

Culture of Silence

Investigating the silence that shrouds the concerns of female students at American High

Vaishnavi Kurupath
Staff Writer

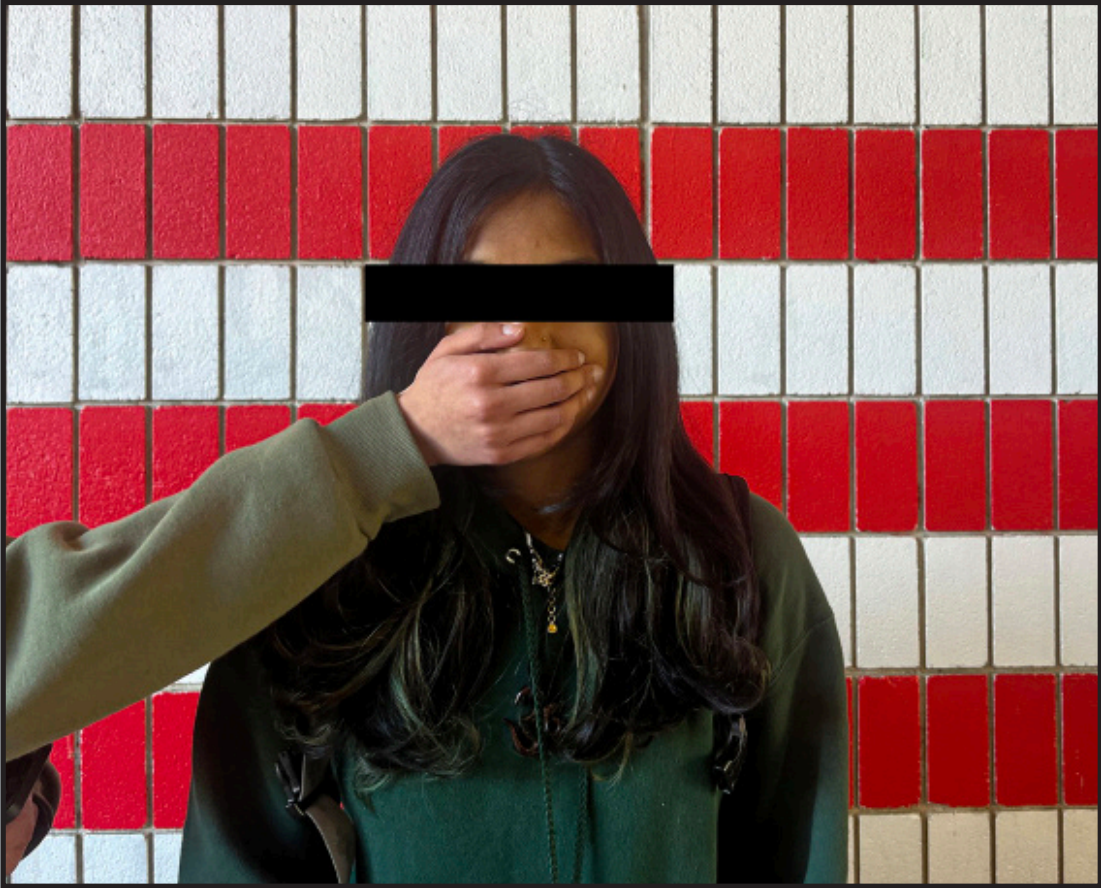
Over thirty years have passed since the first Women’s History Month. From artwork to memes to initiatives, a generation of young people celebrated the accomplishments of women all over the world this year, whilst applauding the success of our efforts in achieving equality. Within American High School itself, flyers and announcements featured celebrations of significant women who have strengthened the movement toward equality. However, these efforts are not indicative of real change occurring within American High, especially change concerning the treatment of women in our student body. In fact, they have led to speculation whether the treatment of female and

femme-presenting students at this school has improved over the years, aside from the ground-breaking flyers with

QR codes posted all over the school.

“I definitely think that there is a huge difference in

the way that female students are treated and male students [are treated], inside and outside of the classroom,” says a



junior. Certain subtleties in how drama revolves around the students reveal a gap between how the two genders are [treated]. “Some of the comments that people say are definitely questionable,” she continues. “And yeah, they would not have said those kinds of things if it was directed [to the] guys.”

Some students attribute this issue to the fact that this is simply how the real world functions. “That’s gonna always happen, unfortunately,” says a female senior. “But it’s a very undeniable issue here.” So, it is not the duty of American High to solve the problem of gender inequity, as this school is not equipped to do so.

However, it’s not only these minuscule, “real-world” differences that add to this environment. In fact, the lack of trust female students and femme-presenting students have towards

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A Fine Arts Fair For the Books

A closer look into American High School's Fine Arts Fair, and what made it so fine

Anna Babayan
Staff Writer

The cool, crisp air of the evening is a harsh contrast to the warm light spilling out of the Rotunda. Entering the transformed building, you’re welcomed in and handed a program with a smile. As you pass by Theater 70, faint sounds of witty dialogue and incidental music briefly reach your ears. The smell of latex illuminates your palette as you cross underneath the arc of balloons and enter the main building. Students and parents mill around, examining the objects placed on easels and tables, and engaging in lively conversation. Across

the room, lights strobe across a stage as student after student present poems and music, eliciting booming applause from the mass of onlookers. Welcome one, welcome all, to American High School’s 3rd annual Fine Arts Fair!

Managed by students, The Fine Arts Fair is divided into five distinct categories: art show, fashion show, dance exposition, film festival. With an event with such a broad scope, lots of organization is in place, directed by our own Associated Student Body. Kiarra Bautista (11), incoming ASB president, shares some of the process from the executive perspective. “We started planning back in December or January. My role was to delegate the committees to every

leadership student, choose the committee heads so they know how to outreach to student’s art submissions and make this Fine Arts Fair successful and different from others.”

In terms of making things

different this time around, Bautista acknowledges some of the problems that have existed with the event. She says, “We’ve never really emphasized publicizing to students in general. A lot of people don’t know what Fine

Arts Fair is. So we really tried to implement different things that may be interesting to people.”

A lot of effort has been put into publicizing this year, that much is clear from what the rotunda looks like. A massive poster spread hanging in front of SAC and countless posters across campus promote the event and urge people to go, whether to enjoy art or submit their own for display.

But more than that, the physical aspects of Fine Arts Fair are what are experiencing the greatest changes. Bautista notes this as one of the things she is happy to announce.

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Down:

1. The civil rights movement's forefront in Alabama and Georgia

2. The first woman to successfully lead the largest tribe in US as chief

3. The first African-American actress to receive an Oscar

4. A female astronaut of Indian descent to first ever fly in space

6. The first Asian to ever win an Oscar for Best Actress

7. A woman ethnologist whose findings on chimpanzee behavior transformed the worldview towards animals

11. An original member of the activists for trans people in the gay rights movement

12. A Mexican painter whose art was iconic, soaked with messages of feminism

Across:

5. A classical pianist known for her legendary ability to play two pianos at the same time

8. A force in the historical supreme case against segregation laws in the US that banned interracial love

9. The female publisher overseeing the groundbreaking publications of the Pentagon Papers and the Watergate scandal

10. The first Muslim fencing champion to represent the US at the Olympics

13. Hollywood's first ever Asian movie star

16. An university student who helped bust the largest online sex-crime rings in South Korea

17. Acclaimed for being the first European female surgeon who implanted an artificial heart

Answers Here!





Kelly Wang, Staff Writer

Letters from the Editors

Sorren Chaudhury
Broadcast Editor

Hello Eagles!

March is a fun time. Seasonal allergies mixed with college rejections creates the perfect excuse to go home. We only have a couple more months left until we're done for this school year, and I don't know about you but I could really use the break. With

school and the emotional whiplash that is the weather, I am ready for a nice, warm period of relaxation.

All that being said, I think Spring might be my favorite time of year. I love appreciating the world around us as it changes, and I hope you can take a couple minutes out of your day to notice it. I know we don't get proper seasons here, but there's still a difference. It's nice to watch the

birds and squirrels interact in their own little world.

As per usual, I have to shout out my staffers. They have an endless list of great ideas, and this paper has truly become theirs over the course of the year. I'd like to give an extra special shout out to my staffers that work on *The Beak Speaks*, our podcast on Spotify (please check it out). We have such a nice variety of subjects and

content, and I'm so proud of them for taking the initiative and starting video podcasts. One of our recurring segments, "On Air with Vaishnavi Kurupath" hosted by the one and only Vaishnavi Kurupath (12) never fails to crack me up every-time and it really shows how our staffers were able to take their own creative direction this year. They are doing things I never even thought

of, and that makes me proud everyday.

