

‘Tis the (Sports) Season

How American’s winter sports have taken the new season in stride

Mata Elangovan, Nami Nair, Emyr Ortiz

Design Editor, Broadcast Editor, Editor in Chief

53-36 against Irvington, 35-30 against Mission San Jose, 1-0 against Kennedy Richmond. These are all scores for American’s basketball, cheer, soccer, and wrestling teams as they pick up wins and start off the new season with a flurry of activity. But on the road to these wins, AHS’ winter teams have had to put in the work behind the scenes, and overcome the challenges the start of the season brings.

For the school’s soccer

teams, the start of the season has been characterized by reflection as the teams work on understanding and overcoming the challenges the new season brings. Regardless of their win at a pre-league game at Livermore, boys varsity captain Phillip Loo (12) still sees issues to address.

“We definitely still have a lot of individuals, but like always in high school, you kind of have to knit them together because it’s a short season. So I feel like we had

a really decent game, but we can definitely improve.”

On the girls varsity soccer team, co-captain Isha Kansal (12) recognizes changes to the team as having provided an interesting new dynamic they must contend with.

“A bunch of our team was a lot younger this year than it usually is. There’s more underclassmen than upperclassmen, which is not how it usually works.”

However, Kansal is mostly optimistic about the team’s prospects. Despite starting the season

with a pre-season loss to Dougherty Valley, the team has not lost a game since, leaving Kansal to reflect, “I think this year, the first two games, we’ve been doing really good, pre league is always hard. But I think we did really well comparatively, and I think it’s been a good season so far.”

Though AHS’s winter teams have had to contend with many struggles, the positive has far outweighed the negative.

For wrestling, that has shown itself in the team’s win against Mission San

Jose in their first meet of the season. Shama Wabha (12), captain of the wrestling team, expresses her pride especially in the rookie wrestlers.

“Our new wrestlers, our freshmen, sophomores, our first year wrestlers in general, they actually did pretty well, considering a lot of them have only had maybe a month or so of experience.”

Sagel Provancher (12)

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Opinion: School Shooting Part 32

Why is Oxford the first to make headlines?

Natalie Loo

Staff Writer

Watson Chapel Junior High. Rigby Middle School. Washington Middle School. Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School. East River High School. New Hanover High

School. Mount Tabor High School. Ben Davis High School. Timberview High School. The list goes on. All these schools, and more, have had a school shooting in 2021. In fact Oxford’s shooting was the 29th this year, and accord-

ing to Education Week, four more have happened since. Yet only Oxford has made the headlines.

With the horror everyone outwardly displays whenever a school shooting makes the news, it may seem a little strange

that Oxford is the only one people seem to be talking about. That is, until you look at the stats. In the Oxford shooting, four students were murdered and seven more people were injured. In addition to that, the facts around the alleged shooter’s family and the events leading up to the shooting are all appalling. From parents who supposedly bought their child a gun for Christmas to disturbing images drawn by the alleged shooter himself, and finally culminating in a terrible tragedy where four students were killed, it’s undeniable that Oxford High experienced something horrific.

And of course something like this should make the news. It’s important for the nation to know about something so important. It’s important for people to learn who the rising football star Tate Myre was,

and the kind-hearted dual-sport athlete that Hana St. Juliana was. It’s important for people to know about the intelligent Madisyn Baldwin and heroic Justin Shilling. All these people deserved better, and all these people deserve to have their stories told in the news and deserve to have people fighting for justice for them.

But it is also troubling that the 31 other schools that have experienced shootings this year have not received similar media attention. In some of these shootings, only one person was killed. In others, no one was killed but several people were injured. Their details aren’t as gory. The stories aren’t quite

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P.C. Scott Olson/Getty Images



Madisyn Baldwin, Tate Myre, Hana St. Juliana, and Justin Shilling were all shot and killed in the Oxford High School attack. This memorial is a way for students and other community members to honor them. Trent Myre, the brother of 16-year-old victim Tate Myre, described Tate as “a friend, a role model, a HELL of an athlete, [and] a hero.” Hana St. Juliana, the youngest of the victims, was described by teacher Jessica Robbins as “the most beautiful flower I will never forget.”

Letter from the Editor

Shreya Daschoudhary
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Dear Eagles,

Ah, December. The most wonderful time of the year, where there's stressing for finals and survival is vital since break is so near. Poetic parodies aside, this month has been hectic—between agonizing about whether that C+ is going to make it to a B- and rushing to finish the curriculum before the end of the semester, the only light at the end of the tunnel is knowing that we'll get to spend two and a half weeks away from this madness. Although, for some of us (more-prone-to-procrastination) seniors, that much-needed vacation won't be a vacation at all, but a scramble to polish the last of our RD applications. And for others, it'll be a time to process the results of the first wave of college decisions.

Seeing as 'tis the season to be jolly, this month's issue features heartwarming Christmas stories as well as a recipe from American's very own Chef Rosen. And, considering the first day back from break will not only mark the begin-

ning of a new semester, but a new year as well, we also have a 2021 recap and album review.

However, with the good, we have the bad. And I'm not talking about finals. I'm talking about something worse, something that has become so deeply entrenched in our daily lives that we don't even think about it.

I'm talking about apathy. On November 16th, 2021, parents in the district received an email from the superintendent, warning us of something so comically horrific that people almost didn't take it seriously: "National Shoot Up Your School Day." As the name would suggest, it was a trend that originated on TikTok and eventually reached school districts across the nation. In the wake of the tragedy that happened in Michigan, you'd think this threat would be taken seriously, that there'd be calls for police on campus, that people would stay home out of concern. And yet...

There was nothing. No extra precautions taken,

no unusual drops in attendance. Nothing. In fact, people laughed about it, explaining how dying would be preferable to taking tests back-to-back next week and that this was a "certified America moment."

Perhaps this is in fact representative of American society, in the sense that it's a testament to how normalized violence has become. Anyone can just log onto social media and joke about committing a literal act of terrorism. We've just come to terms with the idea that school shootings are a reality, and that we may one day go to class and never return home. Victims of gun violence become mere statistics as the shooters are sensationalized and more importance is placed on apprehending the culprit rather than honoring the ones that died for their crimes. On the front page of this month's issue, you'll be able to read an article that further explores this desensitization.

Stay safe and happy holidays, Eagles.

All Too Perfect

A review of *All Too Well: The Short Film*

Nami Nair

Podcast Editor

We start with a single quote.

"Love is so short, forgetting is so long." - Pablo Neruda

The silence and the black screen left my heart in a lurch. What is she going to do now?

We open on an intimate scene between... a father and daughter?!? No, lovers. The dialogue is short, poignant, and somehow Taylor Swift has captured falling in love in the fall in 10 seconds and a couple opening chords. We are whisked away to the East Coast fall, characterized by the red and golden leaves.

All Too Well: The Short Film

This was the moment Swifties have been waiting for since the November 5th announcement on Swift's Instagram. Fans rushed home to bundle up in their best red scarf, sip their coffee, and experience the film they knew would break their hearts like glass. Even as a casual Taylor Swift fan, I could feel the excitement in the air. I mean, it's a 10-minute song about a man (allegedly Jake Gyllenhall) who broke her heart so badly she wrote about 30 songs about him.

And they only dated for 3 months.

Now the misogynistic frame of mind asserts Taylor Swift only writes about her exes, but I dare you to find a male musician who doesn't do the same. And it is quite evident she does much more than that. As the writer and director of *All Too Well*, Swift has broadened the scope for artists to present their art. This is so much more than another music video. It's an experience.

The most jarring part of the film was the casting. Sadie Sink, best known for her role as Max Mayfield in *Stranger Things*, and Dylan O'Brien, best known as Stiles Stilinski on *Teen Wolf*, look as though they could be a father-daughter duo. And it makes

the intimacy throughout the video hard to watch.

When they dated, Taylor Swift was only 20, while Jake Gyllenhall was 29. The casting made sense as the lyrics *You said if we had been closer in age maybe it would have been fine. And that made me want to die* played in the background, and we see *Her* (Sink's character) struggle in a crowded room of more mature-looking adults, looking for *Him* (O'Brien's character). You're supposed to be concerned, to be questioning whether she knows what she's doing and how she's with him at such a young age. Swift's nuanced way of guiding her audience to making the observations she herself has made in retrospect makes the film's themes and lessons hard to miss. The mirroring between what goes on on-screen and the heart-breaking lyrics that accompany it immerses Swift's audience further into the story, taking them along her journey of reflection.

