

# EAGLE ERA

DECEMBER 2019 AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL 36300 FREMONT BLVD FREMONT, CA 94536

VOL. 47 ISSUE #2

## News on the News

*A news article on the newsworthiness of the news*



Shreya Ramachandran (11) and friends talk under the watchful eye of an ABC 7 camera on November 21. Ramachandran was selected to be covered on ABC 7's program ABC7 Stars due to her environmental work, specifically her Grey Water Project. "The news crew was super nice. They were just super supportive and it was a really wonderful experience. I'm really glad it happened," said Ramachandran of her time with ABC7.

**Rebecca Beddingfield and Emyr Ortiz**  
*Media Editor & Staff Writer*

Cameras rolling. Students take glimpses of big cameras and ABC7 news uniforms pointing towards one girl, one face in the crowd: Shreya Ramachandran. Miscellaneous students walk past, gazing at students they've never seen before. For many, this was their first encounter with the Grey Water Project.

Shreya Ramachandran (11) won the Children's Climate Prize for her work with grey water, the prize being about \$10,000 US dollars, which was presented in the country of Sweden. After winning this award, a city official nominated her for a segment of ABC7 news.

"Well, it was the week I got back from Sweden, so I was a jet-lagged baby seal.

And they told me the day before they showed up at school that they were really interested. I got half a day's worth of notice. It was very all-at-once, but the news crew was super nice and when they were interviewing me, I could barely tell that time was passing," says Ramachandran.

Ramachandran's segment with ABC7 was seen all across the East Bay area by many who would have never heard of the Grey Water Project beforehand. Whether the platform reaches two hundred or two million people, news resources have the power to shape the views of the public, including what we believe about people and their accomplishments. The administrators here at American certainly keep the influence of the media

*cont. on page 7*

## New Year, New Me

AHS students weigh in on the benefits of new year's resolutions

**Aarya Vaidya**  
*Staff Writer*

As the year comes to a close, it has always been a popular tradition to start the next year by setting a new year's resolution. For some, this is an important way to create a positive change in their lives while others have a less optimistic view of creating a new year's resolution.

Shreya Patil (11) is one of many students who feels that these resolutions are not the best way to start off the year.

"My resolutions [in the past were] usually big changes...I never follow[ed] through with them, and I don't want to start my new year [feeling like] a fail-

ure," said Shreya Patil (11).

Meghana Hariprasad (10) too believes that new year resolutions that people set are not always a realistic goal, especially considering the time duration of these goals.

"I just don't follow them because they're always things that [are] changing and things that get in the way," explained Meghana Hariprasad (10).

On the other hand, there are several students who find value in creating and trying to follow through with their resolutions.

"My resolution was to get to know more people and make friends outside of my circle...This



*"My resolutions stay the same every year. I feel like if I maintain the same resolution every year, it provides a sense of consistency to my lifestyle, and it ensures that no matter what happens, I will always make time for those who are important to me," said Bhatnagar.*

*cont. on page 2*

## EAGLE ERA

## Editors-in-Chief

Annie Liu  
Michelle Lee

## Newspaper Design

## Editor

Trinity Advincula-De  
Los Angeles

## Online Design

## Editor

Rebecca Beddingfield

## Broadcast Editor

Michelle Fong

## Staff Writers

Shreya Daschoudhary

Liana Dong

Khushi Kanchibotla

Nydia Kuo

Weston Liang

Emyr Ortiz

Aarya Vaidya

Visit [eagleera.org](http://eagleera.org) for more articles. Letters to the Editors are encouraged and will be edited for length, grammar, and clarity.

Please submit entries to [eagleeraeditors@gmail.com](mailto:eagleeraeditors@gmail.com).

Note that not all letters will be published

## Follow us on social media!

IG: eagle\_era

FB: Eagle Era

Twitter: eagle\_era

## Our Mission Statement

We at the Eagle Era strive to be a reliable and compelling source of news for the members of the American High School community. We are dedicated to regularly providing students, staff, and the community beyond with newsworthy information accurately, truthfully, and objectively through printed issues, online articles, and social media posts. We hope to include a diverse range of content that impacts the readers of the Eagle Era in a unique yet creative manner. As a student-run newspaper, we aim not to reflect the values, interests, and ideas of the staff alone, but of the AHS community as a whole.

## CAMPUS LIFE

## The Race Towards a New Democratic Candidate Letter from the Editor

Dear Eagles,

Happy Holidays! I hope everyone still feels well-rested from Thanksgiving break, especially now that most college applications have been submitted to the schools we'd like to attend. Congratulations to everyone who has finished, and good luck to those who still have a few left to send! As we get further into the month, students eagerly await the start of our two-week-long winter break. I hope everyone can catch up on work, get some much-needed sleep, spend time with family, make plans with friends, and eat delicious food before returning to wrap up our first semester.

