



# EAGLE ERA

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## SPW: SENIORS STRIKE BACK

Vrajesh Daga | Staff Writer



(PC: Cynthia Yeung (11))

Read Spirit Week recap on page 2

## "That's what football is about,"

*Homecoming game recognizes and celebrates seniors*

Daniel Davis | Staff Writer

"Everyone comes together, [to have] a really nice Friday night after a long week of school. It's what the Homecoming Court is, just celebrating students," said Assistant Principal Mr. Peterson. "The band has been preparing for weeks. The cheerleaders are great. And the football players. I'm excited for all of them."

During the November 4 homecoming game versus Alameda, the 2023 Eagles cemented themselves as American's 2nd 0-10 football team since 2004. While many team members were disappointed by the end result, most agreed that this was an occasion primarily meant to celebrate the senior class.

Julian Serrano (11) explained the importance of the homecoming game. "Last game of the season, I'm pretty psyched to be able to play this game. It's instrumental because not only is it our HoCo game, it is also our senior night so it's big for us as a team." Serrano added, "I know, we're 0 and 9 but you never know, miracles can happen."

American started the game with a 20-yard

reception from quarterback Danino Corsis (12) to receiver Cruz Madrigal (12), but struggled to gain yardage following this play. Alameda's size was made apparent as several American players suffered injuries during the course of a 42 to 7 loss where they struggled to run the ball or stop the opposing players.

A sophomore varsity player, Jordan Garcia, spoke on how the team's lack of size might be an issue. "Our linemen—they're not the biggest people. So we've been trying to get bigger people on the line, because [Alameda's] a much bigger team than us."

Madrigal also spoke on the team's adjustments. "We watch film, we adjust our offense and defense according to what we see. It's what we do for everyone."

The trio of Madrigal, Henry Supnet (12), and Garcia was a bright spot on defense, having 10, 8, and 7 tackles respectively.

Moving to offense, Jayden Martinez (10) led the team in both rushing and receiving yards and received the pass resulting in American's only touchdown of the game.

These performances could be a direct result of frustration from past games. "I know some

people are demotivated because we haven't won a game yet. And, you know, that gets to people, it's gotten to me a little bit too," said Madrigal before the game. "I've been here all four years. I think it is one of my jobs to try to keep everyone engaged."

Constantino Lopez (c.o. 2023) voiced his frustrations after watching the game on American's sideline. "Honestly, it was kind of disappointing to see our seniors go out like that," said the former football player. "As a community and a coaching staff, we need to do better with our players."

Despite his criticism of the team, Lopez said, "I love being out here supporting the football players and the coach and the team. That's what football is about, especially in high school. It's just kids having fun."

Coach Blackmon said, "My team always plays hard. They know the Eagle Way can do great things."

Devin Kotov (12) elaborated on the feelings that seniors feel during the homecoming game. "I'm a first year player, but it means a lot to me to have

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# SPW: Seniors Strike Back

Seniors run away with 8124 points, Freshmen come close with 8067 points,  
Juniors score 7535 points, Sophomores earn 7131 points

Vrajesh Daga | Staff Writer

Following the class of 2024's 3rd place Spirit Week run as juniors, these now seniors climbed the ranks to earn the coveted title of Spirit Week Champions, putting up a total score of 8124 points. Against their odds as freshmen, the class of 2027 was just 58 points shy of claiming the title, but they came in a well-deserved second place. Like last year's juniors, the class of 2025 juniors ranked third among the classes, attaining 7535 points, and despite their valiant efforts, the class of 2026 sophomores came last, 404 points behind the juniors.

## 3rd Day 1

The Jurassic Juniors' lunchtime performance commenced the week-long rallies. Their exhilarating performance featured four multi-colored inflatable dinosaur costumes, which stole the show. Their show also included a fight scene with several flags, and arguably the most memorable dance was a skillful heels performance.