As a 17-year-old young woman who has never experienced a relationship remotely similar to Swift's and Gyllenhall's, I felt every wave of emotion humanly possible. Confusion and slight discomfort about their age gap in the beginning, melancholic peace as the song played and the main characters frolicked in the beautiful fall woods. Rage and disbelief as *He* started gaslighting *Her* for feeling left out and cast aside. This was quickly washed away by the fall romance onscreen and the generally cozy feel of the film which lulls you into a false sense of security that maybe everything would be alright. She takes your heart and squeezes it with all her might. Then, she hits you.

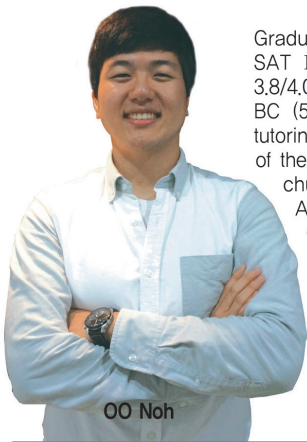
And you call me up again just to break me like a promise. So casually cruel in the name of being honest.

By the time *He* missed her

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SAT·AP Teaching

College Counseling (Application Essay Help)



OO Noh

Graduated from Blythewood High School
SAT I : 1460 (Reading 670, Math 790) GPA : 3.8/4.0, AP : Physics (5), US History (5), Calculus BC (5) Extracurricular activities : rugby, Korean tutoring to Korean-American Children, president of the school math team, community services at church
Awards : National Merit Scholar, South Carolina States Math Competition second place, among others

Fortunately, through Steven Academy, I was able to receive a high SAT score, improved my grades, and was finally accepted to **University of Southern California**.

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December 2021 – March 2022

SAT Winter Boot Camp

Winter Break Boot Camp: December 27-30 & January 3-6
Spring Extension: January 11 – March 5

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 26	Dec 27 Test 9:00am-12:30pm Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	Dec 28 Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	Dec 29 Test 9:00am-12:30pm Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	Dec 30 Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	Dec 31	Jan 1
Jan 2	Jan 3 Test 9:00am-12:30pm Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	Jan 4 Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	Jan 5 Test 9:00am-12:30pm Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	Jan 6 Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	Jan 7	Jan 8



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• • • • • The Roaring 20s, A Century Later • • • • •

Exploring the preparation that went into this year's APENG Great Gatsby party

Sinchan Mishra
Staff Writer

The annual Great Gatsby Party has always been an event to anticipate for juniors taking AP English Language Arts. It's an opportunity to dress up, to enjoy delicacies brought in by classmates, and most of all, become fully immersed in the 1920s (or, as it's famously referred to, "The Roaring 20s"): the period in which *The Great Gatsby* is set.

Mrs. Smith, the lead APENG teacher, recalls her thought process over a decade ago, when she began the tradition.

"When I first started teaching at American 16 years ago, and we read *The Great Gatsby*, I was thinking about what we should do as a cumulative project," she says. "I decided that what we could try to do as a class was recreate one of Gatsby's parties, to try to make the 1920s more real and relevant for students."

While the initial idea was slightly vague, Mrs. Smith believes that "over the years, it has gotten bigger and bigger, and it's taken on a little bit of its own personality."

Part of this is because of the larger role students have taken in organizing the party.

Natasha Anguelouch (11) is a member of the

Party Planning Committee, which she describes as involving "a lot of collaboration, volunteering, and discussion." The commit-

This voluntary style of delegation seems to have improved the party planning process. "In past years, we've had up to 40

could decorate the library this year for the holidays," says Mrs. DiFranco, one of the librarians. "And I decided that an Art Deco

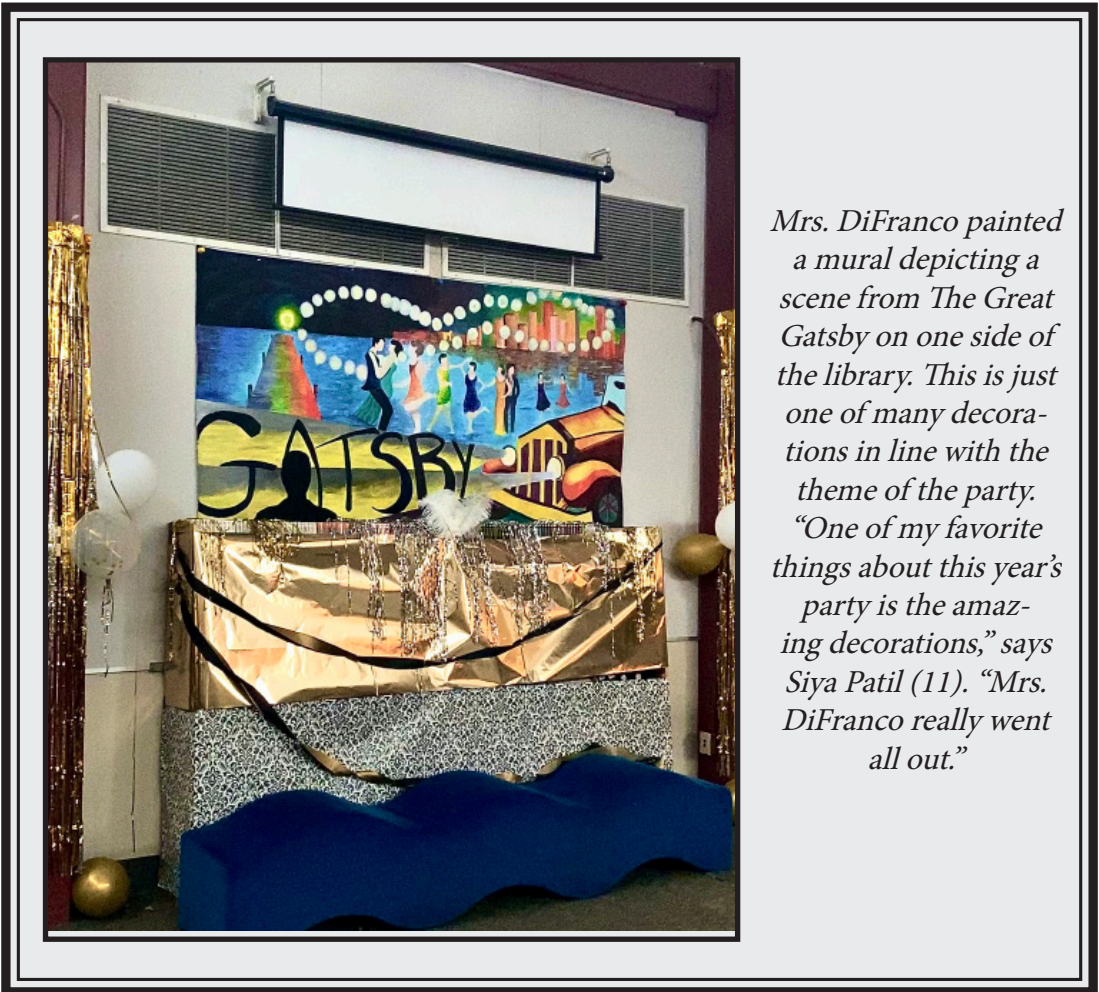
student gave me the idea of painting the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg, as well. I've been doing little things all around for some time now."

Mrs. DiFranco's work has significantly lightened the load of the party planners. "It saves a great deal [of decorating]," says Mrs. Smith. "Especially with the shorter amount of time we have to plan the party this year, and the larger venue."

The work of the planning committee, Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. DiFranco is certainly integral to the party, but the event would be incomplete without the work of individual APENG students, who are responsible for bringing in the food, decorations, beverages, and entertainment.

"We also have to come in formal attire that corresponds to the theme of the Gatsby party," says Siya Patil (11). "And we speak in a 1920s manner. You can't just talk about modern day things, because that wouldn't match the theme."

