

# EAGLE ERA

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## Around the World in One Day

*Students have mixed feelings about International Week being cut short*

**Michelle Lee**

*Staff Writer*

International Week. A week where students spend their lunches navigating the dozens of booths that have set up shop in the rotunda. A week where you spend your food tickets on that churro you've been eyeing, maybe coming back a second or even a third time. A week where lively music of many different cultures booms out of the rotunda and drifts outside. There's just one question: when is this week?

This year, due to the work-to-rule teacher protest taking place at American, International Week was transformed into International Day, the reason being that not enough advisors were available for typical International Week activities such as the food sales.

"Because there is money involved and because [these activities have a] name like 'American High School Interact' or 'American High School DECA,' you have to have a credentialed staff member as an advisor," said Mr. Fulton, AHS's activities director. "Any time a student tells their parent, 'I'm going to go to this [International Week] thing,' the parent is probably assuming it's a school thing, so there's a school adult present. And if there's not, and something happens, that could fall on us."

Another aspect of International Week that was unfortunately canceled this year due to the lack of advisors and the implementation of work-to-rule was the new Night Market. "We were planning on hav-

ing—kind of similar to during Spirit Week—an opportunity for parents to come and see what happened during the day," explained Mr. Fulton. "We wanted to provide an opportunity after school to have some of the performances that are going to be at the rally, and we had

munity we have here, and we're trying to just open our arms to different cultures."

Even though there was only a one-day event to plan, that did not mean that Leadership would slack off. They were determined to see International Day through.

"Usually, the clubs com-



*During the rally, club members made sure that their dances showcased all of the hard work that they had put into their practices. Even as a one-day event, International Day was filled with just as much excitement. "International Week for...our class has always been important to have for the diversity of our school," said Mr. Fulton. "It's one of the things that we think makes our school really special."*

reached out to some food trucks to come with some international-themed food and we were also talking to clubs about selling crafts."

Luckily, all was not lost. The annual rally still took place on Friday, February 15, and students participated in dances that represented their cultures.

"They are still happening because the rally was already planned. We already had that day marked on the calendar. Changing that would have been something that would be difficult to do," said Mr. Fulton.

"The message is still there," added Mingyu Wu (11), who is part of Leadership. "American is still trying to recognize the diverse com-

mittee overlooks the clubs and they tell them all of the information like 'Hey, we're setting up this day. You're supposed to have this food.' They make sure that... each club is assigned a country," revealed Wu. "[Leadership is] still in charge of this year. We're in charge of decorating the school and we've been making a lot of flags and a really nice backdrop to put up this Friday. We also sent out a form for clubs [who want] to have a dance."

Amongst this good news, however, another issue arose: dance practice. Without advisors present, dance practices were unable to take

*See "Around the World in One Day"*

## Picture Perfect

*The presence of Prestige Portraits and Josten's in AHS*

**Ashna Sharma**

*Staff Writer*

"3, 2, 1. Now, smile, hold it... good! You can hold the 'Seniors' sign however you want." Each year, beginning as early as July, Prestige Portraits invites seniors to its studio for portrait-taking sessions that aren't technically mandatory, but are—if they want to be featured in the yearbook with their senior quote. This is just one of the many expenses seniors face to memorialize their high school experience, others being Grad Nite, Prom, class rings and other traditions that they have been hearing stories about since freshman year.

While some seniors moan in sheer laziness at the thought of taking a portrait, others are enthusiastic to take poses with their friends and fret over how their portrait will turn out—how they will be recalled by their classmates years from now. However, the process is known to be needlessly frustrating and time-consuming. Prestige, whose office is in Hayward, is notorious for not picking up phone calls when students want to make changes to their appointment or have questions about their pictures. Teju Edidi (12), for instance, wasn't able to take a portrait.

"I am in the College Connections program at Ohlone, and American shut down my the School Loop portal, meaning I can't get information about what goes on at American," said Edidi. "I called [Prestige] on numerous occasions to make an ap-

pointment, leaving messages, but never got a response back. I feel left out by not being in the yearbook."

For the senior wallet tradition, where seniors give photos of themselves and notes to their classmates, Edidi is using other photos that she can print from Costco and CVS, but admits that a high school yearbook is what most adults want to look back at for memories of themselves, friends, and classmates.

Some students may not take a portrait from Prestige because of financial reasons. The sitting fee to order photos is \$50, with a minimum of \$15 just for the yearbook.

"I've heard more concerns this year than in the years before in regards to [some students not taking a portrait due to cost]," Mr. Musto explained. "I know of one other [school] in Fremont Unified, [Kennedy], that does their portraits on campus. It sounds like something we need to look into for next year."

Some students, however, go all out for their senior portraits, like Krina Shah (12), who bought a \$100 package with two outfits and one background.

"I wanted to have a picture in an outfit that I like the most and am comfortable in. In addition, I wanted to have [one with] an instrument because I'm learning [to play the guitar]," Shah continued.

Some students took advantage of Prestige Portraits' online Black Friday sale to order their prints.

"They wouldn't stop emailing me. I saved about \$150," Ragi Lad (12) said.

Also involved in senior year memorabilia, Josten's

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is a company that for many years has provided AHS seniors with mementos such as class jewelry, photo cards, and announcements. They also provide the mandatory caps and gowns for graduation day. According to Mr. Musto, about 40% of seniors borrow caps and gowns from American.

A Josten's representative came to campus during the senior panorama shoot to inform seniors about ordering options. Some students were unpleasantly surprised by the marketing that took place during that Flex period.

"They have a captive audience," said one anonymous student. "Every senior was in the gym and could not leave. A lot of my friends

## Letter From the Editor

February, how exciting. If you are a helpless romantic like me, you've watched all those sappy love dramas and romcoms, and have perhaps found yourself caught in many perfect romantic fantasies.

Romance is a beautiful thing in and of itself, but even if you dislike it, it's hard to argue that it is not important in today's society. With that said, being caught up in romance and being hateful of it are both things that will hurt you. Do not romanticize or undervalue anything. Harboring these mindsets reflects how we may possibly be living our lives, in a turbulent, chaotic, emotional mess.

Often we let our emotions get in the way of having an open mind. In the Eagle Era, we try to be as unbiased as we possibly can because we are feeding information to others, and we cannot let our personal beliefs get in the way of the truth of the story. Often, news outlets will feed you information that asserts their own agenda, even if they do not state it outright. Perhaps you know this already, but either way, I suggest reading something that goes completely beyond your beliefs because it will make you question your them, and beliefs are

pointless if they cannot be questioned. You don't have to agree with it, but at least listen.

In this day and age, it is easy to prioritize our emotions, and get caught up in validating ourselves according to our labels, "liberal" or "conservative," "romantic" or "cynical." We may think that proving that we are what we call ourselves would oppose anything that anyone of the opposite side has to say. We stigmatize them because they are not like us, and the same happens on the other side. Though it is a perfectly human response to be defensive, it is not helpful in necessary discussions that help people progress forward. People often forget that America is built upon our ability to share our opinions, and to receive and understand others' opinions.

