in a deficit and then, if we're not, [we will] continue to have two nurses, continue to have a health services specialist, our mental health counselor, and do more of community outreach, reach out to partners among the college and hopefully be able to increase services," she said. ✎

SHAPING THE DANCE



STORY AND PHOTOS BY ELYSE WAINSCOTT

CHOREOGRAPHERS GINA AND KYLE SORENSEN, SEATED ON LEFT, WATCH AS STUDENTS REHEARSE FOR *ENTRANCES & EXITS*.

The Dance Department's new chair shares her approach to choreography.

Atending the Dance Department's *Entrances & Exits* dance concert is a great way to support local artists.

"I strongly believe that this is a concert that can appeal to everyone," said Gina Sorensen, the new chair of the Dance Department. "That dance can reach every person."

Each faculty member from the department choreographs a piece for the concert. Gina and Kyle Sorensen, adjunct dance faculty, have collaborated on a modern dance for the performance.

Gina Sorensen describes the modern dance "taps into playfulness and lightness."

The *Entrances & Exits* concert will feature a variety of dance styles, such as ballet, hip-hop and modern.

"Between these really inventive pieces of choreography, professional dancers from our community and live music, it is going to be a really exciting show," Sorensen said.

While her title as the department's chair is new, Sorensen is not new to Grossmont College. She has worked for the college's Dance Department for eight years and has taught dance for over 25 years in various schools.

"I like that I get to support them in the physical aspects of dance; that I am a part of training their technique and performance," she said.

As the chair, Sorensen directs the college's touring dance company and the dance concerts, alongside teaching modern dance and choreography classes.

"I feel like I have an opportunity to shape a future



**"I LOVE HELPING
STUDENTS
EXPLORE HOW
MOVEMENT
MIGHT
MANIFEST."**

—GINA SORENSEN

path for the department and the dancers," she said.

Before Sorensen became the chair, the dance department had no full-time faculty for a year. Sorensen is now the only full-time faculty member. "I feel I can really support them [the students] because I am here every day," she said.

The inspiration process for each choreographer is different. The Sorensens began work on the material for *Entrances & Exits* eight months ago, in France, at an artist residency.

"Anything that kind-of catches our interest, that we want to investigate through the medium of dance, we are open and available to having inspiration come at us from different directions," Kyle Sorensen said.

Because of this, their process and the dances they create look different every time. Gina Sorensen explained that last year they created a haunting and sorrowful dance.

Gina Sorensen teaches choreography classes at Grossmont, describing it as "the most satisfying and rewarding classes that I get to teach."

"I love helping students explore how movement might manifest, and how organization of movement can create meaning, how we can work with the materials of dance in space and in time to make a dance happen," she said.

If you're curious to see the choreography of Grossmont faculty members, check out *Entrances & Exits*, which will be held May 7, 8 and 9 in the Performing & Visual Arts Center (PVAC). Tickets are on sale at gcccd.universitytickets.com. 🐦



The Grossmont Honors Program sets students up for success.

The Grossmont Honors Program is growing every term as more students discover free opportunities to boost their chances of admittance to top colleges across the nation.

For those who are unaware, Grossmont College has a partnership with the Honors Transfer Council of California (HTCC). This transfer partnership extends to more than 30 schools, including all of the CSUs, and top universities such as Yale University, Pomona College, Williams College, Amherst College, Carleton College and the University of Michigan College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Grossmont's program offers students the opportunity to add an honors addendum to their syllabus and establish an agreement with the instructor to complete an additional 20% of coursework in at least 18 different units to earn honors credit at the end of the semester.

All instructors are encouraged to make this addendum available to eligible students who hold at least a 3.2 GPA and have taken at least 12 units at Grossmont, or who can show transcript proof of recent high school graduation.

Speaking from her own experiences as a professor and program coordinator, Dr. Natalye Harpin said, "It is something that instructors do because they really want to help their students succeed."

Harpin continued: "It is open to all disciplines. A student can get those 18 units in several different courses as opposed to only being blocked to having a certain number of people who are willing to do it."

To join the program, students can contact Harpin to confirm they meet the requirements.

No priority is given to any students, regardless of when they started, as long as they meet the deadlines to demonstrate their participation in this agreement.