This may seem like a daunting task in the modern day. However, Patil says otherwise: "I think I have a good amount of knowledge about the 1920s, especially because I was really paying attention to [*The Great Gatsby*]. I have been researching, but I think just paying attention in class can give you the basic gist."



*Mrs. DiFranco painted a mural depicting a scene from *The Great Gatsby* on one side of the library. This is just one of many decorations in line with the theme of the party. "One of my favorite things about this year's party is the amazing decorations," says Siya Patil (11). "Mrs. DiFranco really went all out."*

tee consists of 10 students who work with Mrs. Smith to coordinate different aspects of the event, including food, drinks, entertainment, and decorations.

"At our meetings, we basically go around and volunteer to work out an issue we're interested in," Natasha says. "So, for instance, if someone is really interested in food distribution, they'll volunteer to take care of that."

people on the committee, and the logistics of managing that many people has been an issue. But this year, dividing into different committees isn't as necessary," says Mrs. Smith.

Another new aspect to the party is its location: our school's very own library, as opposed to one of the APENG classrooms as it has been for past years.

"Early spring this year, I was thinking about how I

theme could look really cool. After talking to Mrs. Smith about it, the idea morphed into a more specific Gatsby theme."

Mrs. DiFranco has been working on transforming the library into Gatsby's mansion for months. "As far back as Halloween, I started putting black fringe around. And I brought Christmas lights from home to decorate the entryway," she recalls. "A

Sincere Self-Care Club

A refreshing club that allows time to relax and take care yourself

Inaaya Adam
Staff Writer

AHS has a new club dedicated to teaching students how to take care of themselves. The self-care club advocates healthy and happy lifestyles and creates a safe space for students.

The president and founder, Joanna Abejar (12), got the idea for the club in her junior year during quarantine.

"During quarantine, I was in a very bad mental state. I would not go

outside my room, I would not breathe in fresh air. I did not want to see myself harm myself any further, and other people harm themselves as well; so, I decided [to] start a club to encourage people to start taking care of themselves," Abejar explains.

Having a healthy mental and physical state is crucial for a stable lifestyle. Some people struggle to make time for themselves, Abejar created a system so personal care is easier to execute.

Since this is a new club, a lot of effort went into

bringing peoples' attention to it. Iman Tariq (12) is the secretary for the self-care club and explains the energy that went into it.

"It was a little difficult at the beginning because we really put our all into club rush week. We threw it in everyone's faces, 'join our club, join our club!' and it was really successful because we have had a lot of attendance in meetings and people are excited for our club," Tariq reveals.

"We've had positive feedback and heard people saying it is a fun club and that

they are feeling stress free. Our mission statement is providing that outlet for people to become stress free; I feel like it has been successful," Abejar reflects on the growth of the club.

The Self-Care Club has spiked an interest within the students in a short time. The idea of having an outlet for unwinding is appealing and popular.

Grace Megan (9) is a member of the self-care club and joined to learn how to take care of herself in a stressful environment.

"It's helped me shift my priorities, in terms of taking care of myself. I've learned that time management and maintaining a

healthy sleep schedule helps reduce stress levels, especially as a high school student," Megan shares.

She has already learned key factors to a nourishing schedule in the short time she has been a part of the club.

The club has an emphasis on mental, physical, and emotional health and the proper way to educate people on it. Abejar gives insight on how this is incorporated in meetings.

"During meetings, we educate people on how to prioritize working out, skincare, hav-

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Strike Out

How and why the next MLB season might not happen

Ronnie Lord
Staff Writer

America's Pastime is canceled. At least for now, as the MLB has begun its first lockout in nearly three decades. On December 1st at 9pm, Major League Baseball went on a lockout. After a few brief meetings in New York between team owners and player representatives, a contract between the two parties couldn't be reached. In these meetings, lasting less than 20 minutes each, owners refused to meet demands from player reps, or the MLBPA (MLB Players Association). A lockout is a strike for professional sports players. When the CBA, or Collective Bargaining Agreement, doesn't get renewed the whole sport goes on hold. Operations involving anyone in a players union, such as the MLBPA, stop. The NBA, NHL, and NFL have had lockouts in the last 10 years, so they aren't too uncommon. So with the lockout ongoing, no baseball op-

erations can be done. The frantic free agency period, where players get to sign with new teams or renew their contracts, typically lasts from the end of the World Series in November to the beginning of Spring Training. It only lasted one month this year. The week before the lockout, over 500 transactions occurred in the span of a month. Depending on how long this lasts, it can lead to a shortened season or, in the worst case scenario, the cancellation of the 2022 season. An MLB season has never been fully canceled, but the last time a lockout occurred in 1994, almost a third of the season was lost and the playoffs were canceled. Minutes after the lockout began, MLB commissioner Rob Manfred released "A Letter to Baseball Fans" on Twitter. In the letter, Manfred says that starting the lockout now is in everybody's best interest, and that his goal is to have a full 2022 season. Around the same time,

the MLBPA called the lockout a "dramatic measure" and said it was "the owners' choice, plain and simple." The MLBPA is made up of current and former players who protect players rights. The MLBPA is also unhappy that the owners never made a fair counter offer. Manfred claimed that a counteroffer was made, but the MLBPA said that the offer had cut many important items from their list of demands. During current contract negotiations, the MLBPA demanded a restructuring of the free agency system, a change in the arbitration system, alongside making contracts shorter. The MLB has one of the weirdest free agency systems in professional sports, mainly because no salary cap exists. A salary cap is a limit on the amount of money teams can spend on player salaries. This keeps competition fair, as some teams bring in more money than others. But because there is no limit on team spend-

ing in baseball, teams can seem unfair just because one is richer than another. In 2021, the Los Angeles Dodgers had five All-Star players, while the division rival San Francisco Giants had only 3. The Giants ended the season with a better record than the Dodgers, but lost to them in the playoffs. The other unique thing baseball has is arbitration. Arbitration means that players can't enter free agency until they have played in the big leagues for 3 years. This is in place due to how the minor league system works in baseball. While basketball and hockey only have one league below pro, baseball has 3, and sometimes more. They use this system to let players prove they belong on a major league team and deserve to fight for a contract. However, minor league baseball players are some of the most underpaid workers in the United States because they don't have to abide by the American minimum wage. Arbitration is controversial because some teams abuse it to keep players from entering free agency. The most notable case of this in recent years happened to All-Star Kris

Bryant. The team he was drafted by, the Chicago Cubs, kept him in the minor leagues for an extended period of time even though he had been dominating in the minors and deserved to be in the majors. But because the Cubs kept him in the minors, his arbitration period was extended by over a year. This kept Bryant from finding a better contract for himself for nearly 4 years after he came up from the minors. The Cubs faced no punishment for this either. Bryant ended up being traded to the San Francisco Giants in the summer of 2021 and is now exploring his free agency options for the first time in his career. The owners want to keep these systems in place because it makes them more money and lets them keep their young star players, but if the owners want a season to happen, they have to make an agreement with the players. Fans will have to wait at least a month for news as negotiations don't seem to be taking off, and probably won't until January since owners don't seem to be in a hurry, as no meetings have occurred since the writing of this article.

'Tis the (Sports) Season Cont.

of the cheer team feels the atmosphere of the crowds at the competitions they've attended have been especially positive. She remembers her 1st competition of the season fondly, stating, "[the audience is] always very supportive of everything, Especially because we have a boy flying there, like they love it. And so it really hypes you up when you're there." Back at girls soccer, the bond of the team has proved to be a driving force of their success in competition. "I think what was really helpful for the game was our mental preparation and the team chemistry that we had," Kansal reflects."Because no matter how good you are as an individual player, it doesn't work on the field if you're not good as a team." However, the chemis-

try doesn't just stop once the players exit the field. "After practices, sometimes our captains will tell us we're gonna go out for breakfast if we had morning practice. And we take pictures. Every game we

dress up in different outfits to psych ourselves up for the game," Kansal says. In other sports, the enthusiasm for the successes of the new season can be felt at all levels of the team. Wabha explains how a win

at their first match made for a team-building moment. "Our coach congratulated us which was really nice because all our girls won their matches. It was really nice to be congratulated and have that

first duel meet of the season, and have that team bonding experience." She elaborates, "It was also a relief too, considering no one got hurt at all and we all did pretty good." As the winter season continues, attending sports events is a great way to show school spirit and help our teams. Wabha encourages Eagles to come out to support our teams. "If I were to tell people something it would be to come support our games. I know we definitely need the energy. Because wrestling is a really high energy sport. And we need that support from not just our team, but from the audience." As the winter season continues to progress, look out for game/match schedules and show your Eagles Pride!