However, while there are positive aspects of using social media to learn about the elections, the dangers of putting trust in social media for reliable information is now becoming more apparent.

"Celebrities endorse candidates and sway people's opinions without facts, and misinformation is obviously a huge problem that has been affecting our elections and has drawn the attention of the government as well," explained Mathew.

With the variety of sources to learn about the candidates, many students find that listening to the debates is crucial.

"Debates are super important! A candidate is giving their answer to

America's problems during a debate. Everything they do is key to how America will view them. If a candidate can only promise better jobs but not support his/her plan with actual data and facts, their presence at the debate is not unique or new," explained Aaditya Borse (10).

As the elections contin-

able. We've covered trends, chart-topping songs, rising stars, and more. Who remembers when Frozen and Despicable Me were released, causing an onslaught of Frozen-themed and minion-themed products? Who remembers the year Rainbow Loom blew up and people would sit in corners making colorful bracelets? Who still has their kendama that they used to bring to school every day to flex their skills?

So many things have happened last year, so it's only right that we acknowledge them, even the unfortunate and heart-breaking events. Yes, it's all in the past, but it's our past. There's a reason we look at previous years to make decisions for the future of our lives and other people's lives. Let's make 2020 our year (especially to you, seniors). And it's almost here in 3...2...1...

Michelle Lee  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

ue in years to come, there is hope for positive change in the way that they are run.

"I hope that both parties prioritize grassroots fundraising for candidates, like the Democrats have done this time. I think it is a big step towards making sure these candidates represent public interests," said Baldwa.



"I hope to see less polarization and division when it comes to voting for candidates in the future. I really want people from any party with different views to be able to respect each other and have discussions," explained Meryl Mathew (9).

Mathew too agrees that social media plays an important role in the way that teenagers think about elections.

# CAMPUS LIFE

## The Meaning of Christmas

### *What a Christian holiday means in the diverse Bay Area*

**Liana Dong**  
Staff Writer

The onset of December makes it nearly impossible to leave the house without seeing the influence of arguably the most popular American holiday, Christmas. With Douglas fir filled parking lots, shopping centers adorned with string lights, and festive decorations that seem to exist everywhere from doctor's offices to grocery stores, the holiday is definitely hard to miss. However, in today's society, it can be difficult to see Christmas for what it is instead of getting caught up in its consumerist elements. So, how exactly is the meaning of Christmas perceived by society in this day and age?

For Polina Muradyan (11), who celebrates for secular reasons, Christmas means a nostalgic return to easier times. "Watching Christmas movies and setting up a tree reminds me of when everything was way more simple in life, and all I had to worry about was if Santa would give me the gift I wanted... I think the smell of the tree is what really puts me in a good mood. Obviously, presents are important, but I value the feeling of Christmas more than anything else."

Others see Christmas not only as a celebratory holiday, but as an opportunity to worship.

"We call this service Mass, and that's the ultimate form of worship that we have to God. That's like the source and summit of the Christian life," John Wagas (12) explains. "Especially in terms of Christmas, because that's when we're preparing for the coming of Christ as [His] child; it's sort of like we're anticipating that and we're

worshiping... like we're building that up for that ultimate moment of feast."

For those who don't celebrate, today's society makes the idea of partaking in Christmas appealing by presenting an image of universal and carefree happiness.

Viraj Vinish (10) explains, "During the holiday season, movies come out that show characters celebrating Christmas. Parades take place with Santa Claus leading the way. Children see ads for toys and games. Christmas music becomes popular. The story of Santa Claus is one that every child knows. Santa Claus is loved by all, because which child does not want to get free presents? Most families get pressured into celebrating Christmas just because of the popularity and commercialization...[which] does make me wish that I celebrated Christmas properly. When I was younger... I just liked Christmas because of the presents. I didn't understand the Christian aspect, and that Christmas was like a family gathering in the traditional sense."

The influence that commercialization plays in creating this pressure raises the question of how the holiday has changed with American consumerism.