For semester-length classes, this would be at the three-week mark; for eight-week courses, it would be the second Friday of classes. Exceptions can be made

for students, even those with a lower GPA, if they can get a recommendation from their participating instructor.

The honors program is not limited to students who attend Grossmont in person; the honors addendum can be established with any instructor, even those who teach online classes only. But something to keep in mind is not all colleges within the Honors Transfer Council of California partnership will honor an online completion of this program if it is asynchronous. It is important for students to check with the school they want to attend for specific qualifying conditions.

A positive aspect of joining the program is that it comes at little risk to the student. They can start and stop the program without withdrawing from their courses by simply ending their addendum with the professor.

"If the student decides they do not want to take the honors course anymore during the course of their semester, there is no indication on their transcript that they did not finish," Harpin said.

Current Grossmont student Melody Wilson took honors classes in high school and said she never knew Grossmont offered honors courses at the collegiate level.

"This seems a lot less intimidating to get involved with than it was in high school," Wilson said. "Back then, if any of us stopped meeting the requirements, we would have to drop the class and have a W on our transcripts."

Harpin encouraged students to participate even if they aren't planning to transfer, as completing the program will allow students to dive deeper into their chosen subjects, such as presenting or becoming a research assistant. She considered it beneficial for students' personal and professional growth as learners.

"If there's a subject that you know you do relatively well in and that you think would be a great intro for doing more introspective research-based work, ask your instructor if they are willing to do the honors addendum for you." —NATALYE HARPIN

"It's always a good thing to sample it out," Harpin said. "If there's a subject that you know you do relatively well in and that you think would be a great intro for doing more introspective research-based work, ask your instructor if they are willing to do the honors addendum for you."

Harpin took over as the program coordinator for the Grossmont Honors Program during the previous spring semester. "I like being the honors coordinator, it has been fun learning about everything," Harpin said, "and helping to create more pathways for you all to transfer to help make it an easier transition for you."

As a final note of advice for students considering joining the program, Harpin said: "Don't be too shy to ask your instructors. I know sometimes it can feel intimidating when the student is going to office hours or asking the instructor to help them with something, but we're all here because we want to help guide you all on the path that you want to be on." 🐦



LEADING WITH LOVE

The new UMOJA counselor shares her past and looks to the future.

STORY BY JAZMINE JONES & ASHLEY HARGROVE

Nicole Chung, a wife, mother and poet, was recently selected as the new counselor for UMOJA.

UMOJA, Kiswahili for unity, is a community program whose mission is to engage and support the academic experience of African American students and students of the African diaspora by infusing cultural aspects into education and encouraging them to make a positive difference in the world. In addition to UMOJA events, the program aids in tutoring and academic support, financial support and scholarship opportunities, and college tours.

Chung said she is inspired by her upbringing and her desire to help students reach their full potential, and she strives to lead Grossmont's UMOJA into the light.

LOOKING BACK

Chung said she bounced around countless foster homes after finally being adopted around 5 years old. In the foster care

system, she said she had equally positive and negative experiences.

Although unable to recall many events from her past, Chung said she has a vivid memory of when she was told why she was separated from her first foster home, according to the foster guardians who got in touch with her through Facebook.

"They had a new baby that died of S.I.D.S [Sudden Infant Death Syndrome]," Chung said. "Back then, they didn't have enough research, so when a baby dies, they remove all of us."

Chung said this first foster home was "one of the better homes."

Since then, Chung said her views on foster care swing back and forth as she believes that foster care may be beneficial for some, but also said that other children should not be living in their current foster homes.

"I don't think we as a society, city or country prepare parents enough for reunification,"

she said. "I think we live in a society of pain."

Chung said she often had to look after her cousins because her working-class parents were never there to do so.

"My daughter is about to be eight, and I cannot even imagine having her babysitting anybody at this age," she added.

Chung said she refuses to let negative experiences define her. Instead, she strives to grow from those experiences and wishes to spread positivity to her students and others around her.

"Be positive. You attract that," Chung said. "Laugh a lot. All the things you attract are the things that will stay."

Chung encourages foster children and those who were formerly in foster care by sharing wisdom— particularly the phrase, "When they go low, we go high," a quote from Michelle Obama.

Chung explained that while the world often favors an "eye for an eye" mentality,

she believes this approach is unhealthy and prevents growth in relationships and community.