Thank you. As readers, you guys choose what is "heard" and what goes unnoticed, so your interest in the *Eagle Era* really helps. I appreciate everyone reading right now, and the fact that you're reading the letters from the editors shows a little extra care. I see you, and I thank you. You're a real one. Keep it real.

Karyle Agno
Media Editor

Hi. I know almost, if not, all English teachers despise one word starters but it is an amazing way to catch the reader's attention (I hope). A lot of new content has been released for our 6th edition of the *Eagle Era* such as the main Instagram account, @ahs_eagleera, uploading more videos!

Our recent posts has a spotlight on the International Week Recap, where Patrick Tan (12) and yours truly run around finding and asking people if they are enjoying the festivi-

ties. Boy, it was exhausting. I have no idea how Tiktok interviewers have the charisma and energy to socialize with so many people.

In addition, a music cover by Ms. Sangam sang "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" by Elton John is a precious jewel in a sea of pearls. She has a wonderful voice and deserves the recognition for her talent. Well done!

Other than the regular updates to the Instagram account, April is approaching with staff writers brainstorming ideas on features for "Through Their Eyes!" To sum it up shortly, "Through Their Eyes" is an issue we always publish around April

to feature the many unique people in our AHS community.


It essentially is an in-depth Humans of American where instead of reading a quote that summarizes an experience or significant moment in a persons' life, it is structured into an elaborated article!

Like you, I am so curious as to who may be featured for April. Till then, I can't wait to see you in our paper for Through Their Eyes.



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The Cocaine Bear Cinematic Universe

Just when you thought one movie about a wild animal on coke couldn't get any better!

Vincent Nghiem
Staff Writer

The Creature of Coke. The Cocaine Critter. The Demon of Dope. Attack on Crack. The titular star of *Cocaine Bear* (2022) goes by many names. But this won't be the last you'll hear of your favorite fiend from the forest. In a landmark milestone in the entire history of filmmaking, Brownstone Productions has announced the creation of a new cinematic universe created around *Cocaine Bear*, titled the NONCU (Nature on Narcotics Cinematic Universe), that will expand upon the events of the first film. Director Elizabeth Banks has exclusively reached out to the *Eagle Era* to announce the production of two sequels. *Heroin Fox* and *Meth Rat* have been confirmed to be released in 2024 and 2025, respectively, with Banks returning as director and the Bear returning as the Bear in post-credits scenes. Upon the announcement of the NONCU, Disney released a public statement stating that "Due to unforeseen competition in the near future, the Marvel Cinematic Universe will be terminated immediately as of April 2023." The instant success and

glowing future prospects of *Cocaine Bear* have brought up a multitude of curious questions. For one—why hadn't anyone thought of a movie about a bear on crack before? "It was one day a few years ago, when I remembered reading that news story about the real-life cocaine bear from the 80s when I was a little girl," Banks says in an *Eagle Era* exclusive interview. "And then, it just clicked. Cocaine. Bears. What's not to love?!" However, *Cocaine Bear* was better said than done. The film's production, led by Brownstone Productions, was rife with controversies, but one especially stood out. The Bear, who plays the Bear, has been publicly condemned and scrutinized for her suspicious use of method acting. Recently released paparazzi footage has displayed photographs of The Bear allegedly consuming real crack cocaine on the set of *Cocaine Bear* in order to "get into the role," according to The Bear herself. Brownstone Productions has not issued any response. The Bear is outspoken about the allegations. "I mean, really. How do you expect me to give a good performance without dabbling in a little of the stuff?" she said in an interview from her home in Beverly Hills. The Bear's decision to rely

on method acting has been criticized by numerous activists in the wilderness sphere. "She's honestly just ruining the reputation of bears and forest animals in general everywhere," Smokey the Bear, iconic representative of the U.S. Forest Service, says. He reports an incident when, upon arriving at his job in Yellowstone National Park, an assailant who has yet to be identified threw a shovel at him, yelling, "Take your crack and get out of here!" "Smokey, the Berenstains, Paddington, Freddy Fazbear—they're all out to get me," The Bear says. "They just love to hate on a successful woman in the industry." Outside of the industry controversy, though, both critic and audience recep-

tion for *Cocaine Bear* has been generally positive. There are, of course, a few exceptions; not everyone has been a *Cocaine Bear* lover. For example, in a 2023 survey of drug cartels, 97% answered that they "disliked" the film. These surveyees near-unanimously supported their choices due to "defamation on the grounds of wrongly portraying the security of their drug distribution system." Despite these critiques, Banks is still intent on realizing a *Cocaine Bear* cinematic universe. "What with the amount of public attention we've had on the first film surrounding Miss Bear's, um, acting prowess, I doubt that creating the NONCU will be easy," she explains. "But I welcome the challenge!" Indeed, some actors have al-

ready stepped up to this challenge. Nick Wilde, famous for his leading role in *Zootopia* (2016), has been confirmed to play the Fox in *Heroin Fox* (2024). Remy of *Ratatouille* (2007) fame is rumored to have screen tested for the role of the Rat in *Meth Rat* (2025). The NONCU may extend beyond the theater too. In a recent Instagram post, The Bear has posted an advertisement with a simple text display: "CokeBear+." Fans of *Cocaine Bear* should expect to be feasting for the next few years. Evidently, the greatest story ever put to film is here to stay, and the future of *Cocaine Bear* and its accompanying cinematic universe is in good hands—or, should I say, nostrils!



The Bear, played by the Bear, shoots a suspenseful scene with Sari, played by Keri Russell.

OBX3: Worth the Hype?

A review on the newest season of Netflix's Outer Banks

Sophia Alimagno
Staff Writer

You walk into class on Thursday, February 23, 2023, expecting another casual day of lecture, work, and boredom. As you look around the classroom, you realize almost every one of your classmates has some sort of device out – laptop, phone, iPad – and they all seem focused and engaged on whatever is happening on their screen. Then it hits you: OBX3 has just been released on Netflix. If you have not been aware of last month's recent events,

WHEN THE SECOND SEASON OF THE SHOW WAS RELEASED, MANY FANS SHARED THEIR INTEREST IN BECOMING A "POGUE"

one of Netflix's most popular shows, *Outer Banks*, released a third season. The show was first aired in April 2020, and it quickly became a big hit and was known mostly for its compelling storyline and, you guessed it, the characters of the show, commonly recognized for their looks instead of their acting performance (yes, I am talking about Madelyn Cline's rapid growth in popularity and followers on social media for her role as Sarah Cameron). The show overall is enjoyable and the directors, Jonas and Josh Pate, do a great job in keeping their viewers fixated on the plot by including many plot twists and cliffhangers, as well as the characters' different backstories and pasts. It mainly revolves around the adventures led by five teenagers in their search for gold, while also including where the gold first originated from. As the show progresses, viewers are able to unlock more helpful details and clues, which add on to the story and eventually build up to many new mys-

teries and questions, making them anticipate for the next episode. When the second season of the show was released in late July of 2021, many fans, including myself, shared their interest in becoming a "pogue" (reference to how the characters classified themselves), as the whole vibe and aesthetic of the show really brought out the blissful feeling of summer. The song choices, the settings, and the events that were going on inspired people to go out and live their life, just like the characters did.

Now when compared to the third season, since it was released in the middle of February, the reactions from the viewers were not exactly as positive as when season two came out. February was a month of rain, cold, and wind – the complete opposite of what was being presented in the show. Set in Outer Banks, North Carolina, the show really is unafraid to display the paradise of the island and how carefree the characters are during their time of summer and fun. The timing of OBX3's release does not really appeal

to the whole warmth and summertime vibe, which somewhat takes away the charm in watching the show. However, this season was extremely different from past ones, and the directors were able to do this by bringing in a variety of new characters and of course, multiple instances where there is an unexpected turn of events. I think that is what keeps the viewers so hooked; there are so many possibilities of what is to happen next, yet, they are presented with something so unforeseen and abrupt, that it just keeps them guessing.