Wagas says, "I respect how we can make [Christmas] secularized, but I do think it's come to a point where it's... all about the sales and everything. Of course, as much as the shops try to do 'season of giving' and everything, they still push that thing of 'this item is 20% off.' It's too much! It's better to give than to receive. But maybe not even buying something for someone. Give some



*A Christmas tree stands fully decorated with ornaments and lights. For John Wagas (12), a special part of the holiday season is "the moment where you put the star on top. For us, we have an angel on top. It's really nice to have that... moment where you've reached the literal pinnacle of the tree, and you actually put that on."*

used stuff away, maybe give a toy that you had laying around or give some canned goods in your home, that sort of thing... It's such a season of 'I can get all these deals and sales' rather than 'I can be with family' or 'I can celebrate' or even, if you're a Christian, 'I can worship,' to the extent that they want to."

Many others recognize this detrimental focus on revenue, as well as how consumerist products can set a negative standard.

"With all the ads and movies, Christmas begins to seem like a marketing ploy rather than a religious holiday. Movies and stores make tremendous profits off of a simple holiday," Vinish says. "Commercialization is additionally bad for people who do not celebrate

the holiday. For example, in Christmas movies, the characters are Christians. This focus on Christianity is unhealthy for a nation that prides itself on diversity. Personally, as a Hindu, I felt that Christianity was fun when I was younger... because [Christian children] got presents and stuff for Christmas, due to my biased point of view that was solely based on Christmas movies."

Despite these setbacks, the holiday season is still one of fondness and joy for people who celebrate, like Muradyan.

"To me, [it] is all about feeling cozy and having some kind of closeness. It doesn't matter with who or what. It's about feeling like everything is calm and trying to get rid of your worries if you have any."

## New Year, New Me (cont.)

side of my circle... This goal is important to me because I enjoy meeting new people and being comfortable in any situation without any uneasiness," said Nivi Arun (11).

To achieve her goal, Arun made herself take risks even though she sometimes felt as though she had not followed through her goals. Despite her concerns about not achieving her resolution, Arun worked through the challenges.

"There were a few times that I felt that when I could have met new people I shied away and stayed with the ones I was familiar with which was why I decided on this resolution in the first place... [However], I stayed motivated by remembering the level of closeness and excitement I got from meeting new people, and it encouraged me, in situations where I could branch out, to go out of my comfort zone and make new friends," explained Arun.

Ayushi Bhatnagar (12) too was proud of achieving her goal of spending more quality time with friends this year.

"Schoolwork and other activities tend to get the better of me and I find myself not spending enough time with people who are important to me... By telling myself that [by] allocating a few minutes of my day to spending time with friends and family [allowed] me to be social as well as learn how to properly manage time," said Bhatnagar.

For Rakshan Patnaik, the goal of spending more time with friends was more focused on developing a stronger identity in high school.

"I wanted to get closer to [my friends], and make more [friends], so I can have more connections in high school. I also wanted people to care for me in the scary and intimidating place that is high school," said Rakshan Patnaik (9).

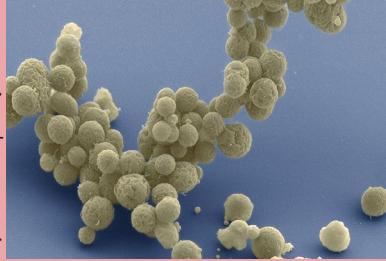
Whether or not you choose to create a new year's resolution, a positive mindset is always a great way to start of the new year and decade. Arun hopes to use next year as a time to improve upon her work.

"Next year I want to stay focused and not procrastinate on any commitments [that] I might have," said Arun.

**2010 Synthetic life is first created**

Synthetic life is used in a variety of important things, such as removing toxic chemicals from soil or creating vaccines for dangerous flu strains. The very first one of these essential life forms was created by Craig Venter in 2010. It was a copy of the cattle bacterium Mycoplasma mycoides; the code was written on a computer, put together in a test tube, and inserted into the hollow shell of a different bacterium.

from aeon.co, courtesy of Tom Deerinck and Mark Ellisman

**April 03, 2010 The first generation iPad is released**

courtesy of lifewire.com



Concepts of an Apple tablet were being brainstormed as far back as 1993. In 2004, the company began working on the iPad, which was meant to be released before the iPhone, but Apple decided the latter was more necessary. The product was most definitely revolutionary, and by the end of the year, began outselling Macs.

**July 23, 2010 One Direction was formed**

Harry Styles, Zayn Malik, Niall Horan, Liam Payne, and Louis Tomlinson all auditioned as soloists for The X-Factor UK. The judges felt that they weren't interesting enough to be solo artists, but too talented to be cut altogether. They were then put together as the band One Direction.