P.C. Denim Bragg



The girls varsity soccer team won 4-0 against Irvington on December 7th. Not having lost a game since the pre-season, the team is feeling confident about their abilities moving forward, and encourages students to come out to watch. "Come out and support our team, we're really good," states team co-captain Isha Kansal (12). "I think everyone should watch. So even if they have to pay money to get into the gate, I think it's very worth it"

The Holidays through the Eyes of American High's Staff

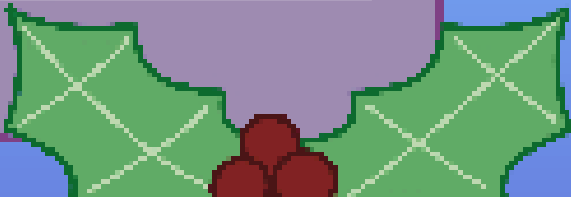
AHS Staff reflects on the lessons learnt during the holidays

Sahana Narayan
Staff Writer

This holiday season, the staff of American High remember their most significant Christmas and wintertime memories and lessons. Whether it was a recognition of community, a sense of gratitude for the simple things, or a simple but powerful realization about the importance of connection, each holiday anecdote imparts a special lesson.

Ms. Benedetti: The Gift that you Get...or the Gift that you Give

"I never had any struggles with Christmas when it came to not receiving gifts or things. My parents were always great about spoiling us. And I remember as a kid specifically, I was obsessed with these little dolls that had wings. They had a cord, and you pull the cord, and then it twirls. It was kind of a 90s thing. And I had a purple doll, I had a blue one, but I really wanted the green one. It was my favorite color but it was a rare one. And I remember for Christmas, I was super excited when opening my presents, hoping for the green doll, but when I opened it, it was a doll I already had. And I just remember throwing the biggest tantrum ever. And it was probably one of the worst moments of my life which is a little dramatic, but it was definitely a moment I regret. And now as an adult, I look back and I realize that the holidays aren't about gifts, it's just about being with family, experiencing things, experiencing joy, and now I think I find more joy in like the giving of things than getting something. I don't think I ever got the green doll, but I definitely think I learned from that experience."

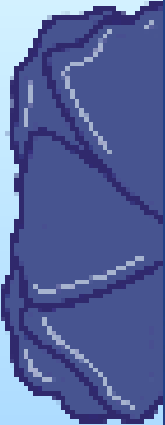


Ms. Smith: The Circumstances of a Christmas Community

"Christmas in seventh grade: it was super, super cold so we turned the heat up. That evening, my brother and sister were watching TV in the bedroom that we all shared, and I was allowed a special Christmas treat to watch TV. We were watching MacGyver, a popular action show, and my little brother, who was six years old, suddenly came into the bedroom where we were all curled up watching TV and he said, 'The curtains are on fire.' My dad and I kind of ignored him at first, and it took a few seconds for us to process what he said but once we did, we all jumped up. We got our dog out of the house. My mom threw three trash bags that were next to the door. My little brother put all of his Christmas presents into a little backpack, so he was wearing underwear, his backpack, and nothing else. But he got out with all of his Christmas presents. I was wearing my jeans skirt, and my plaid, long sleeve flannel. So that's what I had. And then the house burned for seven days. The fire trucks were able to get to it eventually, but we lost access to literally everything. On the positive side, our community came together, and a lot of people brought us things to help us make it. One of the students I had gone to school with came to school with a big black trash bag full of stuffed animals because we had lost all of our stuff. It was definitely a defining moment in my life. I still have a visceral response when I hear fire engines; there is that idea that there is someone who's potentially going to lose the amount of physical possessions that we lost. But it taught me to have a lot of gratitude; it gave me a lot of wanting to share with others. We lived in a relatively small community, and everybody came together. Every church in the area had clothing drives and silverware drives to bring us what we needed to have in order to continue. It all embodied the true Christmas spirit of sharing."

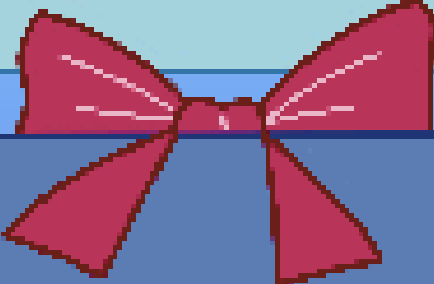
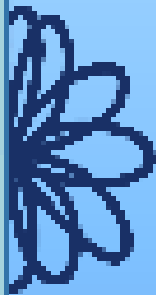
Mrs. Do: The Meaning of Connection during Christmastime

"When the holidays come around, I realize more and more that we can't let everything else, all the things in life: the work, the to-do list, all the practical things supersede our relationships. We spend so much time trying to make a living. You're forced to study, then you have to go to college, then find a job, and then you work every day and you try to pay the bills. Yes, all those things are part of life. But we really have to make time to cultivate our relationships, and that's what the holidays are for! Sometimes when we get to a point where we don't have that connection because we get into the cycle; we start to lose meaning, and we start to lose purpose. But as social beings, we need interaction, and we need to have this depth in our conversations. We need to have fun, laugh, joke and be ridiculous with one another. There is no harm in reaching out to the ones you love. One thing that occurred to me during the holidays is that you don't really wait for other people. You go and initiate those conversations. Sometimes people are scared that they will be told 'no' when they ask to meet or call. But if you don't ask, it's always going to be a no. I'm okay with a 'I'm busy right now.' I'm okay if that person is going through something and can't meet. But I always let them know how deeply I feel about them. And then I'll reconnect with them again, and I'll always initiate. I see that once people get into the rhythm of me reaching out, they start to reach back. That connection, especially during the holidays, brings me so much joy."



Mr. Benz: A Hard Lesson Learnt during the Holidays

"My family is German. And on December 6th, in a lot of European countries, you put your stocking up. And one of two things happens: you get a present or you get coal in your stocking. And one year when I was in the third grade, 1973, I got coal in my stocking. Now, in German culture, Santa Claus makes a naughty and nice list and if you get coal there's the possibility that on Christmas Eve, this demon will come and take you away. But if you are good for three weeks after December 6th, you'll get one and only one present. So that year, I was super super good for those three weeks because I didn't want to be taken away by this demon on Christmas Eve. And when Christmas Eve arrived, I was so frightened. I stayed up the entire night, and I was crying most of the time. But when I woke up, I had not gotten taken away by the demon, and had one present waiting for me. What the experience taught me was that I needed to be nicer to my sister. I was not nice to my sister when I was a kid, but the coal did the trick in a sort of a cruel way. My parents stopped doing it when I got into like sixth grade, but I learnt my lesson and I realized that I deserved everything I got because I truly was not nice to my sister. And you know, when you're in grade school, sometimes you just need a kick in the butt, especially when it comes to Christmas."



Mrs. Mishal: Stories of Snow in New York

"Growing up in New York, when I was a little girl, I always looked forward to the snow. It was one of my favorite times of the year. I remember the first fall especially when there weren't people out like at night and it just looked like this carpet over the street and we as kids would want to rush out and play as quickly as possible before we got dirty. We would play outside all day. And at the end of the day, my mom would make us hot chocolate. We would take a nice warm bath and then have our chocolate. Unfortunately, my brother looked forward to the snow for different reasons than me because he liked to throw snowballs at all of us, especially my face."



So I had to learn how to make a good snowball, make it nice and firm, and then throw it back in his face. And I had to learn quickly because, you know, there's no room for crying when it's snowing. This year, I plan to visit my brother in Phoenix, Arizona, and even if there's no snow, I will throw sand in his face. He can test me."

CHEF ROSEN — A CULINARY CONNOISSEUR

COOKING: THE JOY OF LIFE

Arjun Vaidya
Staff Writer

If you were lucky enough to stumble across the old cafeteria sometime this year, you may have encountered Room 602. Here lies the kitchen of Chef Rosen, a culinary teacher here at American High School. Apart from helping students cook delicious recipes, some of you may not know what lies behind the apron.