More Than Robots

Chronicling Americans' robotics teams rise to success and the many things they build along the way

Ananya Balaji
Staff Writer

A bunch of nerdy kids crowd around a huge monitor with complicated algorithms and neon green binary displayed. They don't seem to be communicating in English. They have a whole other language they use: trigonometry. They wear big glasses, make physics jokes, slap a NASA sticker on anything and everything.

The reality of the Bay Area robot nerd is one that entirely goes beyond these stereotypes, however. Yes, they do seem to find coding and fabrication and design more exhilarating than some. But for Americans' two robotics teams, it's about more than robots.

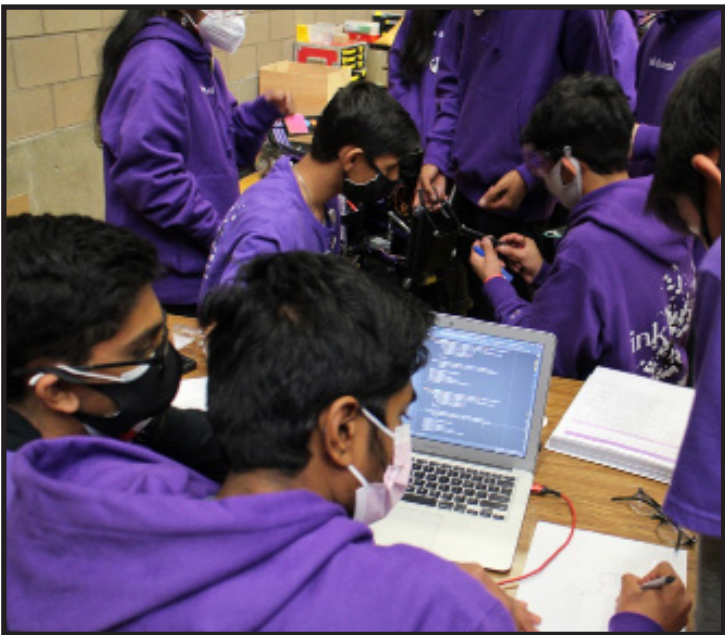
Ink and Metal, America's *FIRST* Tech Challenge (FTC) team, which

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is a competitive robotics circuit, recently made it to the FTC World Championships where they will compete with hundreds of teams around the world. One of our two all-girls Vex teams, Thing 2, which goes through a different competitive robotics circuit, also made it to the World Championships for Vex. So, what's the secret behind these two teams' success?

Similar to any other successful high school team, regardless of the activity, they've had to put in a lot of elbow grease to get here.

Preet Karia (11), a mechanical lead on Ink and Metal explains how, "A very good team at states last, last week, the day before competition, their odometry [which tracks the robots position from its starting point] broke. And they just called it a day. They were like, 'Oh, whatever, it's fine, we'll run with it.' If it was us, we would've definitely done whatever it took to get it fixed right there and make



sure it doesn't break again... So I think that drive to do whatever it takes to win kind of sets us apart."

He adds on, "I think other teams are equally passionate, but they don't spend as much time as we do...I think Anuj's garage, or in freshmen year when it was someone else's garage, that was my home more than my home. I slept there more than I slept at my own home. And I'm grateful to their moms who fed me. But that's also something that sets us apart." Karia even mentions a counter they have for all-nighters spent on the robot.

Anuj Naik (11), who is team captain, agrees, saying, "I don't know that there are many other FTC teams that spend 3 hours per day, per person during the season to get things done."

That road to success hasn't been without its difficulties, however. From a technical perspective, Naik describes, "Our first robot iteration, we tried to make something that would work really well and was optimized for success. But that was in December, and three months [from then to competition] was not enough time for an entirely custom robot...So we definitely overestimated what we could get done."

In the end, however, he describes how they were able to execute their ambitious plan by spending "every single day and night writing CAD" over winter break.

Harshini Srinath (11), team captain of Thing 2, speaks to a similar journey between resolving technical and non-technical obstacles. Vex introduced a variety of new parts that teams could use this year, and Srinath describes how "since we're a school team, we have to

wait until [admin] approves [any purchases for those new parts.] So it took a long time and all the [new] parts were out of stock by then. So we had to do with what we had and create multiple iterations... Eventually, we got it all to work!"

While she describes the process of building things only to run into constant errors and issues as "frustrating," she does note how it's taught her how, "[In engineering] things don't tend to go as planned... But we learned to just test and try again and not give up, which is very basic, but kind of sums up what the work is like often times."

She also describes how with "things not working the first time," she learned to "bounce ideas off teammates, try new things, and be open. And also, even if it doesn't work out, you gain more experience because [after facing challenges with implementing flywheels] I am very skilled with building flywheels now."

The challenges Thing 2 faces are mostly like any other

team, but occasionally, being an all-girls team leads to sexist interactions. "At competitions before, we've heard teams we were alliances with be like 'Oh my god, they're an all-girls team. They're going to do so bad.'"

The male-dominated culture of robotics is something Ink and Metal has also aimed to tackle. Naik notes, "When we went to States and even qualifiers, almost 80% of the people there were boys, which is a problem."

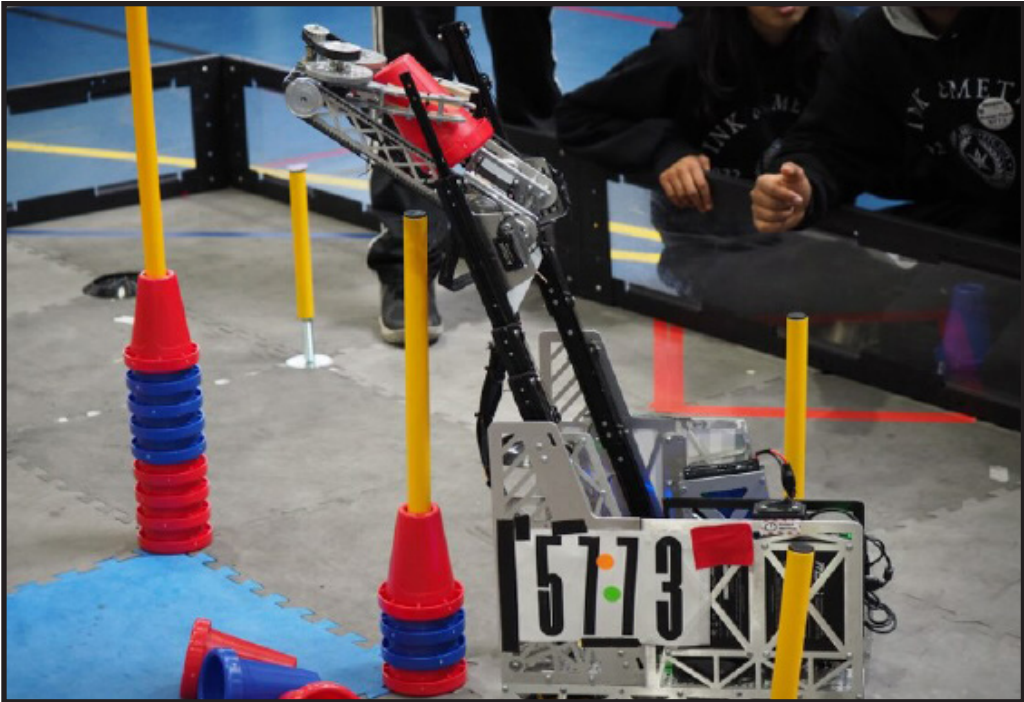
Ink and Metal tried their hand at helping decrease this disparity this year by hosting a conference with the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, which is a federally-funded research center. "After [we received some mentorship from them in planning and our robot], four of the researchers, they were all female, and they approached us saying that they'd be willing to hold this conference for students in our area. So we took it as an opportunity to achieve one of our goals this season which was involving more people of diverse backgrounds in *FIRST*, particularly girls, so we had a panel with those four researchers on astrophysics, general physics, computer science, and AI... Around 50 or 60 percent of participants were female, which is pretty cool, and it's something we just wanted to do for inclusivity in robotics," describes Naik.

Ultimately, the people on these teams all seem to agree on one thing: just as much as robotics is about building robots, it's about building people and community. Manasa Maddi (12), who is

the outreach adviser for Ink and Metal, describes how "A big part of *FIRST* or FTC is community outreach." This outreach is exemplified by Ink and Metal's documentary where they "featured nearly 200 *FIRST* teams" and the global *FIRST* inclusivity conference that they host. Maddi adds on, "In addition to building a robot for the season, a big mission our team follows is to spread the knowledge that we gain from building a robot to the community around us."