**2010**

March 11, 2011

**The Great East Japan Earthquake**

The Great East Japan Earthquake was



courtesy of The Japan Society that struck the coast of Honshu in 2011. This then triggered an enormous tsunami with waves reaching as high as a 12-story building. All of this also led to the Fukushima Daiichi incident, a nuclear power plant meltdown, devastating the country and racking up around \$360 billion in losses. About 20,000 died or went missing, and 500,000 were forced to evacuate.

**May 02, 2011 Osama Bin Laden is killed**

Osama Bin Laden, the leader of the infamous terrorist group Al Qaeda and the man who orchestrated the 9/11 attacks, was shot by a group of US Navy SEALs who infiltrated Bin Laden's compound during an early-morning raid in Abbottabad, Pakistan. The decade-long manhunt resulted in the discovery of thousands of files collected from the compound, including Bin Laden's personal journal.



courtesy of CNN

**October 31, 2011 The world population reaches seven billion****2012 Carly Rae Jepsen's "Call Me Maybe" becomes the most popular music video on Vevo****July 15, 2012 "Gangnam Style" by PSY came out**

"Gangnam Style" is the 18th single by South Korean artist PSY. It quickly became a worldwide sensation, with its catchy beat and memorable dancing allowing it to become the first YouTube video to reach one billion views. It also topped the charts in thirty different countries. The iconic dance has even been attempted by political leaders such as David Cameron, Barack Obama, and Ban Ki-moon.

**December 14, 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary Shooting**

This devastating shooting happened in Newton, Connecticut, when 20-year-old Adam Lanza shot and killed 20 first-graders and 6 staff members at the school before also killing himself and his mother. In response, flags were flown at half-staff in all U.S. government facilities worldwide, and the six staff members who died

courtesy of Britannica



to protect the children were given the Presidential Citizens Medal.

**December 21, 2012 The 2012 phenomenon****2013 Early February****2013 "Harlem Shake" meme videos went viral****March 26, 2013 "Blurred Lines," one of the most controversial songs of the decade, was released**

courtesy of Reuters

In a terrorist attack during the annual Boston Marathon, two homemade pressure cooker bombs filled with shrapnel detonated near the finish line of the race, killing 3 spectators and wounding around 260 others. The perpetrators, two Muslim brothers named Dzhokar A. Tsarnaev and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, wanted retribution for U.S. military action in Afghanistan and Iraq.

**April 15, 2013 Boston Marathon Bombing**

courtesy of AP

**September 2013 "What Does the Fox Say?" by Ylvis goes viral****November 27, 2013 Frozen released**

Frozen was definitely one of the most beloved children's movies of the decade. It has earned a

courtesy of Vital Thrills

whopping 1.26 billion so far, making it the ninth highest grossing Disney film. "Let It Go" by Idina Menzel, the movie's most iconic song, later became one of the most popular songs of 2014.

**2014****2014 "Happy" by Pharrell Williams becomes the top song of 2014**

courtesy of Time



water over a participant's head in an amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, challenge, and even celebrities such as Bill and Melinda Gates took part. In total, it raised nearly \$100 million that helped fight ALS.

**August 01, 2014 Guillermo del Toro's "Pacific Rim" is released****October 10, 2014****Malala Yousafzai won the Nobel Peace Prize**

courtesy of BBC

**2014****February 23, 2014****February 26, 2015 The**

divided the internet

This perplexing dress took over the internet with only one question: what color was the dress? Some people argued that they saw white and gold, others said that they saw blue and white. In the end, the company that manufactured the dress said that it was indeed blue and black, and that the reason for the perceived color difference was because of lighting and contrast in the photograph.

**June 26, 2015 The legal****marriage**

On this day, the Supreme Court made a decision that all states will be required to grant same-sex marriages and recognize same-sex marriages in other states. The people waiting outside of the court cheered with joy, as they could finally get married to the person they love. After all, love is love.

**December 12, 2015****Majority of Americans no longer considered as middle class**

the upper class or the lower class. Middle-class shrink, but the overall population. Compared to 2000, many people

**2015**

# ROLL

arell Williams became

July 2014 The ALS  
Ice Bucket Challenge  
went viral

The Ice Bucket Challenge took over the world in late 2014. It involved dumping a bucket of ice over a person's head in order to spread awareness about ALS. It became a worldwide sensation, raising over \$100 million for charities.

Guardians of the Galaxy  
released



est Nobel laureate because of her work against the suppression of children, as well as her advocacy for all children. She was shot by a Taliban gunman after taking an exam in 2012. Her story, and a biography of her experiences, *I am Malala*, was published a year prior.