The path to becoming a chef is something that took Chef Rosen many years. “I’ve been cooking since I was 12. But I left my old career in my mid 30s, and I went to culinary school in New York, but you don’t really need to do that. I did it because I was older, and I went to culinary school to learn the industry. When you graduate from school, or if you go through what we call the school of hard knocks—which is when you get a job in a kitchen at a young age—you just work your way up the ladder. When I left there, I needed to go to a couple of facilities to work under other chefs to figure out how to operate a kitchen. And then when the time was right, and I felt like I was ready, I took over my own kitchen in a restaurant.”

Chef Rosen transitioned from working in a restaurant to educating students. She describes her path to becoming an

educator. “I was in finance, and it just didn’t resonate with me anymore. So, I decided that I would quit my job, leave everything that I knew, and move to New York and go through school to learn how the industry worked. I never looked back after that. I was an active chef, working in a facility or for people for 20 years of my life. Then I decided to start educating. I [taught at] community college first, and then I came to high school because there are so many of you that don’t have any idea where your food comes from, or how to prepare even the simplest things. You’re buying food from what I call the other side of the food industry, fast food. I also have an interest in nutrition, and I don’t think that you can achieve good nutrition and good health by just eating what other people make for you all the time.”

Chef Rosen herself has many favorite recipes of her own. She seems to have quite a fondness for baking the perfect cookie. “I like complicated cookies, so I make French macarons and shortbread cookies of different colors, like checkerboards or some that are rolled up in sprinkles. What I [enjoy] about holiday cookies is that they should be simple. The decorations should enhance the appearance of the

cookie and also the taste.”

Christmas is the time to make lots of food for family and friends. Chef Rosen gives her insight on what students could be able to make during the break. “I think everybody should know how to roast a whole chicken. I didn’t say turkey or ham because those are relegated to holidays. Vegetables are always underrated, but I think that we derive a lot of satisfaction from vegetables. For example, brussel sprouts, which most people don’t like, are easy to prepare. I think people surprise themselves when they taste food that’s prepared properly, which is what we try to do here. A lot of people don’t know what a potato pancake is until they eat it. It’s very festive.”

Finally, cooking can be more than just having the satisfaction of savoring a good meal. Chef Rosen speaks on how cooking can help students. “Not only do I think cooking brings people together, but I think the act of cooking is nurturing. At least with my students, once a person has completed a task and is able to sit down and enjoy it with other people, that’s an act of giving. I think everybody should know how to cook at least simple things because there’s a lot of satisfaction to be derived.”

CHEF ROSEN’S ROLLED SUGAR COOKIE RECIPE (MAKES ABOUT 2 1/2 DOZEN COOKIES)

Ingredients:

- ¾ cup of butter, room temperature
- 1 cup of sugar
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract
- 2 ½ cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt

Method:

1. Cream the butter and sugar in the bowl of a mixer until smooth and fluffy.
2. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Mix until smooth.
3. Mix flour, baking powder, and salt together in a separate bowl. Add to the butter mixture.
4. Stir until just incorporated. Cover and chill dough for at least one hour (or overnight).
5. Preheat oven to 400F.
6. Roll out dough on a lightly floured surface to ¼-½ inch thick. Cut into shapes with cookie cutters.
7. Place cookies 1-inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets.
8. Bake for 6 to 8 minutes. Cookies will be pale on top and golden brown on the bottoms.
9. Cool completely. Decorate as desired.

CHEF ROSEN’S CHOCOLATE CRACKLE COOKIE RECIPE (MAKES ABOUT 2 1/2 DOZEN COOKIES)

Ingredients

- 8 oz bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
- 1 ¼ cups all purpose flour
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 ½ cups light brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tp vanilla extract
- ⅓ cup milk
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup confectioners’ sugar

Method:

1. Melt chocolate in a heatproof pan set over a pan of simmering water, stirring constantly. Set aside and let cool.
2. Mix the flour, cocoa, baking powder, and salt in a bowl.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer, combine butter and brown sugar. Mix on medium speed until pale and fluffy (about 2-3 minutes).
4. Mix in eggs and vanilla, then add the melted chocolate.
5. Reduce speed to low and add flour in two batches, alternating with the milk.
6. Wrap dough in plastic and refrigerate until firm (about 2 hours).
7. Preheat the oven to 350F. Scoop out the cookies.
8. Roll in the granulated sugar to coat.
9. Then, roll in the confectioners’ sugar to coat.
10. Bake for about 14 minutes (until the surfaces crack), rotating the sheets halfway through.
11. Cool on the sheet pans on top of wire racks.
12. Cookies can be stored in airtight containers at room temperature for about 3 days.



Caption: Chef Rosen is helping her class bake cookies. The room is in organized hassle with the commanding voice of Chef Rosen herself, overshadowing any other noise. “It’s not about experienced cooking, it’s about [the] ability to follow directions,” Chef Rosen explains.

School Shooting
Part 32 Cont.

as shocking. Quite frankly, they're not interesting enough for the public.

And that fact is perhaps one of the most unsettling things of all. Our country has become so numb to these shootings over the years, that the ones with only a single death, or the ones with only a couple injuries, are swept under the rug. It's disturbing that a school shooting within itself is not horrific or rare enough to be worthy of a headline. Instead, the shooter must be particularly disturbed. Or the victims' stories must be especially heart-wrenching.

The fight against gun violence seems to have lost traction as the 2018 Parkland shooting has faded from recent memory. But perhaps it is time to revisit it.

Whether it be through gun reforms, changes in school policy, increases in mental health services, or some combination of all of these, it is clear that something needs to change. These shootings shouldn't be so normal that one needs to be so exceptionally horrific before it can make the news.

All Too Perfect Cont.

21st birthday, every single audience member would have been in tears. The raw emotion from Sink and the agonizing lyrics permeate even the coldest of hearts, and suddenly the fall aesthetic isn't enough to make up for the fact that you too, remember it all too well.

Standing alone in the crisp fall air, you watch the red and golden leaves fall to the ground around you, the wind in your hair making your bare neck cold without its scarf.

The 10-minute version of the song was more than enough, but with the short film, Swift took us all into her very soul, and we all sat and wept as the music faded and *He* walked away in the snow.

All Too Well: The Short Film will now forever be a staple to the fall-blues aesthetic. One thing is for sure- it'll be a long time before we forget this one.

MERRY CRIPPSMAS

EXPLORING FREMONT'S MOST ENDURING HOLIDAY-THEMED DISPLAY: CRIPPSMAS PLACE

Sinchan Misra
Staff Writer

There are many things to love about the holidays: the endless cheer, the beautiful decorations, the giving spirit, the warmth of community... and Crippsmas Place, located just a few streets away from AHS, manages to combine it all into one convenient event.

It all began decades ago right here in Fremont, when in the late 1960s, Robert "Spider" Cantley decorated his home to look like Santa's Workshop. His idea was to use this to fundraise for the Leukemia Lymphoma Society. Over the years, however, the project expanded to encompass dozens of homes in the surrounding area as well as multiple charities.

Today, community member Kate Amon spearheads the orga-

nization of this event.

"Spider was in charge of Crippsmas Place until he moved away in 2005," says Amon. "That's when I rallied the neighbors to carry on without him. We called the neighborhood group that worked on it every year the Crippsmas Club."

Today, Crippsmas Place has grown into a holiday staple in Fremont that "thousands of people," according to Amon, visit each year. Coordinated entirely by unpaid volunteers, it is now a non-profit organization that aims to "support community, charity, and childhood joy."

"The planning process [consists of] various Crippsmas Club meetings starting in the fall," says Amon. "I've also started using more technology to keep things in order. We use a massive Google Drive folder to keep track of decorations and where they will be placed."

Despite the hard work of the Crippsmas Club, this event would be impossible without other volunteers. Setting up and taking down decorations for over fifty different houses is no easy feat, so the event is always looking for new student volunteers that can take a shift or two on the weekends leading up to and after the event.

"Honestly, it took me a few years before I realized I could get student volunteers to help with setting up and taking down decorations," recalls Amon. "Luckily, the turnout and interest in volunteering has been phenomenal because of the need for service hours. That has made the process a lot easier."