The most valuable thing that you can give and receive is not friendship, finding the love of your life like the main character in those romance dramas, or even wealth. It is compassion - compassion to listen to someone who differs from you, even at a fundamental level. Try and see everything as beautiful in its own way, beautiful in the harmony with everything. When I say that, you may think "beautiful"

"as in it looks or sounds pleasing, but I mean "beautiful" as in it serves a cosmic purpose, and belongs in the world at large. Everything has a role, and even the bad things have a part to play in the solidity and development of one's life. Maybe something is bad, but that its destructiveness proves the strength and resilience of humanity, or perhaps lack thereof, and that's what is beautiful.

Too many people keep their hearts and minds locked away from others because they have dissimilar views. If you look at media outlets like Fox News, HuffPost, and other media outlets that have clear political biases, it becomes harder to distinguish what you actually believe-- or what you are being told by these sources that you should believe.

In other words, you must believe what they're saying or you aren't a true liberal, or conservative. Or worse, you're actually a bigoted racist.

Have you ever treated someone in your own life differently because of something you heard about them, and you're afraid that if you don't hate them like everyone else it will make you look bad? That people will start questioning your integrity?

February is the month of love, but when will we start actually loving people, even if they have made mistakes in our eyes? You don't have to condone what people do or believe in, but hatred is never the right answer. Hatred separates people. Hatred kills people, and too many times has that been repeated in history. Even if it's "okay" to hate someone because everyone else does, has that actually ever changed anything?

The people who make real change are the ones that have actually built bridges when no one else would, even if they didn't necessarily have the same views as the other side. They did the things that brought people together rather than separate them. This is always the hardest thing for people to actually do, but it's the thing that needs to be done even though no one wants to do it. I hope that reading the Eagle Era, or any news outlet for that matter, that you build that bridge of compassion between differences and disagreements, even if it is across the deepest, most jagged ravine, in politics or in love.

Trinity Advincula-De Los Angeles  
Design Editor

## Picture Perfect (cont.)

Chen remarked. "I didn't add any charms because I didn't think it was worth the cost."

Lifetouch, the parent company for Prestige, does a lot of work with yearbook for sports and ID photos that are taken on MAZE. However, despite its practical monopoly on AHS's school photos, the company is far from responsive.

"There is a lot of miscommunication," said Maham Junaid (11), the yearbook co-Editor-in-Chief. "With varsity soccer... we were expecting them to do all of [the sports photos]. The day of the deadline, we didn't know that boys soccer hadn't been photographed,

so we had to call all of them out onto the field, and they didn't have their uniforms."

This tends to be a problem even with their Prestige subsidiary.

"We get sent a whole batch of [photos] from Lifetouch, but we don't know when they're coming in. We have a bunch of seniors emailing us, texting us," Junaid continued.

It remains a goal for every senior to have some way to be remembered, and to be remembered in, their high school years. Although a phone camera roll may contain teenage memories, there is something special about tangible recollec-

tions that can be laughed and reminisced over at a coffee table years from now. But because many complications, obtaining this sweet and simple memory is not as simple as it seems.

# Introducing the 2019-2020 ASB Executive Council

*Learning about their drives to take on the responsibility*

**Michelle Fong**  
Staff Writer

A few minutes before the clock strikes 3, everyone gathers closely around the speaker, waiting impatiently for the announcement that is long awaited. Who are the new ASB executive council members? Finally, the announcement is made, congratulating Phoebe Urbano as ASB president, Rishabh Shastry as ASB vice president, and Hanah Abualhaj as chief justice.

Being elected for these roles took a lot of time and commitment to cleverly plan how to reach the student body through campaigning. Their creative ideas showcased their individuality and personality.

"One of the biggest centerpieces I planned for my campaign was 'Risho Mo Bamba.' It is the first time, to my knowledge, of a candidate holding an actual event for their campaign," said Rishabh Shastry.

During this event, Shastry stood on tables in the old cafeteria and began; however, it got shut down due to a lack of proper adult supervision. This idea was something new and different from many of the traditional methods.

"It's still great to see how many people shared the same interest as I did in the event," remarked Shastry.

Phoebe Urbano took a different approach to her campaigning. She decided to focus more on her physical posters because she believed that it would attract more public attention when they met people's eyes.

Although making those large and intricate posters took a lot of effort, "it paid off because I received

many compliments about how hard I've worked on it," said Urbano. Making these posters combined her artistic skills with her drive to become president.

"People recognized that it reflected my work ethic. I have already received compliments from teachers and our principal as well!" exclaimed Urbano.

Hanah Abualhaj created posters: both a photo booth poster, and digital posters with clever puns. The biggest part of her campaigning was her video. With her friend Beau Tse (11), they filmed several clips together in one day and they pieced together the video.

Abulhadj also worked hard on in-person campaigning, which was something she was proud of. She spent a lot of time trying to plan out which areas of the school she had to spend most of her energy campaigning towards.

"It worked out though, and I got to meet so many new people," said Abualhaj.

All three candidates wowed the school with their outstanding campaigns and personal statements.

"I ran for the position of ASB Vice President because I wanted to take on greater responsibilities for the next school year," explained Shastry.

It was a dream of his since freshman year when the ASB Vice President at the time inspired him to be more involved in class events and to enjoy school beyond the academic pressure.

Shastry wants his supporters to know that he is very appreciative of them and he is going to follow up on his campaign promises and remind

## A Few Words From Our Class Candidates...

My whole goal through high school has been to help lead my class to success, and I want to make sure that our senior year will be memorable. I also want to be a part of having a say doing this. The best part was connecting with people. We would always try to get people, and it helped me and introduced me to new people.

Jasmine Miguel (11),  
running for class President

I really love our class and I hope through my campaign we can show what our class is capable of and our spirit for next year as well. I also help with a better council we will be able to lead our class into a better year. The best part was making the flyers, and taking pictures. I hope I can make more communication with the class, so we can make more events people can participate in.

Wenchi Lai (10),  
Running for senator

Me and my partner have been part of the council and our class's spirit week ever since freshman year. We've seen our class grow together. We realized that a lot of students in our class don't have an idea of what's going on when it comes to school activities and so we wanna make everyone connected and have a transparency between the students and the executives. We wanna take their ideas and implement them in every way.

Anjana Sriram (11), running for Vice President

I am running because our class is very big and it needs a lot of peoples' opinions to show our unification and contribute to ideas. I hope in a way, once I become senate, I get a lot of people's opinions and put them all in one. All my peers encouraged me and that it'll be possible for me to be senate.

Caleb Chung (10),  
running for Senator.

## Results

### class of 2022

PRES & VP

Anusha Nayak &

Amanda Lin

SENATORS

Samar Varma &

Ranchana Aithal

### class of 2021

PRES & VP

Jeffrey Wei &

Nicole Lai

SENATORS

Shreya Patil &

Azaan Sharif

### class of 2020

PRES & VP

Jasmine Miguel &

Mingyu Wu

SENATORS

Janine Wang &

Ethan Nghiem

them why they chose him to be ASB Vice President.

"It's this support which will keep me going throughout the school year, and I will do anything

to make sure I won't let them down," said Shastry.