2015 Apple  
released emojis  
dress that

courtesy  
of The  
Straits  
Times

while others  
black. At

ctured the dress confirmed that it

the other colors people see were just

the photo.

lization of same-sex



courtesy of South China  
Morning Post

Because of many economic factors at the beginning of 2015, the country had about 120.8 million adults living in the middle class. This number compared with the 121.3 million that either lived in poverty or above it. Not only did the number of middle-class people fall behind financial lines, but the median income dropped 4%.

# THE DECADE

December 2019 / Eagle Era / Page 5

February 29, 2016 Leonardo DiCaprio finally won an Oscar

Late 2016 The gorilla that became a meme

One day, a boy fell into an enclosure and the gorillas inside were dragging him around. To ensure the boy's safety, Harambe was shot to death. After



courtesy of Maxim

Harambe's death, he became a meme, though not for the best reasons. It started with the hashtag #RIPHarambe to show the people's grief over Harambe's death and slowly escalated to anger. The meme was another way to express one's anger with sarcastic wording.

September 9, 2016 Giant pandas off the endangered species list

November 9, 2016 Donald Trump wins the presidency

courtesy of Business Insider

As the results of Election Day 2016 rolled in, Donald Trump won the upcoming presidency. Upon his inauguration in January 2017, he became the 45th President of the United States. Trump's victory was seen as an extremely controversial event.



2016

January 21, 2017 The women's march



This was the start of a worldwide protest that supported gender equality, civil rights, and many more. Throughout the United States, many "sister marches" rose and some estimated that about 4.6 million people attended these events. This day became the largest single-day protest that ever happened in the United States.

May—June 2017 Fidget spinner trend

September 19, 2017 Best way to heal skin with SkinGun

October 15, 2017 #MeToo

The Me Too movement started with the actress Alyssa Milano, who made allegations of sexual harassment by a Hollywood producer. Soon, women who had been sexually harassed or assaulted shared their stories under the words "Me Too," showing the severity of the problem. Within a few days only, the large majority of women shared the harassment and assault they faced in their own lives.



courtesy of USA Today

What were your favorite parts of the decade or favorite trend?

"The release of the Nintendo Switch"  
- Naomi Tchao (9)

"The Kendama"  
- Rushi Kakkilara (10)

"Back when I was in elementary, viral YouTube videos like Gangnam Style and YouTubers playing video games was the trend. In junior high, it started to get more into Vine, and internet challenges were popular like The Mannequin Challenge and the Running Man Challenge. [Currently], in high school, it seems like things are getting more popular through apps like Tik Tok." - Emily Ash (12)

"Events like the continuous efforts on climate change - like Greta Thunberg's climate [strikes]"  
- Joyce Chen (10)

January 13, 2018 Hawaii's false alarm

Saturday, January 13



2018

2019

March 15, 2019

Hong Kong protest



At the start of the event, people were peacefully protesting. However, protesters' actions soon turned violent in response to police brutality. The protest is currently still ongoing.

May 24, 2019 Aladdin

April 18, 2019 Publication of the Mueller Report

Written by Robert S. Mueller III, the Mueller Report consists of the official documentation



courtesy of CBS of Russia's interference in 2016's presidential election, allegations of coordination between Trump and Russia, and allegations of obstruction of justice. After almost two years and five-hundred search warrants for it, it was finally released to the public.

And so the adventure of the 20s begins...

# Like a Girl? Like a Champion.

*Girls' Winter Sports Dominates the Game in the Beginnings of their Seasons*

**Rebecca Beddingfield**  
Media Editor

**Girls Waste No Time in Their Season**

While many were anticipating family trips or catching up on missed sleep, the wrestling team was looking forward to its first official completion during Thanksgiving break. They had already prepared with weeks of training and an informal competition held at American called a takedown competition.

"Training ends with soreness at the end of the day, but it's really fun because you get to suffer with people you love, and shared pain is better than suffering alone," says Mamata Elengovan, a sophomore on the JV girls team.

While others might be entering their first sea-

son of wrestling, for girls like Josephina Yang (12), this is the beginning of the end. Some students would rather stay out of the spotlight, but this team is confident and excited for their fellow students to see them in action.

"I look forward to senior night, since that would be when we have the biggest crowd to watch us wrestle," says Yang.

These wrestlers have a legacy to live up to: the AHS team consistently ranks first in the FUSD school district and second at MVALS. However, both the coaches, including Coach Esperanza—who is new—and the girls have given it their all, ready to take on Washington High School on Wednesday, December 17 at their first duel meet. The vars-

ity girls will also be competing in a tournament the following Saturday.