Not only can volunteering help high schoolers gain community service hours required for graduation, but it is the perfect way to impact the community this holiday season.

All of Crippsmas Place's proceeds go toward charity, including the Leukemia-Lymphoma Society, H.E.R.S. Breast Cancer Foundation, Safe Alternatives to Violent Environments, Adopt an Angel, the Ohlone Humane Society's Wildlife Rehab Center, and the Fremont Family Resource Center.

Although there is no longer a need for volunteers, there are other ways to contribute to this wonderful cause.

"Donations aren't mandatory," says Amon, "but they are a great way to help important causes. It's always heartwarming and reassuring to see people so dedicated to giving back."

This holiday season, make sure to stop by Crippsmas Place. You'll be amazed by the decorations, and have the opportunity to give back to communities and organizations that could use your support.



The entrance to Crippsmas Place. Decorations range from being generic and holiday-themed to being more specific, such as the Mickey Mouse and Sesame Street figures pictured here. "There's roughly about 300 of these wooden painted decorations displayed throughout the neighborhood this year," says Amon.

Sincere Self-Care Club Cont.

ing a good diet, and a good sleep schedule. We've had one event so far and we taught them how to eat in moderation, but also eat for pleasure. Our first event they decorated treat bags for Halloween, and we gave them face masks and chapstick but we also gave granola and candy," Abejar elaborates.

The club was created because self-care should have a prominent role in everyone's life. The people involved in this group go out of their way to ensure their fellow stu-

dents have an opportunity for a steady routine.

Megan further expresses the importance she has for self-care, "Self-care is an obligation, similar to how school and homework are too. [Although], taking care of yourself is a must, before anything else you must do in a day."

Health maintenance is often expected but treated as an open discussion. Especially in a work environment like high school, it is typical to unintentionally neglect taking time for oneself.



These are items similar to those that were in a treat bag given to by the Self-Care Club during their first event. The event took place right before Halloween on 10/28/21 and those who joined were able to decorate their own bags, the bags contained face masks, chapstick, granola and candy. Abejar explains that the purpose of the event was to teach the club members that "it's good to eat healthy but at the same time it's okay to indulge in food that will make them happy."

The Extensive Planning Behind Senior Grad Nite

What goes into drafting this much awaited celebration

Japneet Kaur
Staff Writer

Senior year marks the end of twelve long years of education. It's the final year before students open the door to adulthood and head their separate ways. After spending so many years with the same class, saying goodbye can be really hard. To ease the agony of this inevitable goodbye and to celebrate the commendable achievements of the graduating class, American High School's exemplary PTSA holds an event each year known as Grad Nite.

Michelle Soares, one of the Grad Nite Chairs, reveals that Grad Nite dates all the way back to the early 80's. Soares herself has been involved since 2015 and officially took over back in 2019.

"What goes into the actual trip is that the coordinator submits dates to Disneyland in early July and we wait for the dates to be picked. Once we have our date, we immediately book the buses. Next, we have students register and start collecting deposits. This gives us an idea [of] how many [students] we have going. Final payments are due in March and [then] we start all the planning for the actual trip," Soares discloses. "I do all the planning for the trip and I have a committee who helps plan the Holiday Boutique."

The Holiday Boutique is held every year for the purpose of raising funds for Grad Nite. Teri Morales, the vendor coordinator, reveals that the Holiday Boutique was started in 2004 and its founder, Laura Dauzart, still participates in the event to this day.

"The Boutique consists of almost eighty 10 foot by 10 foot booth spaces in the rotunda, old cafeteria, and adjoining hallway," Morales describes. "Vendors pay a fee to display their products for sale. The PTSA also holds a bake sale and prize drawing with donated baked goods and prizes. Customers come to do their holiday

shopping and find unique, one-of-a-kind items."

Morales reveals an initial struggle this year in finding volunteers for the Boutique, but reassures that the event ultimately ended up being a huge success. "Some of the planning was slow to start due to a lack of volunteers stepping up. Unfortunately, it is always challenging to find adult volunteers who have the time to devote to such a large function. Plus, many of our regular vendors decided not to participate this year due to concerns over Covid-19 safety. Luckily, [however], all available booth spaces were filled by new vendors. We even had a waitlist of vendors wanting to participate."

The pandemic did create somewhat of a change in the way things were run at the Boutique, but Morales confirms that the event was completely COVID-friendly. "In addition to requiring everyone to wear face masks indoors, we had to adjust our bake sale to eliminate indoor eating of treats. We also required that all items donated were individually wrapped," she recounts.

In addition to the volunteers, many of the attendees also declared the Boutique an ultimate success. "It was a very exciting way to reintroduce the Christmas spirit," says Jalen Reyes (11), a student who volunteered at the Boutique. "It was sort of stressful to run around and try to help with everything they needed, but it was fun to walk around with friends and see everything they had to offer. There were really cool crafts and foods that you could buy."

The Boutique, according to Soares, has 78 vendors come and sell their unique products. This year's Boutique, she reveals, had over 2,000 attendees buying different items. "I bought a necklace with bloodstone and quartz, a ring with rose quartz, and a piece of rose quartz and agate," says Stuti Jajoo (9).

"The annual Holiday

Boutique has become a treasured event not only for the vendors but for the community itself," Morales remarks. "It has the potential to grow and become an even bigger fundraiser for the PTSA, thereby benefiting not just AHS seniors, but perhaps all students—current and future."

She illustrates the Boutique's direct benefits towards Grad Nite as well. "For many years now, the seniors have attended the Disney Grad Nite celebration in Anaheim, CA. The cost for this event includes the event ticket plus transportation to and from the event. It is very expensive. All proceeds from the Boutique event help reduce the per-person event cost."

Grad Nite's costliness doesn't make much of a dent on the students' excitement for the event, however. In fact, many students have been awaiting Grad Nite for years, after hearing stories from their siblings' graduations. Harnoor Kaur (12), who has been looking forward to the event for almost five years now, after her sister's graduation in 2016, details her excitement. "It's an experience we won't get to see and feel after high school. It's the last time you will see all your classmates and friends in one area. Plus, running on a couple hours of sleep and riding roller coasters is a different experience."

Reyes, who also attributes her excitement to her sister's graduation, sees the event as a once in a lifetime experience as well. "It offers seniors the opportunity to spend a late night out with their friends and away from their parents. It sort of resembles an independent trip with other students and teachers. I am looking forward to it because I rarely get to go out with my friends. I think it will be fun going out with them, especially late at night."

Their bubbles were burst-ed, however, on November 1, when Soares sent out an email on Infinite Campus detailing the possibil-

ity of the cancellation of Grad Nite for class of '23 and '24 due to the lack of volunteers to lead it. The email, titled, "2023/2024 Grad Nite Cancelled?" laid out the situation and urged junior parents to step up.

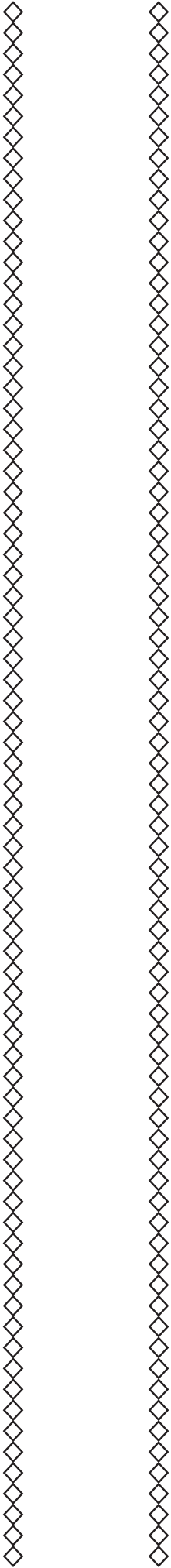
"We normally have a sophomore parent shadowing us and then they are part of the committee for junior year. They take over when their child is a senior. As of right now, we have no junior parents helping to take over, nor do we have any underclass helping," Soares described. "This is a BIG job and you really can't walk into it beginning of senior year. We start planning for the trip in June so, like I said, it's a lot of work. It would be really great if we could get a few people to contact me asap from each class so we can carry this tradition over for our students."