But the impact of Ink and Metal also goes personal for Maddi and many other members. "When I first joined the team in my sophomore year, I would say I was more on the quiet side...But after becoming outreach captain, I started leading people to do things, delegating, managing our time. Those experiences made me more confident in being able to speak up or make decisions with everyone else."

Beyond the gears and flywheels, in Srinath's words, "It's about community. It's so nice and empowering to get to interact with so many teams and competitions and meet so many different people." These teams want to focus on those kinds of things—community, the lessons learned, the jokes they make—instead of the win. Maddi reflects on the moments leading up to their win, saying, "We were all happy no matter what because we tried our best and that's what we believed in. So we were just laughing and having fun, and it was just amazing to hear at the end that we qualified."



Ink and Metal's Championship qualifying robot from this year, pictured during a match.
PC: Preet Karia

Bay Area Life

California Cries a River

The Full picture behind the frenzy of storms bombarding the West Coast

Surya Chelliah
Staff Writer

“Atmospheric river.” The buzzword that has reared its head whenever California’s record-breaking weather has turned up in the news cycle. But what exactly is an atmospheric river, and what brought them to California? An atmospheric river is a column or “river” of water spanning up to 1,000 miles long conjured up by warm temperatures, leading to inflated amounts of water vapor in the atmosphere. This water vapor moves with wind patterns and provides immense precipitation upon landfall. They are no new sight for the US, being historically common along the west coast and providing a majority of the states’ water supply each year, but almost never has the phenomenon been seen with the intensity shown in California.

The source of the river’s

intensity, however, has been a topic of contention. Some scientists claim that the sudden increase in storms follows a trend plotted every decade since 1800 and is more of a product of California’s fluctuating nature, often going from drought to drenched. According to climate scientist Alexander Gershunov, “We know from climate models that global warming will boost California storms of the future, but we haven’t made that connection with the latest storm systems.”

On the other hand, scientist Kevin Trenberth claims, “the interaction between the warming ocean and the overlying atmosphere is producing these rainfalls that have occurred in so many places around the world recently.”

The atmospheric rivers of 2023 are not the first ones we’ve ever seen, but their intensity is well-precedented, causing the “mega-storm” of 1861. The term “mega-storm” describes intense conditions, large impacts, and storm dura-

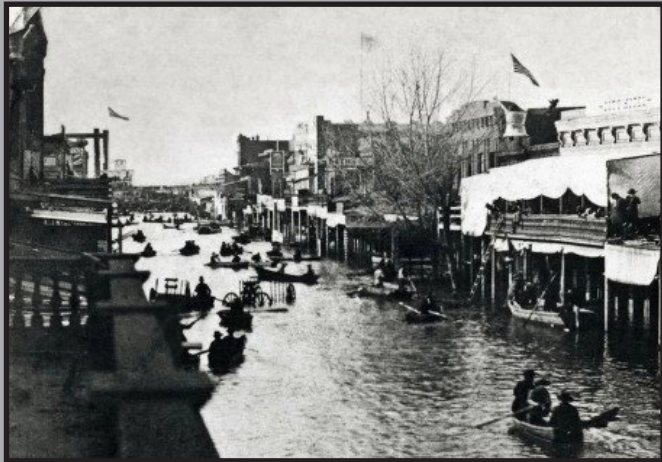
tions of over thirty days. The mega-storm was a 43-day-long atmospheric river that inundated Oregon, Nevada, and California, leaving Sacramento submerged for six months. In comparison, the eleven atmospheric rivers that have hit California so far have had a considerably lesser effect, providing week-long periods of sunshine between the storms.

The 2023 atmospheric rivers have caused widespread unsettlement and an even wider array of effects. After the forecasting of the next river, one question has been on the minds of many: What effects could this one bring, and how long will it last? With the incoming 12th atmospheric river this winter season, California braces for impact, with Dr. Daniel Swain of Weather West theorizing that the storm could morph into a second “bomb cyclone,” a storm that occurs when cold and warm air masses collide and rapidly gain strength. The previous bomb cyclone hit the third

week of March, derailing a train, killing five, and cutting off the power of 230,000 people. The influx of storms does not only hold danger for California, though, their presence has alleviated many of the water-conservation mandates in some California cities as the drought declines.

Fremont’s had its fair share of effects as well, trees and powerlines have been regularly felled, cutting off power

for over 500,000 people and closing roads off. AHS students have felt the brunt of the effects, too, Brianna Chan (11) remarks, “[the storms] cause more traffic. I have to wait longer for traffic to die down after school when it rains, and I [also] stay home more.” With no clear end in sight, California residents can only hope that March showers bring April flowers.



The winter of 1861-1862 drenches California and the west coast in an atmospheric river of unheard of proportions. Sacramento (pictured) is flooded, becoming a boating town for six months.
PC: San Bernardino Sun

The Bay Area Grind-life, Whatever That May Be

Exploring the culture of students ready to sell their limbs for success

Alfred Ukudeev-Freeman
Staff Writer

“It used to be that prestigious college admissions didn’t require, you know, starting a non-profit,” AHS student Aditya Gupta (12) says with a laugh.

He’s referring to the influx of organizations “founded by students” in hope of expanding their resumes: accounts on Instagram with roughly ten followers, apparently “dedicated” to tutoring students. But nobody falls for the supposed good will of these organizations. In fact, their creations all have one common factor behind them:

A sweaty STEM major, trying to get into Berkeley.

It’s a stereotype, but the Bay Area is notorious for its competition. Students engulfed in great expectations, shown nothing but pressure from the eyes watching around them.

“I think in our area kids are very privileged and it’s more of parental or peer pressure that plays into it,” says Gupta. “People see their friends going to these great colleges and they don’t want to be left behind.”

Another student, Eric Cai (12) holds no intensity

about the topic. It’s not that it’s stressful, but rather inherently normal.

“I mean, at some point, like yeah, you’d expect to have breakdowns,” he says. “So that becomes a regular thing.”

It’s a sentiment shared among a large number of students—those willing to sacrifice everything for good grades, strong extracurriculars, the fundamental outline of a “strong college application.”

“It could go from just having an hour of work outside of school to straight-up burning midnight fuel into the early morning,” continues Cai. “That’s the Asian-grind-life.”

He revises his words, essentially saying it applies to all children of first generation immigrants.

“One of the reasons we feel [the pressure] more in the Bay is because we have more immigrants here,” says Gupta. “In all fairness, education is the way someone moves up the social mobility ladder and I think immigrants have the fuel to adhere to that because being an immigrant is already a setback in itself.”

Naturally, generational pressure passes through the family, leaving the image of a scrawny, subjugated student with the weight of an entire family’s legacy to carry.

“Because, after all,” continues Gupta. “Education is a way to jump start and move up the totem pole.”

Despite the outlook of many such students, it’s not to say that students are only pushed by pressure. Rather, while pressure may intensify the process, there are the lucky ones who actually enjoy the subjects of STEM.

“I am pretty happy,” answers Math Club President Manas Korimilli (12) to one of my stupid, subjective questions (Are you happy?). He’s a graduating senior, currently cycling through the biting process of opening letters of admission. “A lot of the things I did I enjoyed. Over the sum-

mer, I took a CS class and a Math class at Stanford. They were pretty fun.”

It’s not a statement said with sarcasm.

“I’ve always liked CS. Ever since I was young, it’s what I realized I wanted to do.”

On the day of our conversation, UC Davis decisions have been released and Korimilli will neither “confirm nor deny” his acceptance. “I feel like earlier I was much more stressed about it. But at the end of the day, no matter where you’re going, you’ll be pretty happy with it. So regardless, you just gotta take the rejections—keep your chin up—and be happy with the acceptances.”

To explore the particular

topic, Rohan Karunaratne, a freshman now at Stanford who grew up in Fremont as one of the Bay Area’s many “motivated” students, reflects upon his busy high school life in comparison to college:

“College is surprisingly more balanced. I have a lot more time to do other things that I enjoy,” says Karunaratne. “In high school, most people will have this sorta tunnel vision of trying to get into a certain program or college or degree, and that can detract from other things that you genuinely care about.”

For example, Karunaratne especially enjoys film and television. He mentions shows like The Mandalorian—shows where the intense effort of the production is apparent in the final product. And now, by grace, he has the time to do so.