## Girls' Soccer Ready to Kick their Way to NCS

Working hard for weeks and weeks, the girls' soccer team has made it through preseason, ready to take the official season head on Tuesday, December 17 at James Logan High School, the best school in the Mission Valley League.

"We have a new formation and are playing with different goals this year. Also, the freshmen this year are really good," says Nimrat Bahia (11), who is entering her third year on AHS's soccer team.

And the girls' new goal this year? Make it to NCS and play among the best of the North Coast Section. While it didn't

seem realistic in previous years, the players are able and determined like never before to reach the Mission Valley League.

The girls' next home game is Thursday, December 19 at 3:30 pm against Washington High School.

## Girls' Basketball Dominates in Preseason

AHS's girls' basketball team has dominated once again, remaining undefeated throughout its preseason, where they have the opportunity to face teams outside their league. The team is ready to meet and beat previous years, shooting for another year of making it to NCS, where they would compete with the best teams across the North Coast Section.

Excitement and optimism rises as the team

inches closer to the official start of their season. Stephanie Carrera (12) is in her first and last season of basketball with the AHS team and is confident in the ability of her team.

"Last year, we went undefeated, and our team keeps getting better every year," says Carrera.

The team's next home game is Thursday, January 9th at 3:30 pm in the gym against Mission High School.

## They're Ready to Play; Are You Ready to Watch?

With these teams bringing better than ever, they're ready to draw an excited audience. To see when AHS games are, visit the activities calendar on the American School Loop page.

# Merry Marketing

*The role of gift-giving around the holiday season in America*

**Liana Dong**  
Staff Writer

As the holiday season reaches its peak, the urgency to buy gifts for friends and family becomes more and more pronounced. Some people know exactly what to buy, excitedly preparing presents for weeks in advance. Others would prefer not to have the responsibility but still must browse the countless retailers across America that advertise stocking stuffers and gifts under \$20. Considering both the joy and dread, it can be difficult to determine whether the obligation to give gifts is a necessary expression of appreciation or just another marketing ploy.

For many people, the holiday season means struggling with participating in gift exchanges.

"Gift-giving is very stressful. [It's a struggle] because even if I've known this person for so long, I [still] don't know what to buy this person," says Shree Sathiyan (11). "And for receiving gifts, sometimes I just don't like the gift, so now I have these gifts that I appreciate but I don't know what to do with."

This sentiment seems to be an obvious one mirrored throughout society.

"I feel that a lot of people don't want to spend money [on others]. They want to spend money on themselves, but because they care for someone else, they feel obligated to get something. I could buy stuff for myself, but because [my class] is doing Secret Santa, I have to get something for people," Natania Ishananto (11) explains.

Even though gift-giving may be an inconvenience for many, there are definitely people who look forward to the opportunity to share presents with loved ones.

"My family loves giving each other gifts. This is the one time of year that we can get something for one another to show our love and appreciation," Ashley Buntrock (11) says. "I know the holidays are all about spending time with your loved ones, but gift-giving has become a big deal in my family. It doesn't matter the price or size of the gift. It's the excitement of it which really makes us love gift-giving."

Although the time and cost of purchasing



*The holiday season entails purchasing gifts for others, an expense that can quickly add up. "I wouldn't say gifts are the only way to express your appreciation for someone but it is definitely a way," Ashley Buntrock (11) says. "When you get a gift for someone, you must really appreciate them because you took time out of your day to go shopping for them and you spent your money on it."*

gifts are not a concern for Buntrock, many people view it in a different light.

"I feel that [gift-giving consumerism] can sometimes be a waste. Right now, there's a lot of [companies] that make...things that are really bad quality and sell them for lots of money. And then they just break easily, like clothes now. Fast fashion," Sathiyan says. "The corporations [are like] 'we're gonna make this really [bad quality] item and then hope for the best.' And then a bunch of people buy it, and then we just keep wasting mon-

ey. It just ruins the economy and ruins the planet."

While some are concerned with the effects of consumerism, others like Ishananto are more concerned with purchasing a gift, especially in a consumerist society with so many choices.

"It's... a hassle, and it's tedious [when] you don't know that person really well but you have to give that person something. [Especially for] family members [because] you don't know what to give them. They're like, 'anything you give me is good!' Like, no!

I don't want to do that."

Buntrock thinks similarly, viewing gift-giving as central to the holiday season.

"I don't think [gift giving is a waste of time or money]. Although gift-giving can be time-consuming and costly, I honestly don't think it has to be. Homemade gifts can be inexpensive and become the best gifts. Or you could save time by ordering online if you really wanted to stay out of the crowds. Basically, what I'm trying to say is that these seem like problems that can easily be solved."