The possibility of Grad Nite being cancelled is really saddening for the juniors, who have been waiting years for the event. Vaidehi Karve (11) details her disappointment in hearing the news of the potential cancellation. "Grad Nite is something that I'm really looking forward to, especially after COVID took away a year and a half of the traditional high school experience. The class of '23 deserves Grad Nite as much as any other class, especially after the pandemic. If there are no volunteers, the school should try to come up with a different solution that still allows the seniors to have a Grad Nite."

Soares' email did seem to have an impact, though, because a junior parent has stepped up for class of '23. However, things aren't looking so great for class of '24 at the moment. "Because of the pandemic, we haven't been able to recruit parents to take over. Luckily, we had a junior parent come forward for next year but still need more help to do it for class of 2024," Soares says. However, seeing things work out for the junior class al-

lows for some hope for the sophomore class as well.

With fundraisers like the Holiday Boutique and volunteers like Soares and Morales working so hard to make the event happen, it is clear that Grad Nite occupies a role of great significance at American High School. Ultimately, like Mehek Bhatnagar (11) says, "Grad Nite is a time for seniors to celebrate the completion of high school and spend time with their friends for possibly the last time before college."



A Second Home

Reporting the harmful effects of school vandalism and latest string of graffiti vandalism at school

Nicole Wu
Staff Writer

Students have two homes: the one they live at, and the one they learn at. Between studying, schooling, and bonding with friends, students spend seven plus hours at school every day. With a majority of time devoted to school, a clean and aesthetically appealing school campus creates a positive vibe that optimizes learning and promotes happiness. On the contrary, a school full of vulgar graffiti and broken school property doesn't sound welcoming.

School vandalism involves any form of damage or destruction to school property. School buildings are often targets for acts of vandalism when school is not in session. Ms. Barrington, American High School's principal, describes the role of timing in vandalism.

"I think that students are very aware of when schools have a lot of people on them and when they don't, so it's a lot easier to target schools when there's not a lot of people around. I wouldn't say there is a start and stop [to school vandalism], so much as there are individuals taking advantage of a vacant campus," she explains.

As a result of school vandalism, the campus environment suffers deg-

radation. Staff struggle to keep school facilities clean and open for students to use. Ms. Barrington provides examples of school vandalism causing student restriction to facilities.

"If we have destruction in our bathroom, that impacts student's access to a number of available bathrooms on campus because we might have to shut it down for a short term or long term. There are regular maintenance issues that happen. If a drain gets backed up, we might have to close the bathroom. If there's vandalism in another one, then all of a sudden there's two closed instead of just one."

Not only does vandalism impact facility access, it affects students' learning and education. Rather than optimizing school spending to focus on improving student's education and purchasing new curriculum resources, school funds are being poured into replacing and fixing damaged school property.

Ms. Barrington elaborates on this wasteful situation. "If we are investing time and money in fixing acts of vandalism, then that time and money can't be spent on instructional services. We could be fixing things that would help students in the classroom. We could be buying new materials, new technology,

but instead, we're spending money buying new toilet paper dispensers or paying hours for someone to work to fix these problems."

Financial consequences of school vandalism burdens the school who continuously put money into vandalism repair and restoration yet experience delays in receiving reimbursement from responsible vandals.

"If we have an individual who is caught red-handed, or we have evidence of their involvement, then we can request that their family reimburse the school district. There are significant delays in that money coming to us. We also, in the past, have had times when there's been a criminal prosecution because of the level of vandalism that has occurred, and the courts can order families to pay for reimbursement to the school as well. However, that can take years for us to receive," says Ms. Barrington.

The cost of school vandalism is not limited to students. Having to deal with school vandalism interrupts administrators' busy schedules. Ms. Barrington shares her experience of readjusting schedules to accommodate school vandalism matters.

"I have to stop work-

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The, originally, light blue shed located behind American High School's track and football field was recently repainted black and blue to cover up inappropriate graffiti vandalism. Ms. Barrington expresses her frustrations with students overlooking the extent of the consequences of school vandalism. "A lot of times students have a short-term vision of the implications of school vandalism. There's a lot of people involved on the outcome side with the repairs, the cleanup, or the cost. There's a lot that is involved when, unfortunately, something like graffiti on the walls could take a few seconds, it could take hours or even days of people's time to fix."

The most popular undesirable Holiday gifts: How to give gifts people will *actually* use

A small list of popular unwanted gifts and the impact of its wastage

Sonal Agarwal
Staff Writer

According to finder.com, approximately \$15.2 billion in total has been wasted on unwanted Christmas gifts throughout the United States overall. The average Christmas spending price amounts to around \$900, as stated by capitalcounselor.com. Seeing a splurge in Christmas gift shopping is not anything new; as holidays like Christmas become more commercialized, people tend to spend more on retail products for gift-giving. Feeding into this consumerist culture surrounding Christmas, a large amount of gift and money wastage occurs. People buy gifts for others on the basis of formality instead of seeking something the receiver can actually use, causing many presents to never be utilized and money being spent in the wrong places.

In order to alleviate this excessive spending which causes many gifts to either be regifted, thrown out, or placed in a dark closet for the rest of one's life, here is a list of items shown to be the most unwanted by a finder.com survey.

1. Clothing. In theory, giving clothing as a gift sounds very practical. Anyone would want a warm winter hoodie right? 43% of the total 15.2 billion dollars wasted comes from clothing. The reality is that there are simply too many risks in purchasing clothing for others as the clothing may have sizing issues or not fit their personal liking. Clothing should only be considered as a gift when something specific that the receiver has been wanting is known, or a developed idea of their style and preferences is considered.

2. Randomly assorted gift sets. Randomly assorted gift sets usually have accessories and toiletries such as lotion, body wash, lotion, hair clips, etc. They can be found in almost

any retail store during the holiday season like Macy's, Target, and Walmart. Although usually on the cheaper side, the issue with these gift assortments is that the portions of the products tend to be very small and expendable, very easily becoming a waste of space on a shelf. Because of their price, these items tend to lack in quality and many may not even bother opening them. As an alternative, purchasing one or two good quality skin/body care products instead of a large gift set with random items may be a lot more appreciated, while staying in the price range.

3. Unnecessary household contraptions. The name may bring ambiguity of what exactly is considered an "unnecessary household contraption" but they've definitely been seen before. Some examples that fit this category are random inventions that are commonly sold on TV and seen in commercials such as soda-making machines, automatic jar openers, cup holders, etc. Some of these random inventions can price up to about \$30 despite being excessive or having no use at all. Household items also ranked second highest on the unwanted gifts list, making up about 20% of the total 15.2 billion dollars wasted.

In regards to gift-giving, people often think "it's the thought that counts," which is definitely true. However, under this mentality, a lot of money is wasted. Losing the formality that surrounds holiday gift-giving and actually searching for gifts based on the recipient's interests would allow for many savings. In situations where the receiver's interests are unknown, presents like cash and gift cards may be a safer route to take as they would allow the recipient to have more

Continued on Page 9

Holiday Readings

Books that people at American High think would recommend for the English curriculum (or just to read for pleasure!)

Natalie Loo
Staff Writer

Mrs. Martin:

“I would really like to see Trevor Noah’s *Born a Crime* added to the ninth grade curriculum. I like that Noah is a successful public figure who came from very humble beginnings in which he encountered a lot of obstacles that most of our students cannot even imagine. The book deals with some serious issues, but it’s also written with a lot of warmth and humor. I would be really excited to see what kinds of lessons I could build around this text, and I think students would really appreciate how different this is from the other things we read in ninth grade.”

“I would really like to see *There There* by Tommy Orange added to the twelfth grade curriculum. It is a contemporary book written by a Native American author about various facets of the Native American community in Oakland, California. This book addresses topics that are not covered in other core novel selections, and I really love the fact that it is a local, Bay Area story.”

Srinidhi Sampath (10) - book recommendation but not necessarily for curriculum

I read *The Song of Achilles*, which I thought was really really nice. It touches on topics like Greek mythology, which I think is something that I feel like we don’t really talk a lot about. I don’t think we’ve read a lot of mythology. I think mythology’s super interesting because it touches on things like history, [and] also lessons. This book specifically is about a romance. But it still touches on a lot of things like war. It’s just such an amazing book. It’s moving. I think there’s a lot to be learned from the book, like the connection between two people, [and] how it affects a whole country. It’s pretty amazing.