There are additional resources for students who are currently or were formerly in foster care. NextUp is a community program to provide tools and financial support for foster students to help them succeed in their academic journey. It offers services such as transportation, emergency housing and tutoring.

"We are the most experienced team in the county," said Grossmont's NextUp Program Specialist Sam Rigby. "We had NextUp before anyone else in the San Diego County, and none of us have left since then."

LOOKING FORWARD

Today, Chung said she feels equipped to lead UMOJA after spending countless hours working with Black Student Union staff as the former vice president and president at San Diego Mesa College. Upon her invitation to speak to the UMOJA classes at Grossmont, Chung said she formed strong bonds with UMOJA's vice presidents and presidents.

"I was very close to my Black Studies professors, so I always knew that UMOJA was happening in the community college realm," Chung said.

Chung was asked to take charge as UMOJA counselor while the previous counselor, Kalon Bell, was on paternity leave. According to Chung, she "just happened to be in the right place at the right time."

UMOJA President Joshua Benjamin said "things were hard" for Chung the first semester. "But now, because of having help such as myself, our other vice president, Addie, and having a team of other people who are supporting her, like staff and faculty, she's doing much better," he said.

Chung said she is a strong believer in respecting elders, as she believes this is what earned her the position of UMOJA counselor. She strongly emphasizes the importance of community and unity in community colleges because many of her own relationships have bloomed from meeting other students.

Chung has also been a light to UMOJA students. Mica Cunningham, a Grossmont student in UMOJA's community, said she highly regards Chung as a counselor. She said that Chung is "like her second mom."

Cunningham said she found a sense of belonging in the community and

thanked Chung for introducing her to UMOJA. She said that if Chung had not found her, she wouldn't have had an enriching community experience.

"This is a sense of community, family, because it's like a village, you know, so I like it," Cunningham said.

Benjamin said Chung is a "kind soul." Benjamin adds that Chung does everything in her power to help the UMOJA students succeed.

"Community keeps you strong," Chung said. "It keeps you doing the things that you need to do. It's like iron sharpening iron."

Chung said she would like to give special thanks to Dr. Cornell West and Professor Theresa Ford for their contributions to UMOJA. She said Ford was the one who prepared her for grad school and her future academic endeavors. Chung added that Dr. Thekima Mayasa and Professor Starla Lewis contributed to her success.

Moving forward, Chung aims to lead UMOJA by learning from her past experiences. She said that being a highly educated, young-looking, joyful Black woman comes with challenges.

"I have been put in positions where people will talk bad about me, so I



CHUNG WITH DR. CORNELL WEST AND PROFESSOR THERESA FORD.
IMAGE COURTESY OF CHUNG.

have to make sure that I lead in love and I don't take offense by people, because that's a stereotype," Chung said. "I watch my words, even the words that I speak to myself. These are the things that I was taught even at a very young age, and I've been able to carry that over into my adult life."

For more info on UMOJA, visit grossmont.edu/student-support/umoja or stop by 70-228. 🐦

Oscar Alcon contributed to this story.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

A new coffee shop perks up campus.

BY LOGAN MURPHY

Coffee spelled backwards is "eeffoc", which is funny, because until I've had my coffee, I don't give "eeffoc" about anything. To some, that may just be a dumb joke, to others, it's a real mindset that represents the real need for coffee to be sold on campus, a need that has just been filled.

In the same spot as the former Java Market in the Griffin Center, the new Griffin Grind officially opened March 23. The Griffin Grind is operated by Lemon Grove Coffee, making this spot an extension of a company already familiar with the market, ensuring students' needs are understood and fulfilled in the best way possible.

As far as drinks go, they offer simple coffee, tea, matcha, different types of espresso, and a lineup of specialty lattes that offer different flavor combos and variety options. New beverages include the "Tropical Irishman" containing Irish cream, coconut and macadamia nuts, the "Queen Bee" with honey and cinnamon, and the staff-recommended "Hawaiian Creme Brulee," made with white chocolate, caramel and macadamia nuts.

Irma Jordan, an employee at the Griffin Grind, said some of these specialty drinks are their best sellers: "I have a lot of people come in for a White Nutella, Loco Coco, Hawaiian. These are main, big-time sellers."