Being a former C/O 2020 Vice President and current ASB Secretary, Urbano is passionate in serving the

*see "Introducing the 2019-2020 ASB Executive Council" (4)*

# SATIRE:

Conflicted voter decisively swayed to vote for candidate upon seeing 45 flyers on the same wall instructing her to do so

*What worked—and what didn't—in the recent class council elections*

**Divya Prakash**  
Editor-in-Chief

With so many worthy candidates running in last week's election, it was understandably a challenge to decide which student to entrust with the responsibility of representing classes in ASB.

As many candidates shared fundamentally similar platforms, two factors truly set them apart.

Asked what caused him to vote as he did, Keegan Markeith (11) states, "It was definitely that sign telling me to vote for him. I probably would not have voted for him otherwise. But like, the sign told me to vote for him. So how could I not vote for him?"

The content of fli-

ers was not the only factor that influenced the election; quantity played a role as well.

"Honestly, at first, I just didn't know who to vote for!" reports Gwyneth Anastasia (10). "But what really convinced me was when I saw upwards of 42 flyers on the wall of the new buildings all telling me to vote for this candidate. Like, if it had just been 30 or 35, it could have gone either way. But 45? That's a mandate."

Not everyone was sold on these ultra-modern campaigning techniques. Dakota Cheung (9), for example, was most swayed by the effort she saw reflected in the campaigns.

She reports, "I was just going to vote for my best

friend or for the person whose name I kept hearing, but instead I decided to vote for the candidate who chiseled her face into an ice block. It was a regular David. Even when it started to melt it looked like she was crying out of love for our school. That's the kind of commitment we need."

So, Eagles, the people have spoken. If you are ever interested in holding ASB office, herein lies the key to success: put up several fliers and tell people to vote for you. If you happen to be handy with masses of ice, copper, or granite, that can work too. And of course, if you happen to have a color printer and a lot of friends, that probably works best.

# Around the World in One Day (cont.)

place on the school campus. Other measures had to be taken to ensure that clubs were ready for their performance in the rally.

"It is kind of hard [going to practices], though I understand that we do need advisors. You just wonder why you can't practice out on the campus on the blacktop," described Leighanna Huynh (12). "It'll be more convenient for students because, for our practices, we'd have to go to the club president's house. I know that it's hard for people because sometimes they can't find rides all the time and not everyone drives."

With these significant changes for International Day, it's natural that the cancellations were not universally favored. After all, International Week was one of the highly anticipated school events that add excitement to an otherwise ordinary week of high school. That's not to say that work-to-rule was misunderstood or unsupported though.

"I do understand the teachers' viewpoints. Living in California and living in the Bay Area is just so, so expensive. A lot of teachers live an hour or two away from Fremont," expressed Wu. "I understand that teachers are such a fundamental part of the younger generation. It does make sense that they should get paid more. It just sucks that it's affecting us and that it's affecting what Leadership does."

Just as much as it affected what Leadership does, work-to-rule also affected what the students received. Seniors, for example, would not have another chance at experiencing the International Week atmosphere as this is their last year at American.

"I know it sounds a little selfish, but, honestly, I kind of wish they took it into consideration more. I understand work-to-rule is some-

thing that is important to the teachers, and we all support that," said Huynh. "I've been talking with my friends and they've been saying 'Oh yeah, it sucks how it's our last year here and we don't even get to have an International Week... We can't have a Night Market.' We were looking forward to senior year, but then everything is happening now."

Much like how this was supposed to be the seniors' last International Week, it was also supposed to be the freshmen's first International Week—the experience that would set their standards for future International weeks and, overall, for high school.

"It's their first impression and experience at American. We hype it up, especially in the beginning of the year. Then, when they actually get into the year, because all of this has come up with the teachers and work-to-rule, it might not meet their expectations."

With all of these mixed feelings circulating, it leads to the question: what can we do? The past is the past, and we were still able to have an International Day with a rally showcasing the many cultures of our school, whether it was the lively Bollywood dance, the energetic K-pop choreography, or the mesmerizing Tinikling steps. It's also impossible to go back to the past and change what might have displeased us. We can, however, look to the future and go into the next school year with high hopes and support our teachers as best as we can.

"Our goal was to make the best of the reality that we face," concluded Mr. Fulton. "If the situation is different next year with the teachers' union, I don't think there's going to be a problem. It feels like, to me, it's something specific to this year."

## Introducing the 2019-2020 ASB Executive Council

school. Last school year, Urbano ran for ASB Vice President as well; however, she did not get elected. This did not stop her from pursuing the leadership endeavors she aspires to be a part of.

As newly elected ASB President, Urbano said, "I am open to new ideas and will do everything in my ability to ensure that students will get the most out of their high school experience."

Abualhaj wanted to run for Chief Justice because although she has participated and done a lot for the school itself, she felt like she had not had the opportunity to accomplish as much as she wanted to.

"Too often times I see events and activities catered to a specific group of people," she said. The people Abualhaj hopes



to represent are those that might be too shy to voice their opinions. She hopes to help everyone at American High School love their high school experience as much as she has loved hers.

We are all very excited

# At the Helm

*What does it take to lead a club at AHS?*

**Annie Liu**  
Staff Writer



*Members of Chess Club engage in friendly competition at the club's quarterly chess tournament. "I enjoy being president because I can meet new people who are passionate about chess," explained Davda. "There are some who come to our practice sessions to learn. I enjoy teaching them and talking to them. I also enjoy hanging out with the officers and the advisor."*

Enjoy providing service to the community? Interested in learning more about an academic subject? No matter what your hobby may be, chances are that there's a club on campus dedicated to it. Clubs offer a way for students to engage in constructive activities that they are passionate about while also interacting with other students who share similar interests. With that being said, how do club leaders manage to keep their clubs engaging and fun throughout the year, and what goes into running a club?

Club presidents, with the support of officers, are responsible for making sure that a club runs smoothly and that members are happy and satisfied. For Anchal Lamba (12), who is president of Interact, a service club and one of the largest clubs on campus, this means centering club events around the core values

and purposes of the club.

"I work to place emphasis on passion for service and community building. It is crucial to Interact's purpose: to provide an opportunity for young people to work together in a fellowship dedicated to service and international understanding," she explained. "This is done through the numerous service events, community and global projects, and collaboration opportunities that I make sure the club provides. I want the students at American to experience what I gained in my four years here: leadership skills, new perspectives, and access to community of inspirational youth."

Although it is a fulfilling responsibility, coordinating interesting and purposeful events can be a demanding experience.

"People want a lot from the club," said Prisha Davda (11), president of Chess

Club. "They expect that we immediately start going to [chess] tournaments." What's unique about her situation is that Chess Club is a new club this year, and this has required additional efforts to prepare the club for function. "I'm trying my best to meet up to people's expectations, but I also think preparation is necessary," she describes. "We are all working on planning a tournament [rather than diving straight in]."

Lamba faces perhaps an elevated amount of stress compared to other club presidents due to the size of her club and its large impact.