“But the concept of whether it was worth it is honestly very relative. For me, getting into Stanford was really last minute. Maybe if I went to another school and things didn’t turn out as well as it did, this answer might’ve been very different. For now though, I think I’m happy with it.”



Students sit in their seats, exhausted or bored out of their minds.

Culture of Silence Cont.

American High specifically is representative of a greater issue than these small dissimilarities.

A recent situation with the coach of the girls' tennis team highlighted this predicament. After American High hired a new tennis coach for the girls' tennis team, the play-

THE LACK OF TRUST FEMALE STUDENTS AND FEMME-PRESENTING STUDENTS HAVE TOWARDS AMERICAN HIGH SPECIFICALLY IS REPRESENTATIVE OF A GREATER ISSUE THAN THESE SMALL DISSIMILARITIES.

ers had much to say. "I think he got hired on the basis that he knows racquet sports, not tennis," says a female junior. "And so he made [us do] super ridiculous work like exercises and drills, which were not really related to tennis. He didn't know how scoring [in tennis] worked or anything."

The story did not stop at inefficient leadership. "Then he [would] make us do planks. He [would] like to make inappropriate comments about smacking our butts with a racket for our butts to go up during [the] planks. It was very inappropriate [and] uncomfortable, [for] comments [like that] to be thrown around. And then, he would record us doing serves, [but] he wouldn't share those videos with us. So, he just held on to those videos, which we thought was actually creepy," she continues.

The school took action on the issue, as the coach was promptly fired. However, it was the handling of the situation that concerned some students. "I'm honestly kind of disappointed because I

thought they would take our complaints more seriously. We would tell them one thing, and then more would happen, and then eventually we had to tell our parents," says a female junior on the team. "If they had maybe stepped in a little bit earlier and maybe had a talk with their coach, I think a lot of this stuff could have been avoided. Maybe the ending would have been different, and a lot less people would have been impacted."

Many female students, both upperclassmen and underclassmen, felt the same way. When asked whether she trusts administration to confront a situation in which she was in danger, a senior says, "I don't see administration doing anything productive at all. I wouldn't see that happening at all." When asked why she felt this way, she cited that her feelings were "based on how I've seen situations like this handled. It's usually thrown under the rug. That's a big thing [here]. Since it's more acceptable in society to throw things under the rug, that's just [where this] tends to go, which is unfortunate

"I DON'T SEE ADMINISTRATION DOING ANYTHING PRODUCTIVE AT ALL. I WOULDN'T SEE THAT HAPPENING AT ALL."

but the truth. I think they're more comfortable doing that."

A lack of perceived action on the school's behalf is what sparks these feelings of [vulnerability]. "There was a teacher in Thornton, who was incredibly gross to girls and was incredibly touchy and made inappropriate comments. A group of people went to the administration, but he is still currently employed [at American]," says another femme-presenting senior. "He's still working at the school. There are [other] teachers who are still working at the school, who have done

things like that." Male students also express an uncertainty towards the schools' treatment of these sensitive situations. "There have been allegations towards guys, [and] nothing happens with them. I'm not sure if that's a lack of action on the school's [behalf] to take action against it, or if it was just not getting

"HE'S STILL WORKING AT THE SCHOOL. THERE ARE [OTHER] TEACHERS WHO ARE STILL WORKING AT THE SCHOOL, WHO HAVE DONE THINGS LIKE THAT."

out," says a male senior. Another junior chimes in saying that "a lot of things happen over text, mainly over group chats of those sorts, so the administration doesn't have a lot of power over that. [But] they don't really take any action to stop it at the source. So [when] something happens, it's already happened, and they might address it. It's just going to keep happening unless they actually start thinking, 'Hey, maybe we should stop treating women like this in the first place.'"

Doubt and insecurity cloud the conversations regarding this issue, and it is apparent through the fear that many students feel to speak out on this issue to begin with. When asked whether she would confide in administration about [something] that troubled her, a sophomore responds, "I feel like I had to hold back a little bit because I was just scared of how people would respond to it."

Despite their short time here, it seems that other underclassmen have the same impression. Two freshmen chimed in about whether they trust American High to take action in a situation where they were in harm's way. "I don't trust them to do something about it efficiently and

effectively. Sure, they would do something about it, but not that much," says one freshman. "If I was talking about it, they would listen to me [and] respect me; but I feel like they wouldn't actually do anything about it," says another freshman.

For underclassmen to enter this school with a preconceived notion about American High, there must be a significant, underlying issue when it comes to the school's relationship with its female students. The source of this tension could lie in how previous situations were handled, or in the lack of change students witness in other policies. "I haven't seen any big changes. Like I still see people getting dress coded. Pretty minimal [progress]," says one sophomore.

"They follow the rules when it's against women, but it's not when it's for women," claims another senior.

So, what will it take to repair this relationship? Open conversation is the first step. Out of all the students that were interviewed regarding the vague treatment of female students in this school, the vast majority insisted on staying anonymous. This is not

"THEY FOLLOW THE RULES WHEN IT'S AGAINST WOMEN, BUT NOT WHEN IT'S FOR WOMEN."

because what is being said is some confidential information that must be guarded from the rest of the school. Conversations regarding this do happen in school in hallways, near locker blocks, at lunch tables. This subject is not new; it has yet to receive the recognition it deserves. As we celebrate more and more Women's History Months, we must ask ourselves whether we can truly acknowledge our progress without addressing the silence that shrouds the many of the students around us in the present.

Story Month

Female Artists Through the Years

Sierra Dellenbaugh
Staff Writer

How artistic women created despite sexism in the art world

Like in most eras of highly esteemed work, women creating art during the biggest art periods in the world were often shunned, as their work was not considered real art; “lady art,” as they called it, was not held in nearly the same regard. At the time, there was “no place for women in the art world,” unless, of course, they were the subjects. Many female artists painted in secret and their art was not discovered until much later, or they painted under a false name in order to receive the recognition they deserved.

Artemisia Gentileschi was a prolific painter during the Baroque era (17th century), which was known for high contrast between dark and light, striking realism, and, most importantly, drama. She was especially famous for her many depictions of the Christian myth: Judith beheading Holofernes. To summarize, Holofernes was the general who was responsible for the destruction of Judith’s home town, so she took matters into her own hands and rightfully avenged her family. Gentileschi painted this scene over and over as a coping mechanism; she was raped by her art teacher when she was very young, depriving her of the opportunity to get married and have a family. As a result, many of her paintings include herself as Judith, and her art teacher as Holofernes, an indirect act of revenge. One detail that remains mysterious about these paintings is the realism of the blood spurting and dripping down the sheets; she would have needed to see it in person and take notes to achieve that level of accuracy.



Gentileschi’s *Judith and Holofernes*, 1620-21
(PC: Khan Academy)



Le Brun’s *Self-Portrait in a Straw Hat*, 1782
(PC: Britannica)

Vigée le Brun was most active in the years leading up to the French Revolution (18th century). She was very close with Marie Antoinette and painted over 20 portraits of her over her lifetime. Although she wasn’t an aristocrat and not a professional artist at the time, she was still forced to flee France once the revolution was in full swing; anyone with any connections to the monarchy whatsoever was under suspicion. While she was away, she made good use of her time by painting many self portraits in a variety of styles, usually inspired by the styles of other famous artists; but even if a portrait was inspired by another artist, they always had a fresh feel with soft, pastel colors (pictured left). When France was finally safe again, she was welcomed back with open arms. What is unusual about le Brun is the fact that she was able to make a name for herself as a female artist, and she was able to earn respect from her peers in a time when women were often silenced.

Frida Kahlo was known for documenting her journey of self discovery through her work, with most of her paintings being self portraits. She portrayed her emotions by expressing her discomfort with gender roles with an imaginary identical twin (pictured right), her split Mexican/American identity with roots and wires, and portraying the torture she felt in her marriage to Diego Rivera (a famous Mexican muralist) through the lens of a shocking news story. She constantly pushed against societal pressures placed on women at the time, and she never sugarcoated the ideas presented in her work, making her paintings bold and sometimes unnerving. *The Two Fridas* portrays two versions of herself with their hearts connected by an artery: who society expects her to be (left) and who she really is (right). She once said, “They thought I was a surrealist but I wasn’t. I never painted my dreams. I painted my own reality” (MoMA).