# News on the News (cont.)

in mind when getting requests for news coverage.

"I hope that when we're able to highlight individualistic success [in the news], it encourages others to feel like they can be successful," says American High principal Ms. Barrington, "Not just students here at American but students at junior high and elementary, who see that [Ramachandran] can have such an impact as a high school student, and hopefully they will be inspired to create and start projects of their own."

While seeing Ramachandran find success in such a public way sounds like it should be ideal for most students, ABC7 news also showed a few students who are on different paths. Junior Khushi Thanki was featured in scenes next to her friend Ramachandran in the halls of AHS in the ABC7 news segment. While Thanki is in several different extracurriculars and focuses on academics, what some might say is the ideal high school student, ABC7 has not quite knocked on her door yet. When asked whether she would like to have huge awards and news coverage like her close friend or live her life at AHS as is, she responds optimistically.

"I think I'm happy where I am, but I'm happy to share that she has had a lot of accomplishments" says Thanki.

Ramachandran's Grey Water Project has the potential to save lives in areas that have been frequented by drought, so it could be determined that her newsworthiness is based on her impact on people other than the fact that she recently won a prestigious international award. When asked what specifically makes someone viable to be covered on his segment, ABC7 News reporter Eric Thomas responded:

"Somebody who has a drive or passion about something. For example, let's start with Shreya; she's 16 years old and somehow finds the time to go to school, advance the Grey Water Project of hers, and be a teenager at the same



*An ABC 7 news van sits in the school's front parking lot while reporter Eric Thomas interviews Ramachandran at a different location. While Thomas was assigned to cover Ramachandran for ABC7 Stars, much of his other work requires a little more effort to get accepted. "When [a story] strikes your fancy, you can try to sell it to your bosses, your editors, and see if you can get them excited about it too."*

time, which is pretty darn impressive. So you like to weave factors like that together, [and] have somebody low on chronological age but pretty high on the charts when it comes to wanting to do something to help humanity."

Other students are impacting the community in important ways. One example is the students on SURFBoardE that advocate for the FUSD student body on topics such as mental health, environmental awareness, special education clubs, and, most recently brought to popularity, the calendar shift initiative. Students like Irvington representative Emily Liu (12) put time and effort into benefiting a whole district of students.

"We have biweekly meetings on the Monday before every school board meeting and discuss board agenda items which our student board member then tells the board of education; she also sits with them at board meetings" says Liu.

While not often brought into the spotlight, there is a layer of prestige that comes with a position on Interact, the biggest club at AHS, whose mantra is

"Service over Self." The club does a variety of community service and rallies other high school students to join with them.

Despite these factors that seem to fit right into Thomas' definition of newsworthy, neither SURFBoardE nor Interact usually receives media coverage from the likes of ABC7 news. Perhaps other factors shape what makes it onto the newspaper or nightly news. For instance, some believe in the newsworthiness of tragedy. There is a fair argument with that, after all, in the headline of Ramachandran's segment, it mentions her "trying to save lives" from her research in water conservation. It may be cynical to believe the news is looking for trouble, but it's not uncommon to have the belief that the news is intentionally negative. This has led some administrators to be wary about allowing the same media that exposes these negative topics into the school.

"That's yet another challenge of my position or any administrators, making sure that our students are protected from newsgagents that might be seeking to

sensationalize the situation that is best handled internally within the school or within a family group," says Barrington, "We've had to make sure they stay off our property sometimes."

On the other hand, FUSD Public Information Officer Brian Kilgore who interacts with these news outlets directly, for better or for worse, has a more positive view of the news.

"The theory I use is that, in general, they're just here to get your side of the story, whether it's somebody being arrested or a bomb threat or a lockdown. We need to respond and we need to give our perspective," says Kilgore.

The reluctance for some school officials to accept news coverage, however, may not be completely founded. While negative topics do get covered, it is not always the first choice for those working in the media. Eric Thomas has first hand knowledge of this, saying, "I enjoy doing positive stories more than I enjoy doing [stories on] murders and fires and stuff like that, which I have done plenty of over the years. If it doesn't involve people hurting each other, then I'm all for that." However, Thomas does not always choose what he gets to report on. Final decisions on what to air and cover are often made by his bosses and editors. Mr. Savoie, the advisor of the school newspaper, often plays a somewhat similar role here at American.