As per the staff recommendation, I tried a Hawaiian Creme Brulee and was very pleased with the refreshing, sweet drink.

The selection is not just limited to drinks, however; they also serve breakfast foods, pre-packaged sandwiches, snacks and sodas. If coffee isn't your main appeal, other offered beverages like Monster Energy, Alani Nu energy drinks and classic, cold bottled water make this a great place for everyone to stop by for a quick refreshment as the hot summer days approach.

Many people may not be aware the Griffin Grind is now open. Jordan remarked that some people are finding their way in, but friends telling friends seems to be what is primarily bringing in customers.

"It's right now word of mouth so, you know, all over campus, we always tell people, tell their friends to come in," Jordan said.

The Griffin Grind is open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 8 a.m. to noon on Fridays. 🐦



SEEKING WORK

As competition rises, campus programs offer students support in their job search.

STORY AND PHOTO BY ALINA SIMONS

There are currently over 7 million people without jobs in the United States, and college students are feeling the heat.

This country has recently seen a shift in the job market, and doors are closing in the face of so many eager or experienced applicants. Several campus programs are offering hope to students by providing resources to support their job searches.

In the midst of escalating prices, such as food that has increased by 2.2% and a 15.9% increase for energy in San Diego alone, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, college students are under pressure to not only juggle tuition, but also the rising cost of living.

While many attend college with the hope of entering the workforce after graduating with a degree or credentials, students are entering the workforce early to cover expenses while still in school.

Genesis Arias, 19, who has been looking for work in her second year at Grossmont College, said: "Everyone wants a degree. I can't find anyone that wants entry-level."

For students, unemployment is not due to a lack of motivation. Arias initially applied for a campus job but was informed she needed to complete a work-study program, which is offered by the Financial Aid Office. This provides students with hands-on experience in a particular field.

Arias, a media communications major, applied for a work-study position as an event support in the Performing & Visual Arts Center in January. Coming into April, she has officially been prepared for the role and completed clearance, yet has not been scheduled to work.

Regarding this campus opportunity, Arias said: "It was easy, it was accessible. I wouldn't have to drive so far. It would benefit me in every way, but then I just don't have it."

and economic uncertainty, Middlebrook advocated for diligence in the face of rejection and treating each application or interview as a learning opportunity.

With the onset of AI systems, even employers have started to incorporate these programs into the hiring process, and Middlebrook said if a resume or application lacks keywords, then "that system will get it out before it even actually gets to a person. So it might be that you're up against a bot."

"I think the resources, the support services that are offered today, are on another scale. We have solid partnerships, inviting employers on campus, which we never had before." —RENEE NASORI

Outside of the work-study program, Grossmont College also has a Career Service Center where students can be assisted by specialists in polishing their resumes, learning essential skills and networking.

Veronica Middlebrook, a Work-Based Specialist at the Career Center, said, "We've had a number of students who've been positively impacted by our services." Middlebrook added that some students "were able to obtain part-time work experiences based off of getting prepared with us."

In this current stage of occupational

Altina Jones, a dance major at Grossmont who is also looking for work, criticized the job market for being unprofessional and correlated AI with the degradation of standards by employers. She said, "If I have a robot screening my application, I'm not gonna get a kind of human response that would be appropriate."

On this topic, Middlebrook said: "The way we help students is to help you get through those systems and really understand what it means to job search effectively and efficiently."

However, AI is not the only obstacle for job seekers. There is a trend of poor

communication. “I don’t think I’ve gotten any sort of denials, but I’ve also not gotten any sort of acceptances,” Jones said. “And so, it’s been stagnant.”

Jones shared that one of her friends was employed, but he was effectively terminated when he stopped receiving scheduled hours without any advance notice.

Arisa said that she has noticed a trend of conflicts in employment due to the commute and the difficulty of fitting work hours into a week full of classes.

“There are some companies who do go through hiring freezes where they might not be able to hire people at the moment. So, you know, we are in an interesting economy,” Middlebrook said. “And so, I always tell students to maybe even keep an entrepreneurial mindset to stay resilient.”

Career Services Supervisor Renee Nasori said, “I think the job market is honestly strong right now.”

Nasori said she has noticed a wide range of industries and activities on job boards, from both applicants and employers. She encouraged students to take advantage of the available assistance.