Kahlo’s *The Two Fridas*, 1939
(PC: fridakahlo.org)



Keane’s *Little Thinker*, 1963
(PC: Keane Eyes Gallery)

Margaret Keane was the artist behind the “big eye craze” of the early 60s: the little children with the swollen, haunting eyes that stole America’s heart. Her work redefined the role of art in the world of the consumer, as she was more popular among ordinary, middle class people, rather than the highly esteemed art critics, selling more prints and copies than actual paintings. However, it wasn’t until over 20 years later that her name was put to her work, as her delusional ex husband, Walter Keane took credit for all of her big-eyed children. He had taken advantage of her quiet, reserved personality and convinced her to keep this scandal alive for years; while he was on TV presenting a painting to the USSR after the Cold War, she was locked in her studio, forced to paint and uphold the lie that was tearing her life apart. When she eventually came forward, she became an inspiration to women all over America, encouraging them to stand up for themselves despite the societal pressures. Keane’s painting, *Little Thinker* (shown to the left), depicts a melancholy child in thought, expressing how she felt in her years living in Walter’s shadow.

Shirin Neshat’s photography speaks out against the stigma and prejudice against Muslim and Middle Eastern people, both in their own countries and in America. The photographs in her series *Women of Allah* usually have these symbols in common: poetry by female poets written in Farsi, the chador (veil), and the iconic gaze into the camera. Because most Americans don’t read Farsi, they are completely unaware of the messages behind the text, thus the poetry symbolizes ignorance. This also overlaps with the meaning behind the chador; a common misconception is that women in the Middle East are forced to wear the veil, but in reality it is a religious choice and a demonstration of piety. The gaze is what she is most known for; it is meant to symbolize the reversal of the male gaze, denying the objectification that comes with it. She left her home country of Iran for the states when she was seventeen to go to college, but when she returned, she was horrified by the aftermath of the revolution; the current ideologies completely oppose the ideologies she grew up with. To this day, it is still not safe for her to show her work in Iran; she is an “artist in exile.”



Neshat’s *Faceless* from the *Women of Allah* series, 1994
(PC: Smart History)

Spin It to Win It!

A look into American’s Winter Drum Major program

Siena Encarnacion
Staff Writer

What would you do when given a large metal pole measuring approximately 6 inches in diameter and 38 inches in length, neatly laced at the top with a refined colored rope? Would you show it off to your friends? Slay your most abhorred enemies? Or perhaps, like American’s Winter Drum majors, you’d twirl it, and watch it elegantly spin midair amidst a grassy-green background while practicing outside the 700 wing?

With marching band season at its end and the winter band activities in full swing, American’s Winter Drum Majors are in the midst of preparing for their upcoming competitions.

Neelim Mollick (11) explains what Winter Drum Major is, saying, “Winter Drum Major is part of the winter activities associated with the marching band! We have Winter Guard, Winter Drum Major, and Winter Percussion. In the marching band, we have a drum major who leads the band and spins a baton. Essentially, Winter Drum Major is an opportunity for anyone with any kind of drum majoring skills—whether that be conducting or baton—to show off their skills and compete without having a band behind them.”

Two ways these students can show their skills are the following: field conducting

and L-pattern.

“Field conducting is when the drum major, or in this case, the Winter Drum Major, is conducting the entire marching band,” explains Raghuram Vungutur (10). “[However,] in Winter Drum Major, there is no actual band—they’re playing a backing (the backing is any marching band piece; they can range from soundtracks from Harry Potter or Mission Impossible to traditional band arrangements) and you have to act as if you’re actually conducting the entire band.”

In comparison, “in marching band, when you use a baton, it’s for conducting a band; you use a baton and you move it up and down. This is what L-pattern is for Winter Drum Major.” Ann Zhou (10) adds. “You can pick essentially any song you want to create your routine and you use a baton, you spin or throw

it, and march in the shape of an L [on a field.]”

Unlike marching band, Winter Drum Major is a means for them to learn what it takes to lead the band on the field—technical training if you will.

Samuel Yip (12), former assistant drum major and now Winter Drum Major tech elaborates, “[Winter Drum Major] is both a competition and training grounds for [American’s] future drum majors and band leadership team. Conducting is essential for leading both rehearsals and field shows, and military baton signals are essential on parade routes for the 120+ members who march behind you. Drum majors, aside from acting as a team captain or club president might in other settings, also act as student instructors, coaches, and mentors. Music, marching, and choreography are led

and reviewed by drum majors.”

“Winter Drum Major is something preparatory—it’s something that helps people get ready for the next season.” adds Bhargav Shriram (11). “If anything, if it ever came on to announcements, [for example,] something like ‘Oh, who won these competitions, right?’ It’s a lot of people—we put a lot of work into it. A little more recognition would be nice, but more than that, [Winter Drum Major] is just a preparatory thing.”

Nonetheless, some people, like Color Guard captain Naomi Tchao (12), simply enjoy the thrilling atmosphere of spinning a metal pole in a competitive band environment.

“Honestly, I tried out because I want to show that Color Guard could do something that I only saw instrumentalists doing and somehow do it without knowing music. [Although L-Pattern] isn’t fully music focused, I hadn’t seen a Color Guard-only Winter Drum Major before. In a way, it was a way for me to show others that the gap between Color Guard and instrumental players isn’t that big.”

Evidently, baton spinning and field conducting aren’t easy. Nonetheless, these drum majors have figured out a sure-fire way to ensure that their work is as refined as possible at competitions. Their trump card?

“Practice. Practice, practice, practice.” Mollick replies. “Winter Drum Major and drum majoring in general, is a

skill, and like any other skill, you won’t get better at it unless you practice. [So,] you get your music, go home, [and] you play your music. If you’re conducting, you stay in your house and just conduct your music in a mirror, preferably, so you can see what you’re doing. If you’re doing L-pattern, you go outside to a park, set up a little [track, and practice.]”

Yip provides a similar response when asked about what he has learned throughout the years spent in band, replying, “hard work often pays off when you least expect it to. The extra bit of practice that you felt like you could do without, but decided to do anyways comes in clutch—in rehearsals, concerts, military L-pattern performances, conducting routines, etc.”

Regardless, as Mollick says, all the Winter Drum Majors agree on one thing— “band isn’t just a space where a group of people make music together. It’s a lot like a family. Especially if you’re in [American’s] marching band, they start to feel like a second family—like a home away from home. It’s this experience of making music or putting on a performance together as a group, having 120+ people and coordinating [with] all of them to make a beautiful, hopefully performance. To me, band is [this] community that is bound by this shared goal of putting on the greatest performance we can whenever and however we can.”



Former assistant-drum major Audrey Zhou (12) is performing her L-pattern routine. (Picture credit: Joel Tchao)

A New Class, Thousands of Years in the Making

The history behind AP World’s replacement of AP Euro at AHS

Vincent Nghiem
Staff Writer

Next year, sophomores’ AP history classes will expand beyond European borders. In a landmark decision achieved after a decade of support, American High has finally replaced AP European History with AP World History.

AP Euro has been a rite of passage for AHS sophomores for years now, with equal parts adoration and horror stories circulating around the public consciousness. “I feel really lucky to have been able to take this class,” Nanki Kaur (10), who takes AP Euro, says, “despite the countless sleepless nights the notes have given me.”

But it seems that a class with such a *history* at AHS is unexpectedly on its way out,

due to a variety of reasons.

“Mostly the problem has been that we just got new AP Euro textbooks, and the school district did not want to have to get rid of one-and-two-year old textbooks and buy a whole bunch of new ones,” Mr. Iglesias, who teaches AP European History and California History, explains. “The only reason it happened was because 20-something years ago, one of our teachers wanted to introduce a social science AP course for seniors and juniors to take as an elective and he just happened to come across Euro. Then, after a couple years of that he went to the district and said, ‘Hey, can we replace college prep world with this?’ And they said okay, but that was a long time ago.”

The biggest motive behind the replacement, however, has emerged in light of the current

social atmosphere. “There are people at the district who felt the same way as we did, which is—you’re getting credit for taking world history but you’re only taking European. That, especially in the current climate, doesn’t seem equitable. It doesn’t seem fair to say European history is just world history,” Mr. Iglesias continues.

The switch was also proposed in part to a growing awareness of the importance of representation. “Obviously another problem is we’re looking at a school district [that is] not even 50% European,” Mr. Iglesias points out. “So if we’re studying the history of only Europeans, we’re also negating the history of a lot of people who are taking the class....We don’t have a school filled with people of European descent, so why can’t we learn about Africa, Asia, the Middle East and

Latin America?”