## 4th Day 2

The class of 2026 rally followed the juniors the next day, on Halloween. A major highlight of this performance was their riveting fight scene. The sophomores incorporated a remarkable bhangra dance into their collection of dance gems. Embracing the superhero sophomore theme, their unity performance featured songs such as "Annihilate," from Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse.



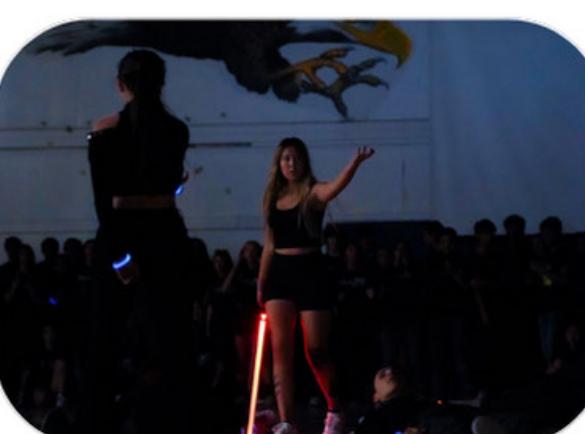
## 2nd Day 3

The class of 2027 spirit week performance, which won first according to judge scoring, included an entertaining, extended combat scene. Other crowd-engaging songs included "The Disco Song" from Bollywood film Student of the Year. Much like the other classes, they tied the performance back to the theme of Stranger Things by adding a bicycle as a prop for their skit.



## 1st Day 4

Last but certainly not least, the Star Wars Seniors wrapped up the 2023 daytime rallies. Unsurprisingly, the senior class had the most dance participation. They opened their performance with a step dance to the theme song of Star Wars. The seniors were also the only class to incorporate a blindfolded tinikling dance. The most unforgettable scene of all was the elegantly choreographed fight scene, which featured two lightsabers.



(PC: Aaron Thwin (12))

Final scores	Judges	Coin Drive (x10)	Dress-up (x10)	Student voting	Total
Freshmen	7831	25	196	9	8067
Sophomores	6824	100	201	6	7131
Juniors	7294	42	181	18	7535
Seniors	7784	40	250	50	8124

# Schools' overemphasis on STEM, what it means for students

*Analyzing the collective focus on STEM classes at American and its role in students' attitudes toward their career prospects*

**Amrita Venkatesh**  
Staff Writer

With schools scrambling for more funds for their science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) departments and more students at American signing up for STEM classes than teachers and space to accommodate, STEM has taken overwhelming precedence in the lives of students and the education system. But what does this overemphasis on such classes mean for students?

As the time to consider and plan for their career prospects approaches, students reflect on their motivations. "I think my pursuit of STEM is rooted in a stigma that you can't pursue the arts or major in something that's not STEM. Being in the Bay Area where it's so competitive, and [American] offering so many hard classes has made me feel like pursuing a STEM career is the only option," Anishka Jannu (11) said.

Contrastingly, some can attribute their academic pursuits to sincere passion. "My pursuit of STEM is purely based on passion, and I am fortunate to have passions that are related to that area of study," said Jyoshika Balaraman (11).

However, the effect of American's emphasis on STEM is not lost on her. "Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for everyone around me," Balaraman went on. "My friend's dream of being a writer was crushed by peer pressure to be an engineer. Another friend's dream of being a graphic designer was lost

**"I SEE HOW MUCH MY FRIENDS ARE STRUGGLING AS THEY ARE FORCED INTO CERTAIN CAREERS BASED ON WHETHER THEY ARE SEEN AS MORE RESPECTABLE BY SOCIETY."**

when her parents pressured her to go into medicine. I see how much my friends are struggling as they are forced into certain careers based on whether they are seen as more respectable by society."

Expectations within racial and ethnic communities to pursue highly paying, conventional jobs serve as motivating factors for STEM pursuit. "I have immigrant parents and if I pursued a career in the arts, which doesn't necessarily guarantee a stable future, they would feel like I'm risking everything they immigrated here for. I think members of my South Asian community specifically

would be skeptical and imposing if someone was going to pursue a career in arts, not only because of the salary but also because of how hard it is to become successful," said Jannu.