"The word 'stressful' is honestly an understatement for my responsibilities, which are often more than my academic-related work," she said. For her, sacrifices are necessary in order to ensure the club's well-being and complete everything that needs to be done. "We eventually deal with the to-do list, even if it means I have to crash at [co-president Archisha Datta]'s place and sort everything out, or meet with her in the library during lunch to delegate tasks amongst each other and our officers."

While Davda and Lamba represent clubs that center around organizing engaging events to attract a large number of members, clubs that are geared towards academic purposes face a different scenario.

"One thing I have learned from Linguistics Club is that a club doesn't have to be very large to be successful," explained Aditi Talati (11), president of Linguistics Club. "The few active members we have enjoy participating in Linguistics Club and solving the problems, so

*see "At the Helm"*

# Crash Course Fremont History #1

*In which your simple old city of Fremont is revealed to be much, much more*

**Michelle Lee**  
Staff Writer

Hi, I'm Michelle Lee. This is Crash Course Fremont History and today we're going to be talking about the origin of Fremont and the changes that have formed the city you call home. Now, why is this important? Well, first of all, you go to school here, and secondly, a majority of you must live nearby. It's good to know your origin story. Maybe teach your teachers and fellow classmates a thing or two.

"Michelle, Michelle! Does this mean that having an origin story makes us superheroes? I've always wanted to fly!" Unfortunately, Me from the Past, it does not—all those miles and pacers at P.E. that could have been a little bit easier. All right, let's get straight into how Fremont came to be. Cue the intro music!

Fremont was founded by Wally Pond on January 23, 1956, making it sixty-three years old last month. It's basically a combination of the five out of eight towns previously dubbed the Washington Township: Niles, Mission San Jose, Center-

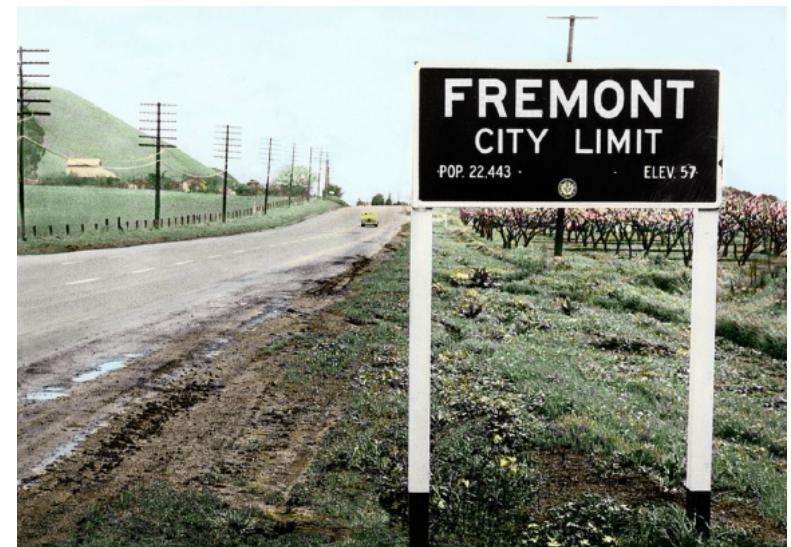
ville, Irvington, and Warm Springs. The city was named after John Charles Frémont, who actually accomplished other things besides being the name of a place.

According to Kelsey Camello, President of the Washington Township Museum of Local History, "John C. Fremont was an American soldier [in the Civil War], explorer, and later politician, who, among many other things, mapped a trail through Mission Pass, ... a thoroughfare for miners traveling to the gold fields of the eastern part of California and also Nevada."

Now, just to be clear, just because John C. Frémont explored the area does not mean he discovered Fremont. Putting a place on a map first does not mean you discovered it (looking at you, Columbus). Before Frémont himself were the Ohlone people and the Spanish. What really caused the area to grow, though, was the California Gold Rush in 1848.

During this time period, followed by California's entrance to the United States

*see "Crash Course"*



*Fremont started off simple. There weren't clustered buildings, towering electrical poles, or gas stations every ten miles. "In the beginning, this place was mostly agricultural. Washington Township has always had a history of open space, covered with fields, orchards—a lot of natural beauty," explained Kelsey Camello. "Today we seem to see nothing but people, cars, buildings, and development application signs. I don't think the city's founders quite expected this big of a population boom."*

*(Photo courtesy of Kelsey Camello from Washington Township Museum of Local History)*



# Teaching in the Bay Area: A Delicate Balancing Act

*Investigating the costs of living as compared to teachers' wages in the Bay Area*



**Annie Liu**  
Staff Writer

Throughout FUSD, teachers began work-to-rule in January as a form of protest regarding their requests for higher wages. In work-to-rule, teachers work only during their contracted hours and do not provide any additional assistance to students. The teachers argue that current salaries are not enough to sustain the inflated costs of living in the Bay Area and are asking the district for a raise in their salaries. With many data and numbers floating around, it can be difficult to understand the situation, but the statistics generally break down as follows.

According to a report by KTVU, the beginning salary for new teachers in Fremont is roughly \$65,000 per year. This places FUSD as the highest paying district out of the 15 Alameda County districts and the fifth highest paying district out of a total of 102 in the Bay Area. The average salary amongst

all teachers in Fremont is estimated to be \$89,000 per year, and the end salary is \$114,000 per year.

How do FUSD salaries compare to the teachers' living expenses? The Bay Area is one of the costliest locations in the United States in terms of living expenses, with a cost of living that is 81% higher than the national average, according to PayScale.com. It is virtually impossible to provide an exact calculation of living expenses, as every teacher's situation is different due to a variety of factors, some of which include number of family members, the salary of a spouse, or size of home. However, a general summary of typical expenses constitutes of the following.

Housing is one of the most significant expenses. According to Rent Jungle, the average cost of renting an apartment in Fremont as of January 2019 is \$2,437 per month. This translates to a total of \$29,244 per year spent on rent, which already amounts to roughly 45% of the total income per year for a new teacher in Fremont. Rent Jungle also claims that the average apartment rent within ten miles of San Francisco is \$3,772 per month, which is

\$45,264 annually.

Utilities and basic necessities also constitute a major percentage of teachers' wages. According to the US Energy Information Administration, Californians pay \$91.26 on average per month for utilities. This translates to a cost of \$1,095.12 per year spent on utility bills. As for Internet, according to Numbeo.com, the average Internet bill is \$62.17 per month, or \$746.04 per year. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Expenditure Survey in 2016, an average American household spends \$7,023 on food in a year. The survey also found that the average American spends \$1,803 on clothing each year. When these costs are added together, they total around \$10,667.16, or 16.4% of a starting teacher's salary in FUSD.

Transportation is another category of expenses. A 2015 study by ValuePenguin found that the average California monthly car insurance premium is \$164, meaning that the average annual rate would be \$1,968. In addition, GasBuddy.com reports that the average cost of gasoline in California is \$2.84 per gallon. In 2015, the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) reported that Americans used a total of roughly 140.43 billion gallons of gasoline that year.

Taxes are also a major component of teachers' expenses. Let's look at tax rates for a teacher whose taxable income is \$65,000 annually. In California, the state income tax rate for single individuals who fall within the tax bracket of \$53,980.00 and over but below \$275,738.00 is as high

as 9.3%. For a teacher who is married and filing his or her taxes jointly, the state income tax rate is as high as 6%. For federal taxes, a single starting teacher's tax rate is as high as 22%, whereas a married teacher filing jointly faces a tax rate of up to 12%.