The switch, which is district-wide, has been met with open arms. “I think everybody here is pleased that we’re doing [this]. It’s certainly gonna mean more work,” Mr. Iglesias admits. “I can only imagine that it’s just more people and places to try to remember. We obviously can’t go as in-depth into anything as we used to when we were focused on one continent, so maybe a little less depth will make the learning a little more general.”

Rest assured, though: the teachers are working hard to develop a firm grasp on the AP World curriculum. “All of us who are teaching are gonna be taking courses over the summer to figure out the curriculum and we’ll have to be looking over the curriculum before then and reviewing to know what we’re teaching.”

“Students who are taking World will never know what they’re missing,” Mr. Iglesias says with a laugh. “I personally don’t feel like I’m gonna miss out on much by teaching World.”

Some of his students, though, disagree. “Being the last year to have AP Euro for the time being saddens me for future classes because they won’t get to learn and analyze the in-depth chaos of European history,” Kaur describes. “If you look past all the insane amounts of work and monstrously difficult tests, I believe AP Euro was an enjoyable experience.”

Leaving AP Euro in the past is going to be quite a dramatic change for the AP experience here at AHS, but the future of this history class looks so far to be promising. So, rising sophomores—Euro-kay for next year!

Extracurriculars

March Sports Recap



Badminton Team Captain - Evelyn Liu (12):

Q: So how long have you been playing badminton?

E: *Seven years. My friends kinda pulled me into it and then I just always stuck through it. I've done it for all four years at American.*

Q: How's your overall experience of playing with the school been?

E: *Uh, it's better than, like, competitive badminton because here it's more like a team and then outside is just too competitive. I used to play competitive outside of school and then in Junior year I quit.*

Q: Why's that?

E: *It just took too much time because I'd have, like, three hours at school practice and I can't do both club training and team training at the same time.*

Q: Badminton is primarily an individual sport so how does the team dynamic work at AHS?

E: *A lot of it is cheering— when you're playing your own game, there's like sixty-four other teammates cheering you on off the court. And then in each event, the pairs changed sometimes. So you do have to know everybody in the team.*

Q: How's it been as a captain?

E: *Well, this is my second year as a captain and, I mean, it's definitely a different experience because—typically, you don't interact with everybody—but captains have to deal with both JV and Var. So you kinda have to talk to all sixty-four players.*

Q: How's the team doing this year?

E: *For now we're projected to be in second in the league since we only lost one game to mission. Every other game we want so far.*

Q: Any memorable moments from your badminton experience?

E: *Last year, we were close to tied with mission and I was the deciding match.*

Q: But you won!

E: *Yeah, we did. It was really stressful. Like yeah, never again.*

Baseball

3/11 Woodside: L (3-4)
3/18 San Mateo: L (2-7)
3/24 Washington: L (2-3)
3/26 Menlo School: L (0-17)

Swimming

3/10 Mission: W (338-331)
3/15 Irvington: W (429-284)
3/24 Kennedy: W (552-124)
3/29 Logan: W (472-245)

Softball

3/14 Irvington: W (12-5)
3/22 Newark: L (1-13)
3/23 Irvington: L 7-10)

Volleyball

3/6 San Leandro: W (3-1)
3/7 Mission: W (3-1)
3/9 St. Joseph Notre Dame: W (3-2)
3/14 Washington: W (3-0)
3/16 Logan: W (3-2)
3/21 Kennedy: W (3-0)
3/23 Irvington: L (1-3)
3/28 Moreau: L (0-3)

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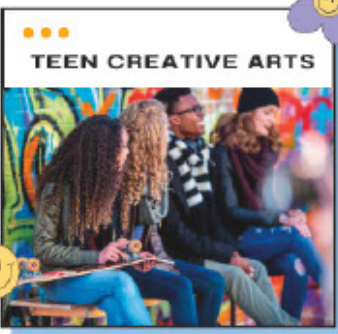
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A Fine Arts Fair For the Books Cont.

“We’re having more space for the art itself [by] shifting things from last year’s structure to this year, because last year I believe the film festival was cramped up in the cafeteria.” She laughs, and continues on. “And so we changed it to Theater 70, because there’s more space and it’s a different aura. The other exhibitions are spread out throughout the rotunda so you can just keep walking around and you’ll see something cool.”

Everyone seems to be in unanimous agreement that whatever changes are being made to the event, it is still a cultural pinnacle in American High School’s event calendar. Aditya Gupta (12), a member of ASB and class of 2023’s class council, recounts his experiences doing Fine Arts Fair and why it is such an important event for the school. “In a culture where arts are not really promoted at our school, it’s a great thing. Throughout the process of doing Fine Arts Fair, I’ve met so many people who are really talented at the arts, but it’s a shame that they don’t go into it because of the culture that we’re surrounded by. So I think I’m just trying to play

my part in promoting the arts at our school, which I think a lot of people are really good at, but don’t really have the opportunity to display.”

After months of preparations and meetings upon meetings, the Fine Arts Fair came into actuality after school on March 25th. A quick walk around the dimmed rotunda and anyone could see arts in various mediums displayed, from photography to live performances. One attendant, Amulya Manoj (11), noted how much she enjoyed the fashion show in particular. “It’s pretty cool that people are getting to show off their personal style, especially since school is a place where you don’t really get to do that since you don’t want to dress up too much. With this, people can show a different side of themselves, and it’s just a fun little thing.” Overall, Manoj was very content with the event. “I’m very happy with the outcome. There’s a lot of people here,” she says while looking around, “And I’m very excited that everyone is showing off their talents and diversity.”

Another attendant (9) expressed their experience of the event as their friend surveyed

some photography displayed. “I’ve been enjoying myself a lot. I really liked the dance [exposition], I really liked the open mic earlier today, and I really enjoyed the fashion show.” Inspired by the event, they say, “I’m probably going to submit art next year, even though I didn’t this year. It’s just a cool opportunity.”

The open mic was certainly a highlight of the night. Multiple ballads, heartfelt poems, and a performance by Tri-M stirred up various emotions of the attendees. No matter the performance, however, everyone was met with undying applause. One performer, Stuti Jajoo (10), shared her poetry early on in the event. She gives some insight to her performance, saying, “This year, I performed a poem about a friend who will be leaving soon because he’s a senior. He’s like an older brother to me and has helped me grow so much. It was a great opportunity to express that and have people listen to it.”

Amongst the bustling crowds was a table full of handmade phone cases, jewelry, and accessories. The Fine Arts Fair didn’t just feature various forms of art, but it also provided a platform for a few small businesses at

school to make some sales. Jessica Yu (9) was one of those who had their business features. She is the owner of A Side of Cherries (@a_sideofcherries), and specializes in doing handmade jewelry that features pearls, fruit, and floral accents. On how she got to sell her jewelry at the fair, she says, “I saw the Fine Arts Fair announcement on the school instagram account, and I thought that it was really interesting. Originally I was planning on just displaying my jewelry, but then I realized they also had a pop up shop. I decided to do a popup shop because it’s not only really fun, but also a way to connect with the school.” Business was booming as she was quickly drawn away by a prospective customer.

Deemed a success, everyone packed up their art and went home, the only remains being a happy memory in the minds of all those who attended (and also some pictures on the AHS school account).

Looking back to all the preparations they did, Bautista said, “I feel like this year’s FAF was above and beyond! On the behalf of a lot of participants and attendees, it was inspiring to see

the talents of Americans showcased in such a themed event.”

Gupta agrees and restates the importance of FAF. “It is a very niche event, but it’s something that we should do to showcase different parts of our school.” He says he takes particular pride in the additions made to fashion week particularly the visual aspects. “I was really happy that we set up a lot of tech, particularly the projector that was projecting stuff on the wall. It took us so long to figure out how to do it, but it really added to the whole event.”

Of course, despite its success, there’s always something that can be done to take it to the next level. Bautista elaborates on this, saying, “In our school, film is, unfortunately, less recognized than other arts. Since the film festival wasn’t incorporated into this year’s schedules, something I would like to add next year is adding a portion of our schedule for film.”

The third annual American High School Fine Arts Fair came to a happy conclusion. With a bigger and better vision in mind for next year, look forward to another next year!