Drawing from a similar sentiment, Balaraman said, "I do think I was often subtly pressured by my extended family to pursue a STEM career. In India, there is a stereotype that successful people are often doctors and engineers."

While some may not feel pressure within their racial and ethnic communities or a sense of obligation that comes with holding an immigrant status or being a child of those who do, they recognize the ways in which pressure to follow a certain career path may serve as a loss for students. "My interest in STEM does come from a genuine interest but my parents weren't so adamant on me pursuing it. I feel like a lot of students are only really interacting with STEM because their parents make them, even though some of them would do really good in an art career," Jessamyn Glasscock (11) said. "When students view their jobs as more of an obligation than something they're passionate about, it takes all the fun out of what they're doing," she continued.

Despite differing motivations, students collectively acknowledge various factors that foster a rigorous, pressurizing focus on STEM at American. "Even the school plays an influential role in a student's career choice. The lack of pathways offered by the school for other popular careers shows the lack of balance in the school in terms of what kind of careers students plan to pursue. Teens then change their career choices

to be able to utilize the school's resources," Balaraman said. According to American High's website, the only clear pathways created by the school are the Engineering (PLTW) Pathway and the Computer Science Pathway. With no conventional pathways to explore other, non-STEM related areas of interest, students choose to conform to safer, more comfortable options.

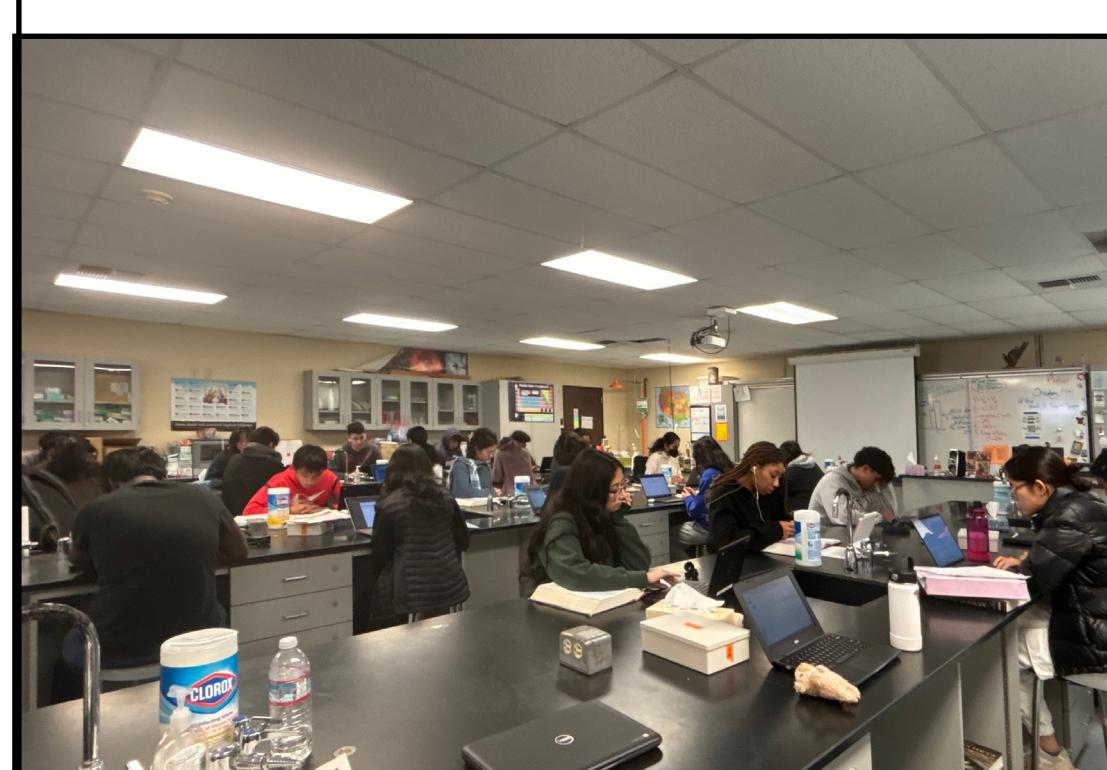
When making decisions regarding career prospects, students may factor in negative social stigma regarding non-STEM subjects. "The biggest stereotype about STEM careers is that they provide a lot of money. There is also a perception that it is hard to find jobs with a non-stem degree. I definitely think both of those things aren't true," Balaraman said.