"I think what's important is to strike a balance as a newspaper. We have a responsibility to inform our readership of things that they should be concerned about," said Savoie in reference to the Era's editorial staff. "As the people that get to decide what's in the newspaper, we have a lot of responsibility. We get to decide what is worth our attention and time writing about and interviewing about." The definition of newsworthiness is not an exact science. Many factors weave together when deciding what to stitch onto the intricate quilt of the news media, whether it is reporter preference, editor assignments or pushback from administrators. Still, it certainly helps to have a great story and, like Ramachandran, a good message.

# Around the World in 7 Days

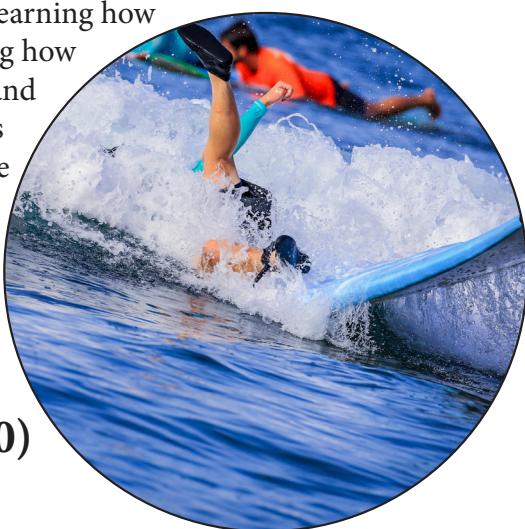


"We went on a vacation to Reno and went shopping, swimming and laser tagging. It was a big stress reliever because it was a good place to relax, and we just spent a lot of time in the pool just having fun, forgetting the stress we have from our own daily lives."

**Rashi Haria (11)**

"The first fifteen minutes [of learning how to surf] were spent on learning how to addle, pop up, turn, and stand on the surfboard. The rest was spent out on the wave with the instructors helping us fix our form. It was something I've always wanted to try because it looked cool and was pretty similar to snowboarding."

**Athen Tang (10)**



"I think the highlight of my trip was trying 3 new cuisines. I generally love trying new foods and when I went to my uncle's house he took us to these small local restaurants that had really good food from different cuisines I've either never tried before or never had any authentic food from. I had Israeli, Mexican, Italian, Taiwanese, and Japanese food. Trying these different types of food from small restaurants on the streets of LA gave me a feel of the city and I realized I really would love living there because I love the city life."

**Sneha Anantharaman (11)**



**Anna Kishani (11)**



"The Barat [when the groom arrives and everyone is dancing around him] was probably the highlight of my trip [to India]. We were dancing on the road on the way to the wedding and my close family was all with me. We were enjoying ourselves without holding back and the colorful lights and fun music just improved the entire vibe."

**Anais Ng (11)**

"My family and I would go to Hong Kong every year because of my grandma's age. But recently my mom told me she coughed blood and is getting sick. So we wanted to see if she was alright and try to see her as much as we can. It was really nice seeing my grandma happy because it made me feel relieved that she was doing okay."



## HITS OF 2010'S

### 2010:

"Tik Tok" - Kesha  
"Need You Now" - Lady Antebellum

"Hey, Soul Sister" - Train

### 2011:

"Rolling in the Deep" - Adele

"Party Rock Anthem" - LMFAO ft. Lauren Bennett and GoonRock

"Firework" - Katy Perry

### 2012:

"Somebody That I Used to Know" - Gotye ft. Kimbra  
"Call Me Maybe" - Carly Rae Jepsen

"We Are Young" - Fun ft. Janelle Monae

### 2013:

"Thrift Shop" - Macklemore & Ryan Lewis ft. Wanz

"Blurred Lines" - Robin Thicke ft. T.I. and Pharrell

Williams

"Radioactive" - Imagine Dragons

### 2014:

"Happy" - Pharrell Williams

"Dark Horse" - Katy Perry ft. Juicy J

"All of Me" - John Legend

### 2015:

"Uptown Funk" - Mark Ronson ft. Bruno Mars

"Thinking Out Loud" - Ed Sheeran

"See You Again" - Wiz Khalifa ft. Charlie Puth

### 2016:

"Love Yourself" - Justin Bieber

"Sorry" - Justin Bieber  
"One Dance" - Drake ft. Wizkid and Kyla

### 2017:

"Shape of You" - Ed Sheeran

"Despacito" - Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee ft. Justin Bieber

"That's What I Like" - Bruno Mars

### 2018:

"God's Plan" - Drake

"Perfect" - Ed Sheeran

"Meant to Be" - Bebe Rexha ft. Florida Georgia Line

### 2019:

"Circles" - Post Malone

"Someone You Loved" - Lewis Capaldi

"Good As Hell" - Lizzo

**billboard**