“I think the resources, the support services that are offered today, are on another scale,” said Nasori, who is a former Grossmont College graduate. “We have solid partnerships, inviting employers on campus, which we never had before.”

Middlebrook said: “We partner with local employers to be able to ask them what they are looking for in students. And so, what we do, we prepare you guys.”

As a student still on the hunt for work, Arias said she is determined to keep searching and not be disheartened by the bumps in the road. Arias had shaky first few interview tries, but is using the experience to improve.

“Use this as a matter of getting yourself used to it,” she said. “You have to believe that you belong there. The opportunity came to you, take advantage of the opportunity.”

This is the attitude of proactive perseverance that specialists at the Career Center champion. Nasori invited students to participate in the Career Services Department because “the more you can prepare ahead of time and practice, the stronger you’ll be at interviewing.”

Students can download the Handshake app to set up appointments to meet with counselors, attend workshops that go over workplace preparation, and find a route to establish a footing in a desired career field. 🐦



AMERICANS AND THE HOLOCAUST

WHAT DID
AMERICANS KNOW?

WHAT MORE COULD
HAVE BEEN DONE?



April 14–May 21, 2026
Grossmont Community College Library

Check out our programming lineup:
libguides.grossmont.edu/aath

All events take place on the Grossmont College Campus, 8800 Grossmont College Dr., El Cajon, CA 92020

APRIL

15 U.S. INCARCERATION OF JAPANESE AMERICANS: RACE, NATIONALITY, AND DIGNITY IN A WARTIME DEMOCRACY

1:00 P.M., GRIFFIN GATE (BLDG. 60, ROOM 180)

22 WHAT DID WE KNOW? EXPLORING PROPAGANDA AND MORAL CHOICE

12:00 P.M., GRIFFIN GATE (BLDG. 60, ROOM 180)

22 AUSTRIAN VICTIM MYTH

6:30 P.M., GRIFFIN GATE (BLDG. 60, ROOM 180)

23 LIFE-SAVING KINDNESS AND COURAGE: SURVIVING THE HOLOCAUST AND COMING TO AMERICA

10:00 A.M., GRIFFIN GATE (BLDG. 60, ROOM 180)

23 ECHOES OF WITNESS: AMIT PELED'S MUSICAL REFLECTIONS ON AMERICANS AND THE HOLOCAUST

7:30 P.M. (DOORS 7 P.M.), PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS CENTER (BLDG. 22)

27 POETRY READING WITH JASON SCHNEIDERMAN

11:00 A.M., GRIFFIN GATE (BLDG. 60, ROOM 180)

28 HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR LOU PECHI

11:00 A.M., GRIFFIN GATE (BLDG. 60, ROOM 180)

28 FILM SCREENING THE U.S. AND THE HOLOCAUST

6:00 P.M., PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS CENTER (BLDG. 22)

29 AMERICANS AND THE HOLOCAUST: WHAT DID AMERICANS KNOW?

6:30 P.M., GRIFFIN GATE (BLDG. 60, ROOM 180)

30 RESISTANCE AND SURVIVAL IN THE WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING

1:00 P.M., GRIFFIN GATE (BLDG. 60, ROOM 180)

MAY

5 THE INTERSECTION OF JIM CROW AND NAZI GERMANY

9:30 A.M., GRIFFIN GATE (BLDG. 60, ROOM 180)

14 THE CHURCH STRUGGLE AND AMERICAN RESPONSE TO NAZISM

10:00 A.M., GRIFFIN GATE (BLDG. 60, ROOM 180)

SPECIAL THANKS
TO OUR PARTNERS:



THE
BUTTERFLY
PROJECT
Reconciliation & Hope

This exhibition was made possible by the generous support of lead sponsor Jeannie & Jonathan Lavine. Additional major funding was provided by the Bildners—Joan & Allen z”l, Elissa Spungen & Rob, Nancy & Jim; and Jane and Daniel Och.

The Museum’s exhibitions are also supported by the Lester Robbins and Sheila Johnson Robbins Traveling and Special Exhibitions Fund, established in 1990.



PRESENTED BY:



Anatomy Learning Center

The Anatomy Learning Center is located in 30-162. The schedule is posted at the door, as the hours vary.