Sarvani Vungutur (11)

I really like the book *Crazy Rich Asians*. I think it can be kind of like *The Great Gatsby*, minus the American dream, but just more like high end society. The main character is Asian American, and she comes from a middle class or a working class family and she saw firsthand how her mom struggled to make her way to become more successful. And she’s doing the same thing as well by being like a college professor of game theory. But she is thrown into this high end society with her boyfriend where they’re rich by striking a fortune many, many centuries ago. So she navigates the world through old money. That part is set in Asia, but I think the principle there can be very similar to what we’re learning about [in] *Great Gatsby*. It [also] shows the point of view of an Asian American. With American, the demographic is very much Asian, so I think we can see how the main character is related to us. And also just see society in other places, as opposed to America so that we can get more knowledge on the world itself.

Keerti Verada (12)

There’s this genre known as philosophical fiction, which sounds very intimidating, but it’s not. It’s like Nietzsche and Hesse, and similar authors, and it’s very related to morality. I think that that’s a very important theme in literature, and philosophical fiction really explores that. One of my personal favorites is *Demian* by Hermann Hesse. It’s not even 100 pages, so it’s a very short book. It’s a Bildungsroman, which means it explores the coming-of-age story of this boy, Emil Sinclair. The interesting thing is it doesn’t really try to answer the question directly of what is good and what is evil, but it explores it through a lens that is very relatable. like as a student going to college, like through childhood, and you know, influence from family and religion. So I think that, when I read it, I definitely found it helps you better understand morality in literature.

A Second Home Cont.

ing on something where I might be giving a teacher feedback on their lesson, working with students on upcoming club activities, or helping with the leadership class wanting to bounce ideas off of me for dance. Instead of that, I am scheduling painters or ordering parts,” she remarks.

Throughout the past few weeks, students and teachers have spotted graffiti vandalism on school property. Most of the graffiti vandalism was limited to the buildings facing the back parking lot. Ms. Barrington mentions graffiti vandalism at school isn’t something that commonly occurs.

“The graffiti that we had this week was an isolated incident. Every now and then, we’ll have an incident like the one that occurred over Thanksgiving break, in which we had quite a few buildings marked, but those are rare.”

When graffiti vandalism is spotted, the process of handling the incident involves many aspects. “One of the first things that we do is photograph any characteristics that might be identifying. Sometimes there are names attached to a graffiti, so we would investigate those names. We would want to get it covered as quickly as possible,” Ms. Barrington notes.

Multiple staff from different departments have to come together to deal with graffiti vandalism. “We have district maintenance crews that will come out and work to get that covered up and back to its original state. We have the investigation of the activity that occurs from the administrative side. We have conversations with our district staff about security over holiday breaks or long vacant periods,” Ms. Barrington states.

The recent events of school graffiti vandalism can be tied back to the ‘Devious Licks’ TikTok trend and challenge which involved students posting videos showing themselves breaking, stealing, and damaging school property with school bathrooms being hit the

hardest. Ms. Barrington explains her thoughts on the impact of ‘Devious Licks’ leading to mistreatment of school property.

“When we have a trend of not respecting the school, then that could potentially spread. It’s possible that because the devious licks were so popular at the start of the school year, that set an unfortunate tone for respecting the campus and the school property.”

While school vandalism is an ongoing issue, students can do their part to inform staff and report incidents of vandalism.

Ms. Barrington explains student responsibility in helping to create a conducive environment. “If they do see damage in a classroom, they can let their teacher know. If they see damage in a hallway or anywhere else on campus, then they can let a campus supervisor, a custodian, or administrator know. Any of our staff here are working to make positive change. It is a huge campus, and change in schools is a little bit slow because we have a limited number of maintenance personnel or custodians. Every day that students are taking care of campus, we make the campus a better place to be.”

We can do better, Eagles.

Holiday Gifts Cont.

control over purchases. It is still inevitable to receive a gift at some point that may be considered unwanted. In scenarios like this, it is best to donate to local Christmas drives and charities where someone might be able to find good use of someone else’s unwanted gift. Donating and cutting down on excessive Christmas spending would create a much more sustainable environment and disperse gifts among more people.

With Christmas approaching this Winter Break, it may come as a surprise just how much waste comes with unwanted Christmas gifts during the season. While shopping for friends and family this year, it is important to understand what to prioritize and avoid so that everyone is able to make wise purchases during this festive month.

Overlooked Events of the Year

A review of the most important events that happened this past year

Kelly Li
Staff Writer

January 20th: The long awaited presidential election led to the inauguration of President Joseph Biden as our 46th US president. The election happened in 2020, however, Biden didn't get sworn in until January 20th, 2021. On Biden's first day of presidency, he started off by rejoining the World Health Organization, making strides to create a better living environment for the United States.

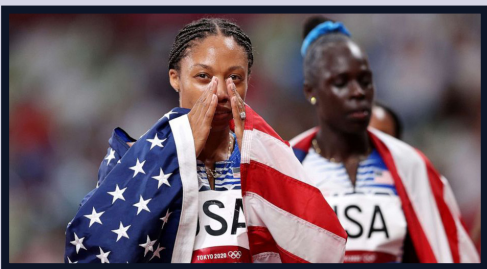
July 23-August 8: The highly anticipated 2021 Tokyo Summer Olympics finally happened. The previously planned 2020 Summer Olympics was pushed back a year due to the pandemic. The pandemic caused Tokyo to have strict rules for their Olympic village, requiring many Covid tests and social distancing. Athletes needed to provide two negative Covid tests before being able to get on a plane to Japan. Temperatures and more covid tests were taken in the Olympic village. During the games, popular gymnast Simone Biles pulled out of most of the Olympic games due to mental health reasons. She performed on the beam after taking many health assessments and took a bronze medal home for the balance beam. The U.S. ended up with the most medals of the 2020 Olympics with 39 gold medals, 41 silver medals, and 33 bronze medals, ending up with a total of 113 medals won!

September 1st: A new law was passed in Texas banning abortions after the seven week mark. Some people might not even know they are pregnant before the five week mark. People involved in an abortion or helped someone get an abortion could be sued for the procedure which will instill fear in women trying to get abortions. Laws like these can lead to unsafe abortions which can be dangerous or even fatal for the mother. The new law resparked arguments about the choice of abortion and when it's appropriate. Thousands of people marched to ban abortion laws in Texas.

Nov 22: FDA approves Covid-19 booster shots for adults who had Pfizer and Moderna. Adults have the option of taking the Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson and Johnson booster while 16-17 year olds only qualify for the Pfizer booster shot. Adults who had the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine have to wait at least 6 months before getting the booster while people with the Johnson and Johnson vaccine have to wait at least 2 months. Getting booster shots helps boost immunity to the virus. Most other vaccines that we receive will generally give booster shots too, so the idea of a booster shot isn't new. Since the initial release of Covid vaccines came out, there have been new variants such as the delta and Omicron variant which have posed new risks to serious illness. Pfizer believes that the new booster shot will help protect people against the new Omicron variant.

May 1-Aug 15: The Taliban took over Afghanistan including major cities such as Kabul. The takeover impacted citizens greatly, especially Afghan women who have been denied education ever since the Taliban took control over the country. People in Afghanistan fled the country out of fear of the Taliban and the possibility that they would be attacked. People were in such desperation to leave Afghanistan that some even held onto the side of military jets to try and escape, sadly falling to their deaths.

P.C. Patrick Smith/Getty Images



“Sprinter, Allyson Felix’s reaction to beating Olympic history and winning the most medals out of all female U.S. athletes”

August 18th: American finally went back to school in person! After a year and a half of online school, we were finally able to go back to physical school. The release of covid vaccines helped ease students back into regular school. Vaccines help prevent the spread of the virus making school a safer environment. Schools are now equipped with air filters, hand sanitizer, and extra masks to help. Everyone's lives were changed in the past year, but being able to return to school has brought back some normalcy to the strange year we had.

P.C. David Paul Morris/Bloomberg/Getty Images



“Medical workers testing for the Omicron variant at San Francisco Airport”

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