Adding together the percentages from each section of expenses, the total percentage comes out to be 105.9%, excluding taxes—meaning that these expenses already exceed the current starting salary for teachers in FUSD. In addition, many teachers face student debt from university, with the average student debt in California being \$22,744. This only worsens the situation and presents an additional cost of living, especially for younger teachers who have not paid off their debt yet. It is also important to recognize that the above calculations were based on the bare necessities of living, but that expenses can also come from a variety of other miscellaneous sources, including money spent on entertainment, gifts, and professional organization membership fees, to name a few. These expenses can add up rapidly and present yet another financial hurdle for teachers.

With this information in mind, teachers throughout the Fremont Unified School District are faced with a very delicate situation in terms of paying all of their expenses and balancing that with their salaries. Although it may be an inconvenience, work-to-rule is part of the teachers' fight for higher wages so that they are able to continue to sustain themselves in the unforgiving economic conditions of the Bay Area.

# Celebrating Black History Month

*A look into African-American culture and heritage at American High School*

Michelle Fong  
Staff Writer

Although the African American population here at American High School is small, they are mighty. Many students participate in the Black Student Union (BSU) to represent their heritage. February is especially important as African Americans often celebrate Black History Month together.

To recognize this significant month, the club has planned for guest speakers to hold seminars during Flex period so that students at American can learn about their journeys.

"African American [speakers] come and have a talk with us and tell us their background and what [life] was like for them," said Donnyeah Tate (9), a member of BSU.

The stories shared by the guest speakers are motivational to the younger generations of the African American community. By explaining their hardships and achievements, speakers can inspire youth to strive for the future.

The majority of Fremont's population being Asian, many African American students have different feelings about being in a minority.

"I wish there was more diversity and that the school wasn't [so homogenous] ... but I'm used to it 'cause I grew up in an Asian community," explained BSU president Mykal Coleman (11).

But joining the BSU can provide these students the African American community that is missing from Fremont.

Because many African American students have grown up along peers of a different races, BSU warmly welcomes diverse club members to share how passionate they are about their culture.

"The club represents not only the Black community,

but all people of color. It allows us to have an open dialogue with each other, and gives us a voice in situations that we might not be able to take on as our own," revealed Kylah Adams (9), historian of BSU.

The club can be an outlet for African Americans and people of other races to come together and socialize.

"It really helped me interact with a lot more African Americans, and I didn't really realize how many of us it was until I came and saw that there was a lot of people like me," stated Tate. "It is also a safe space for people to explore the club and see 'where we come from' so it brings African Americans from all around campus together at the same place."

To enlighten the rest of the school about their immense pride and respect for their culture, motivational quotes by African Americans are shared with the school each morning during morning announcements. And in addition to representing the Black community in a school environment, the club also prepares students for college.

"For many of the kids in BSU it's actually been a huge help for them because many of their parents didn't go to college. Having these field trips and guest speakers help to inform them and make sure they are better prepared for their futures," explained Coleman.

Visiting San Jose State University as a club on February 5th was a way for upcoming seniors to explore their future college options. Black History Month is huge deal for many African Americans students in the school and in the country.

"It's important to us because it really helps those who know nothing about Black History month to know more about Black history," said Coleman. "School for me can now be viewed as a safe space rather than

just a classroom setting. It has allowed me to express myself and challenges I face on a day to day basis being an African American female."



## At The Helm (cont.)

making sure we have activities often that [these active] members will enjoy... really makes the club successful." In addition, she feels that a major component to the success of an academic club is introducing members to the content in an intriguing way. "What I enjoy... is being able to take activities that other people [may not have known] about or haven't tried previously and [introduce] it to them from the perspective of a fun puzzle," she described. "I also really like the fact that if I want to work on practice problems with people, or just have an event to play word games, then I can put in the work to make that happen, and hopefully by doing that I can introduce someone else to the NACLO—the annual linguistics competition our club participates in—and maybe that person will have a more interesting lunch period because of the activities we put together."

Of course, like any large endeavor, running a club is not easy and mistakes do occur. However, rather than panicking over mistakes or refusing to own up to them, Lamba describes a more constructive approach.

"Archie Datta, my co-president, has made a Google document called 'Interact Things to Do Next Time.' While it may seem that the club is functioning well from a member's perspective, there are plenty of mistakes being made behind the scenes," she said. "With the document, we acknowledge those mistakes and record them for the

next generation of Interact presidents." Mistakes aren't always entirely a bad thing, either. "I've learned about better time management, utilizing creativity, and having a Plan B in case things go south," Lamba explained. "These mistakes have increased my experience on handling obstacles smoothly and effectively, and making difficult decisions for the betterment of the club."

Another important aspect to a successful club is ensuring that officers are able to work together in a positive and welcoming environment.

"Running a club this large is admittedly a great responsibility and it takes the perfect combination of a passionate officer team, effective communication, and a positive mindset to fulfill club duties," explained Lamba. "As president of Interact, I make sure that these components are consistently maintained throughout the year. Whether it is organizing fun officer bondings on the weekends, creating a Facebook group and multiple group chats for delegating tasks to specific officers, or simply empowering them for their work, I try to solidify a secure base for my officers to tackle all the responsibilities that follow."

However, occasionally, clubs may experience internal conflict amongst officers when they disagree on certain issues. Although most officers have good intentions and share the goal of making the club the best it can be, disagreements can often complicate matters if not resolved.