Run by Coordinator Alison Shearer, the center provides the most hands-on resources of the bunch. Not only is tutoring available, but students can also rent equipment such as microscopes and skeletons to help with assignments. The center offers support for students enrolled in all anatomy and select microbiology courses.

“I wish [the students] knew that we wish we had every seat filled,” Shearer said.

While it’s primarily for anatomy students, anyone who needs a quiet space to study is welcome. With computers and plenty of desk space, “students of any major can come study,” Shearer said. “We try to provide a judgment-free zone.”

Tutor and Grossmont alumnus Amanda Ramirez said, “I enjoy coming back as a tutor because the atmosphere here is really great, and there’s a lot of great resources to help the students succeed.”

No food or drinks are allowed inside, and water bottles must be left outside. Information about supported classes, equipment usage and more can be found at bit.ly/griffinALC.

Business Office Technology

The Business Office Technology Flex Lab, located in 70-131, is overseen by technician Candy McLaughlin. Homework lab hours are Monday from 2:30 to 5 p.m., Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The primary tutoring services offered are for economics and business majors, but students can receive help with more than just classwork.

The lab offers a program that recently celebrated its 40th anniversary: Office Professional Training, or OPT. This full-time, one-semester program offers 12-20 Grossmont credits, designed to equip students



with the skills to succeed in office environments. The lab specializes in accounting, insurance, medical office and office support. Best of all, it’s “100% free,” McLaughlin said.

A licensed marriage and family counselor is also available for students in the training program who need help transitioning into the workforce.

When setting up tutoring appointments, economics and business majors can “get there from the Student Support Hub within Canvas,” McLaughlin said of the Support Hub, which is located in the left menu of the Canvas homepage.

Interested in the Flex Lab? Additional information about tutoring, training programs and many more services can be found at bit.ly/griffinBOT

Computer Science and Information Systems (CSIS) Tutoring Lab

The Computer Science and Information Systems Tutoring Lab, located in room 70-112, is led by Computer Lab Technician II Austin Thomas. In-person tutoring is available Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Friday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The lab is a one-stop shop for students who need assistance with any computer science class. While its services are straightforward, the importance of the resource remains.

“You’re not asking too much [of us],” Thomas said.

The Tutoring Lab offers multiple tutoring options with friendly tutors ready to help students with anything related to computer science.

In-person tutoring is available during scheduled hours, and virtual tutoring via Zoom can be booked online. Whether students need help with cybersecurity or data science, the tutors are there to make classes as smooth as possible.

Computers in the lab are loaded with all the tools students might need to complete their work. Students can use the equipment while being assisted, or simply as a quiet place to study.

For anyone interested in the CSIS Tutoring Lab or seeking additional information, full details are available at bit.ly/griffinCSIS. 🐾



SHARING IS CARING

Why is Grossmont College part of a district?

STORY & INFOGRAPHIC BY SAM POLLMANN

If you have signed up for classes through Self-Service, you may have wondered why you can register for classes at either Grossmont or Cuyamaca colleges. You may have guessed through the campus website that your GCCCD email extension stands for Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, but why are these specific colleges connected?

California is divided into 73 community college districts, each with its own independent governing board. According to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 23 districts are multi-college like Grossmont-Cuyamaca, meaning their boards make decisions for all of the colleges in their district.

District Chancellor Lynn Neault said that colleges themselves don't make decisions; instead, the districts are constrained to certain regions and help make decisions for the colleges in that region.

"The district is the legal entity, and the colleges are under the district umbrella," Neault said.

East County voters approved the formation of the formerly known Grossmont Junior College District in November 1960. In 1962, the Governing Board acquired the Fletcher Hills property, which is now the site of Grossmont College. Cuyamaca College did not come into the picture until 1972, when the Governing Board acquired the Rancho San Diego site.

Today, the district serves students from all over San Diego, with its full borders encompassing a population of 498,019, according to the 2020 census. Census data and Geographic Information Systems are used to help define the boundaries of each district when they are redrawn or "redistricted" every 10 years.

According to the website for the Foundation for California Community Colleges, redistricting is a crucial practice to ensure compliance with the California Voting Rights Act: "In order to meet the law's requirements, districts were required to redraw their lines or restructure their regions to reflect their changing demographics and ensure one representative for each region."