According to studies conducted by the National Science Foundation and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, both STEM and humanities workers with a bachelor's degree or higher experienced the same unemployment rate of 3.6% in 2021.

Still, students are not willing to take risks. "Although you can make a lot of money with an art career, I think it's harder to be successful and the chances of making money through STEM careers are much higher," Jannu said.

Ultimately, though the factors that a student prioritizes when choosing a career are subjective, American's competitive atmosphere is one that impacts students collectively. Balaraman said, "If I attended another school, I wouldn't be as academically motivated as I am right now. The pressure to be successful and the perceived instability of non-stem programs pushed me to look more into STEM careers."

*Students in one of American's science classrooms.  
(PC: Vanessa Hinh (11))*



# Students and Staff Express Opinions on Conflict in Israel-Gaza

## Ms. Mishal, Palestinian Social Studies teacher:

My family's from a very small village called Silwad in the West Bank. And where we live, there's actually an Israeli settlement, which goes against international law. They've been building Israeli settlements in the West Bank, which was supposed to be a Palestinian state. And where my family lives, there's right next to them a settlement called Ofra. And it's built on the land that was confiscated from Silwad, which includes my inheritance, because my family lost their land. And those settlers will provoke the Silwadi people. The Israeli army will just go into the town and raid or stand at the entrance just to intimidate it. And they've been doing it more since the conflict began. So we're very scared for our relatives who live in the West Bank, where they're not under direct threat, like a war. However, even before this most recent conflict, it's known that on Fridays, the Israeli army will come in and they'll throw out tear gas. People just shut their windows, it's a part of their routines.

As someone who teaches US history, I keep seeing how American and white settlers kept taking more and more native lands, and Native Americans would sometimes agree giving up some land because they're like, "Okay, if we give them this, they'll stop." Now we have this whole United States. And I can't help but wonder, is Israel taking a page out of America's playbook? Is this what's going to happen to Palestinians? Are we going to live in reservations where we're trying our best to protect our culture and identity and preserve our language or dialect?

I grew up in New York City, and New York City has a really sizable Jewish population. So I've also been exposed to the Jewish experience and stories. In high school, we went to the Holocaust Museum, and we had a whole unit in English on the Holocaust. We read Night, we read The Book Thief, we watched Sophie's Choice. I have nothing but empathy. But it's very disheartening because everyone celebrates the creation of Israel. Finally the Jewish people who've suffered for many, many years have their own homeland. And everyone just likes to gloss over the fact that there were very much people living there as well.

Constantly, the narrative has been taken out of our control. We were never welcomed at the table, we never have a seat at the table to make any sort of impactful decisions. And then people say, "Why are they so mad? Why are they so upset? Why do they teach their children to hate?" And that's not what's happening. It's really hard to live in peace when you're not allowed to.

For Israeli citizens, if they're in the range where missiles from Hamas can hit them, they can evacuate, they can go to other countries, they can seek refuge elsewhere. But people in the Gaza are sitting ducks. They don't have an official army. They don't have their own currency. They don't have the ability to import goods, export goods. You cannot refer to them as two equal bodies. They're not in the slightest.

When I lived in New York, a lot of times my parents discouraged me and my siblings from attending rallies and demonstrations, because they were scared we would get labeled as anti-Semitic. Because especially in a place like New York, this is very ruinous for your reputation. You become essentially blacklisted. We know people who lost full-ride scholarships to Columbia University because they disagreed with a professor who accused them of anti-Semitism when they were like, "No, actually, this is what's happening." This is the nature of the conflict. There's this side that's not being taken into the equation. It's really scary, because a lot of discussion gets shut down so quickly once the term anti-Semitism gets thrown around. And it's not helpful. It's not progressive.