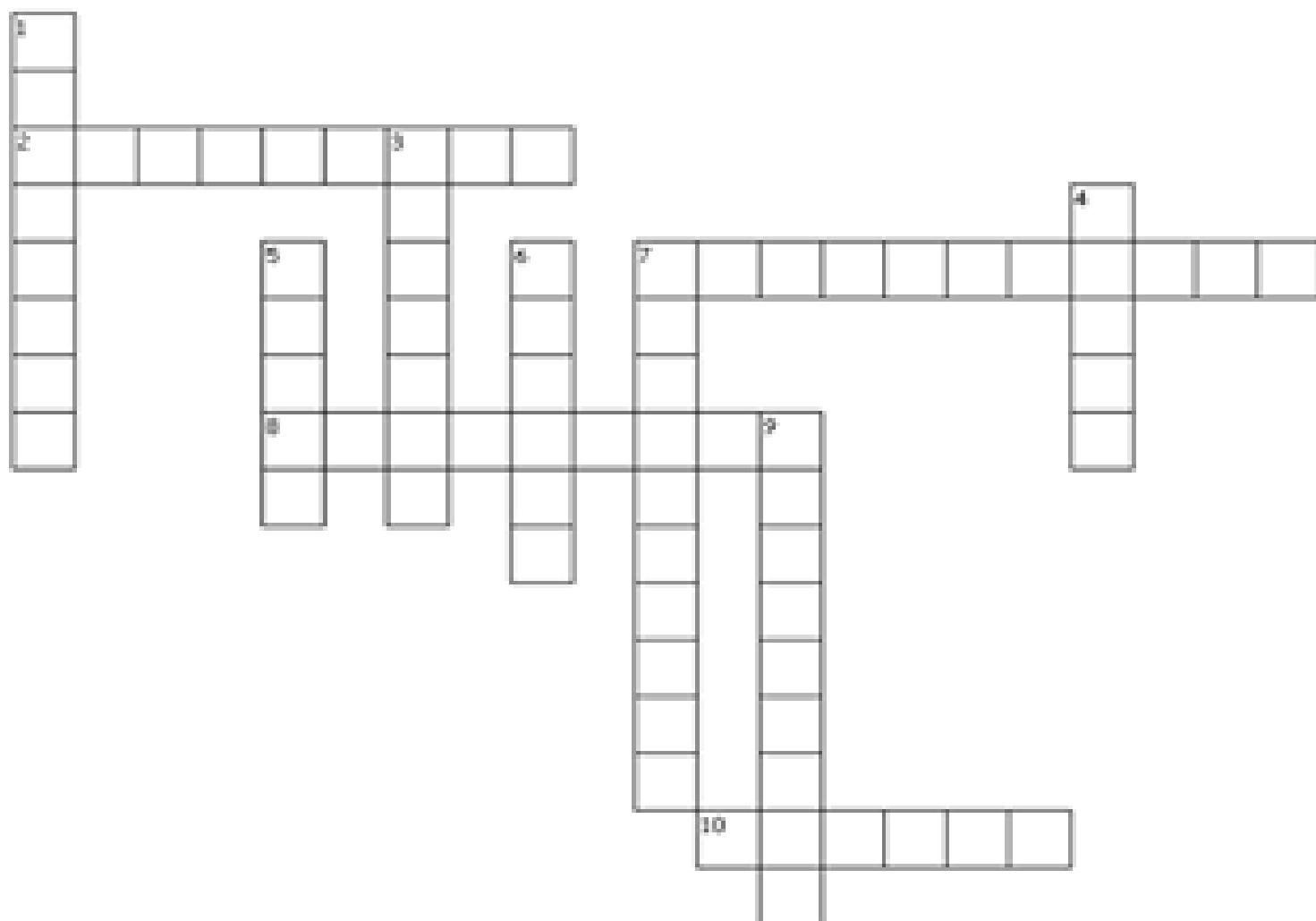
"The most stressful part is planning events, considering all the officers' and the advisor's opinions. Sometimes officers will disagree on things, and handling internal fights is a struggle," explained Davda. However, she describes that this has also taught her how to make the club experience even better. "The main thing that can improve the way the club is running is cooperation. If the officers collectively plan events, consider fundraising, and include everyone in our activities, the club will grow."

During these times of conflict as well as times when the club is particularly busy, the club advisor is also a valuable resource for officer teams to ask for advice.

"Our advisor, Mrs. Zheng, plays an important role in helping me handle the struggles that come with the club. For example, she helped me come up with a schedule to have practice sessions for chess club," explained Davda. "I ask her for guidance when the officers aren't agreeing with each other. She acknowledges people's achievements in the club, and she creates a fun and supportive vibe for the club which reduces the stress of meeting deadlines and requirements for the club."

At the end of the day, club presidents work hard and make sacrifices for their clubs because of their passion. "Being president [of Girls Who Code] has given me a new perspective on problems," Anusha Nandam (12) explains. "I've been able to give help [to members], but I've learned so much more."

# This American High School Life



Across

- 2. AHS civic event
- 7. V-day candy not available this year
- 8. Filipino dance at International Day rally
- 10. Polar \_ in the Midwest

Down

- 1. Hayward photo company
- 3. Where 30+ teachers went to protest on February 22
- 4. Fremont "Pond" first name
- 5. Our teachers' union
- 6. New Jersey 2020 candidate
- 7. Disease that affects roughly 25% of AHS students
- 9. Oscar Best Picture

## EagleMD: Senioritis

*A look into the seasonal disease that can plague up to 1/4 of the school population*

**Sriram Dasarathy, M.D.  
and Divya Prakash, M.D.  
Staff Medical Writers**

**EMERGENCY HEALTH ADVISORY:** Senioritis is beginning to spread! It can affect large portions of the population and must be guarded against at all costs. Read further to understand the causes, symptoms, effects, and treatments of this fatal disease.

**OVERVIEW:** Senioritis is the ebbing motivation felt by high school seniors every year, beginning in mid-second semester. Its symptoms and time of onset can vary, but results are universally devastating. Many students begin to contract it in late February and mid-March, especially upon receiving a college acceptance. Some students, however, have been suffering from it since as early as 8th grade.

**SYMPTOMS:** Symptoms include: absolute lack of desire to accomplish any sort of productive work, lack of attendance in classes, simultaneous feelings of utter sluggishness and uncon-

trollably ecstatic freedom, curious gaps in memory even for simple tasks, and a constant sense of anticipation and boredom.

**CAUSES:** Researchers believe that these symptoms stem from students' mistaken belief that their work ethic no longer matters for college and job applications. In addition, scientists theorize that after 3.5 years in high school, students might be suffering from a deep sense of restlessness and excitement that manifests, unfortunately, as senioritis.

**EFFECTS:** The effects are varied, but uniformly severe. Some students might find themselves unable to get up, exercise, or eat and sleep in a timely fashion. This can lead to a deterioration of their physical and mental health. They will feel sluggish and therefore underperform in the classes that they do deign to show up to. Other students might rack up so many absences that they run into disciplinary issues at school. They might face extreme parental

anger; just because colleges do not see those grades yet does not mean your parents don't. Others might see their work ethic drop so far that they are unable to regain it in time for college. And of course, the most dreaded effect of all: some students, in the most extreme cases, might find their hard-won college acceptances rescinded for poor grades.

**PREVENTION AND CURE:** As you can see, this disease has the potential to truly ravage the body and mind. Fail-safe preventions are as of yet unknown; however, studies have found that students who enjoy learning for its own sake, rather than for college admissions or parental approval, are far less likely to contract Senioritis. As for cure, mental fortitude goes a long way. Work hard, have a lot of fun, make memories with your friends, and keep fighting the good fight. If none of that works, however, a letter from Harvard withdrawing your acceptance can also go a long way in quickly curing senioritis.



# FEATURES

## COMMENTARY:

### An American Land of Opportunity

*My story of family poverty in the most expensive region of the United States*

**Anonymous**

*Guest Contributor*

I was born in Los Angeles, but spent my elementary years in a village in a small South Asian country. Our home there, while not palatial, was comfortable, cozy, and a short walk from my school. More importantly, our home was happy. I lived with my parents, my two older brothers, and a ratty stray dog who subsisted off our table scraps. But we were hungry: not only for food, but for opportunity. We could feel the world expanding and we wanted to be a part of it. So in 2010, we came with our cousins to Fremont, California, and our American life (take two) began.