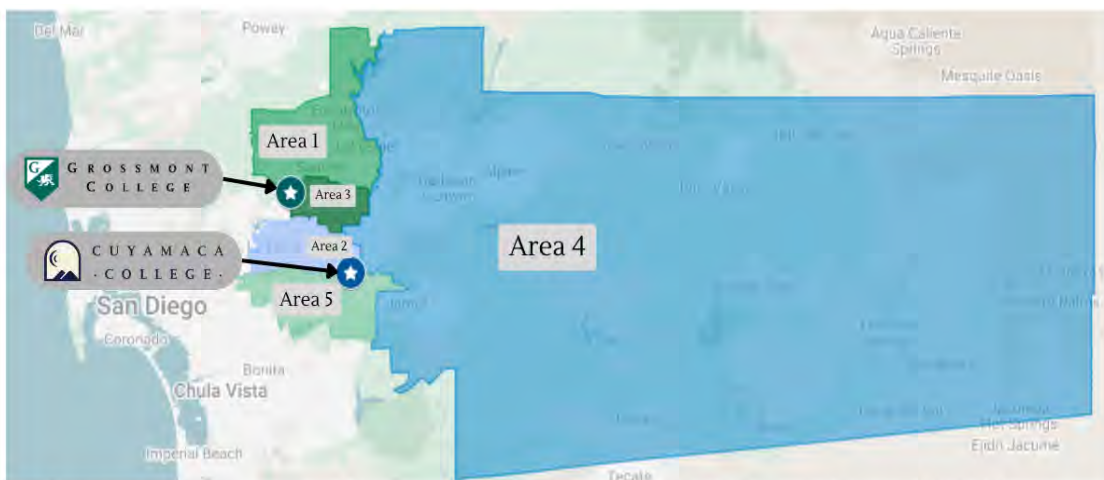
A 2015 amendment to the

act made community colleges change the way their governing representatives are chosen. Before the amendment, college districts elected Governing Board members via an "At-Large" system, in which any district resident could vote for a trustee running to represent any area.

Each board member represents one of the five regions or "areas" of the district. For example, the most recent board member on the Grossmont-Cuyamaca board, Cindy Page, represents Area 1, which includes Santee, Winter Gardens and Lakeside.

The amendment shifted from the "At-Large" voting system to the "By-Trustee" voting system, in which only residents of a given area can vote to elect a board member for that area. In this system, a resident of Area 1 could vote to re-elect Cindy Page, but they could not vote to re-elect Elena Adams, who represents Area 4.

As required by AB 182, the bill that instituted these changes, the aim is to prevent "dilution" and "discrimination" in the trustee election process. In addition to redistricting, "By-Trustee" voting ensures that each board member acts in accordance with the needs of the people they represent. 🐦



Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District | Population: 498,019*

*Population statistics reflect data from the 2020 census.

At-Large Area Election System (Former)

- Before a 2015 amendment to the California Voting Rights Act of 2001, **all** voters from anywhere in the represented district could vote for **any** board seat up for election. This is known as an "At-Large" voting system.
- **For example**, in this system, a resident of Area 4 could have cast a vote to elect Brad Monroe for Area 5 or **any** other candidate for **any** area.

By-Trustee Area Election System (Current)

- In this system, each area within the district elects a Trustee; voters can **only** elect a trustee to represent the area in which they reside. Conversely, a trustee can **only** represent an area in which they are residents.
- **For example**, a resident of Area 4 can vote **only** to elect a trustee for Area 4, not for any other area.
- This system ensures that the power to elect a representative remains with the people represented.