Fashion: The Double Edged Sword

Delving into AHS students’ experiences with fashion

Tejal Prabhu
Staff Writer

Most people aren’t dressed by their parents anymore. From skirts and sweaters to baggy hoodies and jeans, the freedom to dress has allowed students’ sense of style at American High School to become diverse. Considering that fashion allows students to feel both comfortable and confident, many are motivated to use it as a form of self-expression. Despite cold weather limiting wardrobes for the past few months, students have been able to make do, either dressing modestly or simply besting the strong winds. Regardless, fashion is always interpreted differently by everyone, as demonstrated by three students whose styles are vastly different.

While some enjoy following trends, others take a unique approach, with their clothing pertaining to their personalities. Caden Kwon, a senior at American High, details the way he dresses: “It’s not really consistent to one aesthetic sense, but I do like dipping into influences from Korean streetwear. I like to diversify. I have influences from more contemporary streetwear that could come off as somewhat grungy, but I have a lot of proper stuff, like turtle-necks and jackets, that are a lot more clean and pressed. But,

I like finding ways to combine what I have partially because I get bored with wearing the same outfits every day and partially because I’m cheap and have no money.”

Arushi Shelvankar (12) enjoys blending aesthetics as well. –“I do not have a particular style, but I mostly enjoy incorporating maxi skirts and baggy clothing into my outfits. I typically mix different styles such as street wear, subversive fashion, and more. I am also inspired by my Indian culture, as I love incorporating Indian jewelry and other pieces of my culture into some casual outfits. My style varies and I usually dress according to my mood, which allows me to try different things, and prevents me from putting my style in a box.”

Mehek Bhatnagar (12), on the other hand, feels most comfortable wearing clothing that blends in. “I just go with whatever I want honestly, and it’s usually what’s trending at the time. I’m okay with going with a trend, and I also don’t see anything wrong with going against them. I mainly prioritize wearing clothes that are warm because, these days, it’s super cold and rainy. I usually wear sweaters and more neutral colors like black and brown. I’m not inspired by anyone specific either, because I mostly just take inspiration from generic Pinterest boards and stuff.”

As for the process of shopping

itself, although many indulge in fast fashion, thrifting has grown widely popular, allowing for students to repurpose vintage clothing pieces.

Shelvankar states “I thrift a lot of my clothes, which allows me to have an expansive style. I believe that thrifting is a really affordable and sustainable way to experiment with different styles. When I thrift, I generally look for colors or patterns that are appealing to me in order to try different styles. Since fashion trends come and go, people might not reuse a lot of the trendy clothes they buy, so if a new trend seems appealing, I will try to see if a thrift store carries pieces of that style in order to try it.”

Kwon details a similar perspective. “I love vintage clothes, and I can kind of take anything and make it my sense of style. I like to thrift jeans and just modify them by either acid washing or ripping them. I’ve also just taken fabric markers and customized some of my shirts. I’ve sewn and ironed on patches and pins to my jackets as well.”

Despite their differences, a shared trait between all three students is the fact that their preferred style did not come instantly;; it took time to develop.

Bhatnagar states, “I always think I kind of have a set style, but then as time goes on it slowly changes and I end up adding more to it or changing it up. I feel like, even now, I’m still in

the early process of developing my style.”

Kwon and Shelavankar agree, describing comparable experiences.

Kwon states, “It was a developmental process. It came from a lot of experimentation. Once you just buy stuff, you have to figure out what you can work with it. So, I started just looking things up, seeing what I could and couldn’t do. And over time, I developed a more confident sense of what I could do with what I had. My style also changes based on how often I can afford to go shopping.”

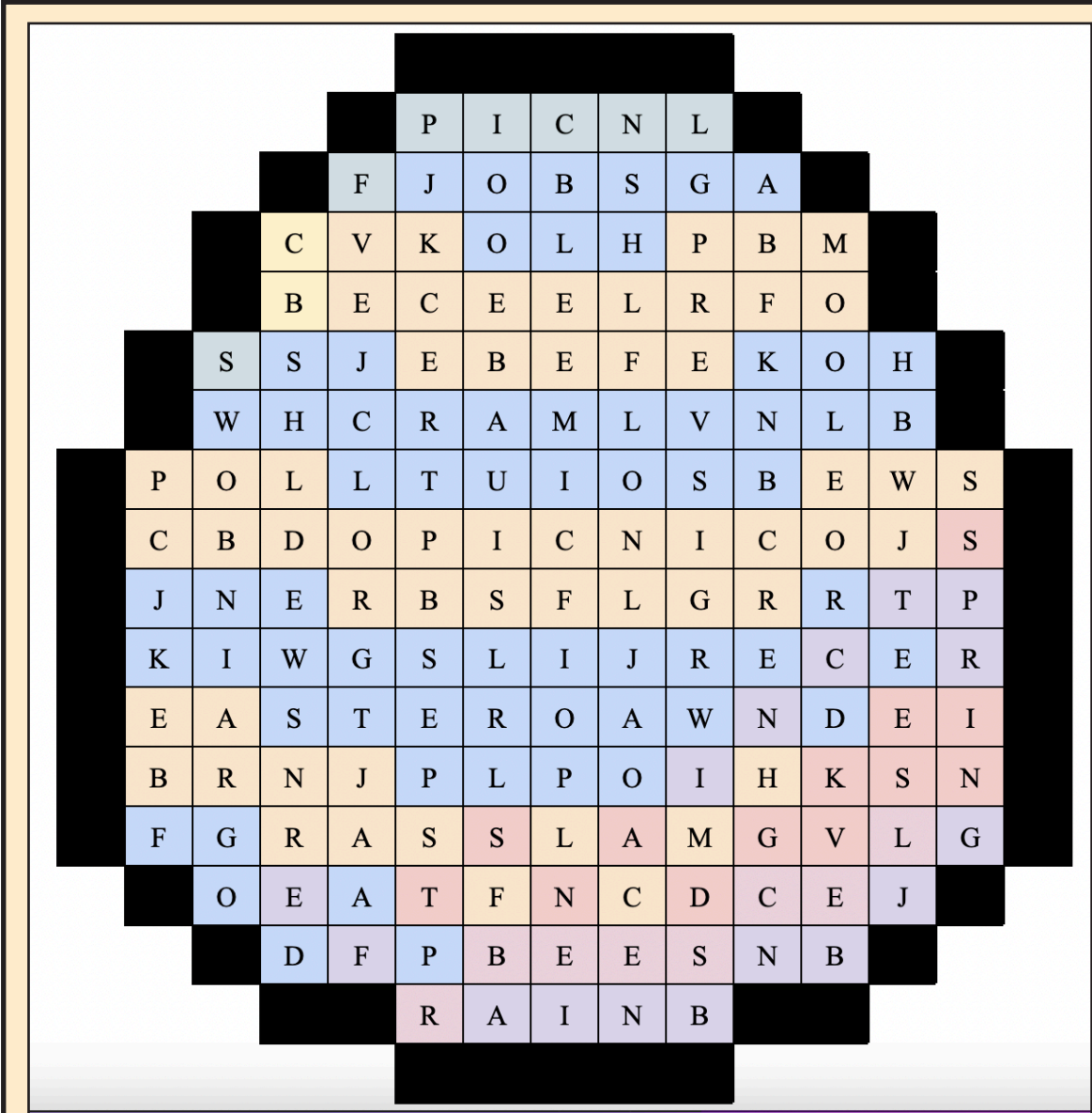
Shelvankar says, “It took a while to understand what I was comfortable wearing. I started to explore different styles in 8th grade, and from there I tried to figure out what I liked or disliked in terms of patterns, the fitting, and colors. Sometimes I would force myself to wear clothing that looked appeal-

ing to me even if I did not feel confident wearing it, but then I understood that I felt less self-conscious once I started to wear more comfortable styles.

Although they make it look effortless, the journey of fashion-inclined individuals is not always the easiest. Shelvankar states, “There are instances where I feel nervous dressing expressively. Although dressing expressively mostly makes me feel less insecure, sometimes if I dress out of my comfort zone, I constantly worry about the way I look in the clothes I wear that day. In order to avoid feeling insecure about my outfits, I make sure to wear clothes that I feel comfortable wearing, allowing me to be less insecure and more confident in my style.” Fashion is a double edged sword, but these students, along with many at American High, have been able to master it as a result of effort and experience.



Happy Spring!



Words:

Picnic
Flower
Sparrow
Pollen
Grass
Rainbow
Bees
March
Spring
Dew
Easter
April
Bloom
Rain

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