However, we soon realized that there is a tremendous difference between the cost of living in the Silicon Valley and in a developing country whose top export is sugar cubes. Things that we once considered basics—pens, socks, menstrual pads, bread—became luxury items. I remember sticking my Science Fair presentation to a poster board using cooked rice, since we did not want to spend valuable money on frivolities like glue. Eventually, we were pushed out of Fremont, into a relatively less expensive neighboring town. But these adjustments were, and still are, trivial in comparison to the opportunity we're surrounded with, here in California.

The main place where these adversities did take their toll was within my family. Controlled—and viciously antagonized—by our lack of money, my dad returned to an old vice, later leaving our family. My mother developed health issues which remained untreated as long as we remained uninsured. My brothers, who spent time in foster care be-

fore I was born, are still suffering the sins of that system. I work 20 hours a week; my brothers and mom, nearly 60 each. We are a close-knit family—especially now that my dad returned—and we often find a way to enjoy a movie or buy nice clothing. So none of this is to evoke pity, but rather, to illustrate the pressures of making do with fixed income in such an affluent community whose costs are only rising.

The high school in the town I live in is a very different environment than American is. Absenteeism was high, few advanced courses were offered, and the people around me seemed to struggle in many of the same ways my family did. It seemed to my family that the entire American dream was this drive to be surrounded with people who elevated us; what we see, my mother reasons, we will become. So together we made a decision that was terrifying at the time... using our cousins' address, I enrolled at American High School.

It was simultaneously the best and the worst decision we ever made. I am so grateful for the safe environment, the multitude of courses, the motivated and motivating student body. But the fear was often overwhelming. Don't call anybody home. No getting rides from people. Take the later bus so nobody sees where you get off. There were so many rules to remember.

After graduating, I heaved a sigh of relief at completing not only four years of high school, but four years of deception. I know that not every non-Fremont student at our school is struggling financially, just as I know that many struggling families somehow make do in Fremont. What we have in common is both a certain gnawing guilt and also

an accompanying skepticism: should a city line determine our educational outcomes? And are our education outcomes so neatly tied to property taxes paid, AP courses offered, the demographics of our student body? We took this risk in return for the risk that education takes

on us, this nebulous promise of a better future, of deliverance at the end of four years of work and play. And I guess we drank the Kool-Aid.

There's a lot that I'm not sure about, even to this day. Am I a criminal? What should I have done? What should be done about the thousands of

students at the school I left behind, and at dangerous and failing schools around the country? But through all these questions which will never be answered, what I am sure of is that America was my family's land of opportunity, all those years ago. Now let's let American be one too.

## New Colors For Valentine's Day

*Checking in on American's LGBTQ+ rainbow*

**Rebecca Beddingfield**

*Staff Writer*

Valentine's Day is the ultimate day to celebrate love: love that overcomes all obstacles and that brings happiness into a person's life. Thousands of red and pink roses, chocolate boxes, and teddy bears are sold every year. The love stories of many LGBTQ+ individuals have painted Valentine's Day in rainbow colors.

Before people can fall in love, they have to meet. AJ Laxa (11) and his boyfriend John Wagas (11) met in an AP European History class during their sophomore year. They started out as friends and began hanging out at brunch.

"As we were talking, it became 'I look forward to brunch.' It was the best part of my day at that point," says Wagas (11).

Other couples took a bit longer to realize that they liked each other. Ysabella Ballesil (11) and her girlfriend Nitalia Camilosa (11) have known each other since seventh grade, but it wasn't love at first sight.

"The funny part about that was that she would tell me about [liking] my best friend, but I liked her. I didn't say anything, so I was the wing woman," says Camilosa.

In the midst of friendship, many people in the LGBTQ+ community have to come to terms with their sexuality before they can enter into a relationship. Morrigan Banks (9) is one person who had trouble accepting that part of themselves.

"For the longest time, I was really scared, because I was scared that I was going to be condemned to hell, but in the Bible, it tells you that God is going to love you no matter what," Banks says. "If He really hated everyone for being gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, etc., then wouldn't we all not be here right now?"

After overcoming struggles with sexual orientation, many brave souls then confess their feelings to their crushes.

"I was like 'Hey, I think I like you' and I was thinking 'Welp, she's straight, she doesn't like me, time to be sad again,'" says Ballesil (11), remembering how she confessed to her girlfriend.

Ballesil had many crushes on heterosexual girls in middle school, so she thought Camilosa would be no different. However, Ballesil was in for a surprise.

"I said 'Actually, I kinda like you back' and her only response to that was 'wait, what?'" says Camilosa (11).

Before and after the big moment of two people finally coming together, students like to 'ship' couples. Laxa and Wagas have dated ever since sophomore year, and have become very well-known on campus. However, they don't want to be known as the "LGBTQ+ couple."

"I'd rather be seen as the gold standard," says Wagas, "it's like when JFK said 'I'm not the Catholic candidate for president; I'm the candidate that

happens to be Catholic."

Another well-known ship on campus in Desna Bui (10) and Sebastian Moreira (12). Bui identifies as part of the LGBTQ+ community as a bisexual.

"I was lucky enough to have an understanding partner," says Bui (10). "I think the problem with a lot of LGBTQ+ people in heterosexual relationships is that, especially with bisexual people like me, people think that there's a higher chance of cheating on their partner. However, it's really not like that."

Even if a couple is "shipped," not all of their romantic gestures are perfectly executed with fairytale-like precision. Ballesil took Camilosa to the winter ball their sophomore year, and Ballesil made an attempt to impress her girlfriend.

Ballesil was messing around with her friends, and a stylish walk was a sure way to impress Camilosa, who says, "It was like a cowboy walk. I don't know why she was doing it, and I didn't even realize it because I was on my phone for a bit, but then I looked up and I was like 'Kay, I like you, but what the hell?'"

Valentine's Day can be confusing for everyone, but what these couples have demonstrated is the importance of knowing and being yourself before seeking someone else. No matter identity or relationship status you have, that's something we can all stand to learn.

# CAMPUS LIFE

## Crash Course (cont.)

in 1850 as a state, Frémont became one of California's first two senators. In addition, he tried to run for president against James Buchanan in 1856, but failed.

"[In] '56, Fremont did not win the presidency because, well, we've never heard of a President Fremont," stated Mr. Rojas, who teaches U.S. History. "I guess he tried to stake his glory when he came out west to California and saw this wonderful and beautiful land."

Frémont was also appointed general of a few Union troops during the Civil War two times and relieved from duty two times for "ineffectiveness" by former President Lincoln. In the second time, though, Frémont decided to resign before he could be officially kicked out, which was basically the equivalent of telling your boss "I quit" before he fires you.

Okay, okay, so he wasn't always the best person at times, but this is history so I don't know what you were expecting. A fact that may not be commonly known was that the main reason Fremont was chosen as a name was because it won the majority of votes from the towns deciding the city's title.

According to the document "The Man Who Named Fremont" from the Fremont government's database, "Mission San Jose gave 'Mission Valley' the top vote, but every other town preferred 'Fremont.'" And thus, Fremont was born.

Ever since that fateful day, Fremont has gone through changes. A lot of them. One of them is the geography of the city, especially with the construction of buildings.

"All the buildings on Fremont Boulevard! You just wonder how sustainable they are," exclaimed Mr. Creger, who has taught at American High for almost 31 years. "Is the school district able to keep up with the growth? Is the character of the town going to be adversely affected?"