Trustee Area 1: Cindy Page

Represented Population: 102,646*

Trustee Area 2: Debbie Justeson

Represented Population: 99,339*

Trustee Area 3: Julie Schorr

Represented Population: 99,358*

Trustee Area 4: Elena Adams

Represented Population: 96,090*

Trustee Area 5: Brad Monroe

Represented Population: 100,586*



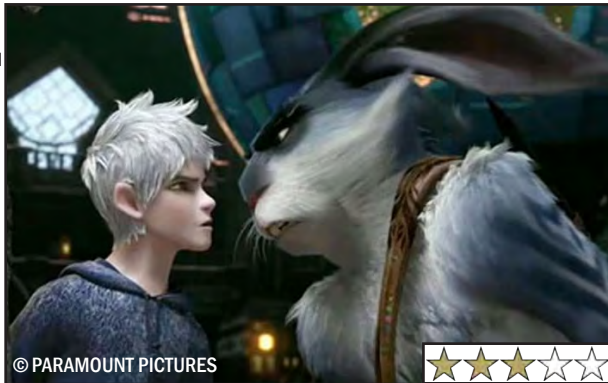
WORD SEARCH: LET'S PLAY

CROSSWORD: SPRING HAS SPRUNG

THE SUMMIT | APRIL 2026 **23**

REEL TALK | RABBIT ROLES

Explore cinema with a bunny-filled twist.



RISE OF THE GUARDIANS

Review by Eliann Griffin

Rise of the Guardians, an animated feature film, was brought to life based on William Joyce's book series, *The Guardians of Childhood*. Directed by Peter Ramsey, the film follows Santa Claus (Alec Baldwin), the Tooth Fairy (Isla Fisher), the Easter Bunny (Hugh Jackman) and the Sandman, who serve as immortal guardians, protecting children across generations against darkness and despair. When the evil boogeyman Pitch Black (Jude Law) starts to attack children's belief in the guardians, Jack Frost (Chris Pine) steps up as a new guardian. The story includes themes of self-discovery and hope, clearly marketed for children and families. At times, the quick pacing makes the story feel rushed and difficult to follow, especially if you are not already familiar with the characters involved, as the story relies largely upon expanding pre-established lore. I cannot speak to the film being a book adaptation, as I have not read the series, but I imagine the books may fill in some of the gaps lost in the pacing and abridged storyline.

DONNIE DARKO

Review by Caleb Storey

Donnie Darko is a psychological film that includes a mix of mental health, time travel and mystery. This allows for a really unique, but, also, confusing story. This film follows Donnie (Jake Gyllenhaal), a teenager who begins to see a creepy figure named Frank in a rabbit costume. As Donnie has to deal with school and his own personal problems, the visions begin to affect his decisions and get increasingly more intense as the movie goes on. Gyllenhaal does a great job showcasing Donnie's confusion, which allows the character to feel more authentic. The vibe of this film is definitely unsettling, but that's the part that keeps you hooked. You might not fully understand after the first watch, and the storyline can be very confusing. Still, *Donnie Darko* stands out because of its authenticity and unique plot. The movie will definitely leave you thinking. It might not be for everyone, but if you go into it with an open mind, it can be a very unique experience.



ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Review by Rianna Romasoc

Alice in Wonderland (2010) is a film that makes Lewis Carroll's Victorian imagination into a darker fantasy fever dream. Director Tim Burton re-imagines Alice (Mia Wasikowska) as a young woman stepping uncertainly into adulthood, displaying themes of choice and identity through CGI marvels and psychological exploration. Falling into the surreal realm, Alice faces the hot-tempered Red Queen (Helena Bonham Carter) while the Mad Hatter (Johnny Depp) becomes a chaotic guide and protector. The film transports the audience from reality to a world of wonder and disorientation; however, it shows the themes of self-discovery and empowerment in a different perspective. This film is like a feminist fairy tale promoting confidence and independence through a grown-up, heroic Alice. Other figures like the White Queen (Anne Hathaway) support Alice choosing her destiny over traditional expectations. Compared to when I watched it as a young girl, I now realize the film celebrates deviating from gender roles and seizing power.



SPACE JAM: A NEW LEGACY

Review by Logan Murphy

Space Jam: A New Legacy is supposed to tie into the universe of the original *Space Jam*, but does it so poorly, simply riding the wave of nostalgia that came from having "Space Jam" in the title. The story follows NBA legend LeBron James as he and his computer-savvy son Dom (Cedric Joe) get trapped in a computer program where an evil AI puts them against each other and exploits them for their skills. LeBron gets sent to the Looney Tunes world and teams up with notable figures like Bugs Bunny, Lola Bunny and the rest of the classic group to save himself and his world by beating the AI's team of unfairly modified basketball players. The story is way too similar to the original, but now, the Looney Tunes seemed like an afterthought, and not what made the story unique. The constant references to other Warner Bros.-owned franchises make those parts seem more like blatant advertising rather than being used for narrative advancement. 🐰