More buildings bring more people. Then more people bring more buildings, and the cycle continues. So, the establishment of more buildings must mean that it's causing the population to go up, right? Well, actually...

"Fremont's population was impacted before all the new buildings came in. It's been a slow and steady growth," explained Mrs. Wheaton, who grew up in Fremont. "We've been getting people who retire and sell their property because it's worth more money than when they bought it, and then we have families moving in. We're especially seeing an increase in K-12 students."

That's why our traffic is just so wonderful and efficient and does not make you want to scream at the driver blocking the intersection (you know who you are) while you're trying to get to school on time. Traffic aside, a growing population means changing demographics.

"In 1960, 98% of the people living in Fremont were Caucasian. The largest ethnic groups below that were Japanese and Filipinos. Today we are more than 50% Asian, with Caucasian people numbering closer to 30%, and about 15% being comprised of people of Hispanic or Latino descent," described Kelsey Camello. "Fremont has always been, and always will be, a multicultural place. If you look back through our history, we have had waves of immigration as far back as you can see."

With the community's growing and ever-changing diversity, much of this change spills into the schools. I mean, look at our school!

"Eight years ago, I would say that there was no significant racial, ethnic, or religious majority. There were 30-something percent white kids, 30-something percent Asian kids, and the rest was kind of broken up," said Mr. Creger. "There was no one majority, and now, in the

last eight to ten years, Asians are more of a majority."

So, what do we have so far? Fremont. Big city. Many, many changes. It's like a "New Year, New Me" campaign, except that the year has been going on from 1956 to today. Is there anything that seems to have stayed the same? A little old mixed in with the new?

"Nothing," admitted Mrs. Wheaton. "Lake Elizabeth is still there, but otherwise, it's not the same place at all. The kids are working at school nonstop, so you don't have the same dynamics. When I was a kid, we just stayed out on the street playing all afternoon, all evening, and into the night until the parents yelled to come home. Now, the streets are barren."

Truer words have never been spoken. Free time? What's that? Gotta love those SAT and AP prep books. Even outside of the school and work environment, Fremont just isn't what it was sixty-three years ago. But, not to worry! There's an explanation!

"We've always been multicultural. We've always produced goods that have made their way to the rest of the world," stated Camello. "Once, long ago, it was produce. Later, it was microchips and computers. Today, it's Teslas and digital technologies. Fremont [is] innovative."

Whether it's a 1956 world of produce or a 2019 area of business, Fremont's still Fremont. I hope you learned a lot about your city. I definitely did due to all of the research needed to create this piece.

To end with a quote from Wally Pond himself, "Everyone should know a little something about their community. You should know what's happening and why, and what you can do to help. When your time on earth is gone, the world should be a little better for your being there, for your kindnesses."

Thanks for reading!



PC: NBC News

## February Headlines

**LeAnn Liu**  
*Web Editor*

### Train Tracks Intentionally Set On Fire in the Frigid Midwest

At least eight people have died at the hands of the Polar Vortex that attacked the Midwest and sent the temperature dropping around 30 degrees below zero, though wind chill factor can make it feel like negative 50 degrees. Flights and other forms of transportation were not the only things forced to stall; the Postal Service was also suspended. When the trains were operating, the tracks had to be set on fire to keep the cold from damaging infrastructure. Water pipes were also frozen or broken. The sudden chill was caused by a split in the Polar Vortex, a mass of cold air that usually stays over the Arctic. Unfortunately, until the vortex passes, the only way to step out of the house and return alive is by bundling up extravagantly.

### A National Emergency Strikes the Border

After an over month-long government shutdown that failed to yield the \$5.7 billion that President Trump wanted to construct a wall along the US-Mexico border, the president declared a national emergency so he could follow through with his project. 15 state attorney generals are suing against the declaration.

### A Not So Super Halftime Show

After many artists refused to perform in the Super Bowl Halftime Show this year, Maroon 5, Travis Scott, and Big Boi attempted to meet the expectations for a much-loved American tradition. The controversy in the NFL began in 2016 when then 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick took a knee during the national anthem in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. He became a free agent after that season but was unable to find a team, leading to an accusation that the NFL was working to keep him out of the sport. Many artists boycotted the Halftime Show in solidarity with Kaepernick and against racial injustice.

### Venezuelan President Blocks Humanitarian Aid from Helping His People

The people of Venezuela are starving and the president is preventing them from receiving life-saving aid. Despite leading the country into the worst economic disaster in Latin American history, President Nicolás Maduro was reelected in 2018. Those who believe he rigged the election have chosen to recognize Juan Guaidó as the president instead. More than 50 nations, including the US, recognize Guaidó as the president as well. Maduro, however, refuses to yield and four people have died protesting the regime.

# Photos from International Day

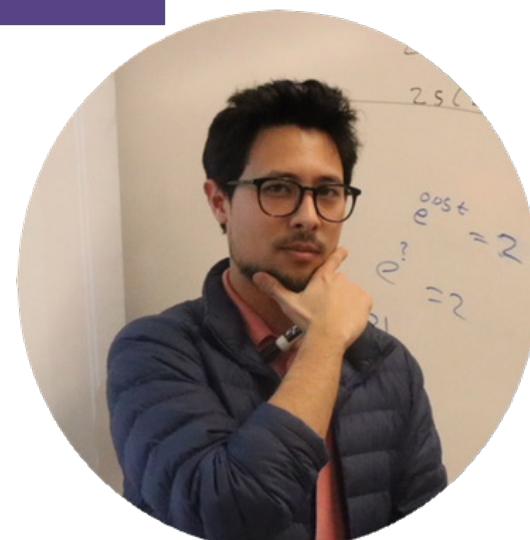


## The Early Morning Grind: Struggles Teachers Face With Stagnant Salaries



"The coaching stipend is pretty low, and if you did it by the hour, it would be below minimum wage. I don't do it for the money, but it's nice to get the little bit extra... If I was a beginning teacher or just getting out of college, I don't think I would make the same career choice... When [the superintendent is] given 3.7% from the State from the cost-of-living and they offer us 0.7% percent. It's like a slap in the face."

-Mr. Lindsay



"Right now, I have a lot of student loans that I have to pay back, and... since I studied math, I could get into a lot of different fields. Some of my friends [are] in actuary business, and they get paid a lot more. Me, personally, I love teaching... There is a part of me that wishes, 'yeah, if I made a little bit more, I wouldn't be so hesitant to have a kid.'"

-Mr. Stephan



"Because I'm breaking even or finding that my savings account isn't being added to, I have to be more mindful and cognizant of how I'm saving money and stick to a very strict budget. Back in North Carolina, ... since I had somewhat of a savings, I didn't think twice about going out to dinner with friends, getting a coffee with someone."

-Ms. Roberts



"I live in Mountain House, which is 45 miles away. How can you have an area where even the basic people, firefighters, teachers, policemen, cannot afford to live in the city that we serve? ... I wake up at 4:30, I leave at 5:15, but I have to give myself an hour-and-a-half play time just in case the traffic is so unpredictable."

-Mr. Sharma