When I was a little girl, I would see things on the news and I was always, always hopeful that this war would be over at a certain point. Now I'm an adult, and I'm seeing there's a bigger pattern here. It's not going to resolve so nicely or so easily. And it just kills me every time.

We want to see this narrative that the Jews overcame all of this history of oppression to have their own homeland. But you cannot talk about it without talking about what happened to the Palestinians. And there's a lot of efforts to erase Palestinian history and cultural identity.

For many students, it's not often that they can ask someone who is Palestinian what's going on there. So I appreciate them coming over to me and they've been approaching it very sensitively. And I'm grateful I can provide them some perspective. Also some of the Palestinian kids, we check in on each other because Palestine is many cities, many villages. We're just making sure each family's okay. It's just a good to see the camaraderie and the community come through in that way.

[Younger generation] approach things with a little bit more nuance. They understand that there's a complexity there. So I'm grateful for that. And I just hope that they are trying to take in information from as many different sources as possible so that they can see where is the alignment because that's probably true. Hopefully kids take it upon themselves.

On Piers Morgan's show, he was reporting on the rise of Islamophobia incidents and anti-Semitism around the world. It's happening. It's very unfortunate. It's disgusting. And the caption was "Islamophobia versus anti-Semitism." Why couldn't it be both? Both are happening. It's not one is more bad. I hate that it's always depicted like it's a competition, or which one has it worse.

Many news sources assert that Israel has the right to defend itself. But there's also conventions, there's also international codes of conduct for war and to have ceasefire, humanitarian aid, to be brought in to give people an opportunity to seek refuge.

I don't condone violence. I don't condone what Hamas did on October 7 at all. I was heartbroken to see so many Jewish families destroyed by the hostage situation. But also we can't forget the decades-long—almost centuries-long—conflict.

Jessica Li  
Staff Writer

*In discussing the Palestine question and the aftermath of October 7, affected parties at AHS provide a geopolitical as well as personal perspectives.*

## Raveeha Rabbani (11), Muslim Pakistani student:

It's so one-sided. There's a country who has one of the strongest militaries in the world and the other country doesn't even have a military. The main talking point in Western media is self-defense. Self defense is not giving collective punishment to millions of people. More than 2 million people have been displaced, forced out of their homes that have to evacuate. The death toll has more than 10,000 civilian deaths so it doesn't seem like self defense.

In AHS, there's a certain community of people who are really active fighters who are posting about it and who are talking about it. But the majority are unaffected, even some of the teachers. Teachers have a responsibility to educate students about what's happening in general, not just here. So I think it's been so overlooked. There might be someone who is Palestinian and their family's suffering. It's so scary to think.

I've been to three or four protests here in the Bay Area. One of them was actually a discussion, a conference, and one of the speakers was talking about how he has never lived in Palestine...He was talking about how his whole family that was his extended family, who lived in Palestine and were killed a weekend before I went to the discussion. He seemed so confident and strong still. You can't imagine if your whole family was killed, you wouldn't be like that. You wouldn't have the courage to come and talk about everything. He did. My whole life, I've never downplayed the issue and how started. Now it's just become mainstream. It was always there, it's been there since 1948.

One of [the protests] was in Fremont, in the library. People had posters and we had everything written on it and with all this people, you could see. You could hear the passion in their voices they wanted the genocide to end. They wanted ceasefire, that's what they were advocating for. Even the cars as they were going by them would honk to show their support. And it was really nice to see that even here in America.

## Fern Tigri (12), Jewish student:

*Caption: The infographic of the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea shows the current labeled territories of Israel and Palestine.*  
(Art Credit: Jessica Li (12))



I'm seeing sources that are coming from inside of Gaza, listening to like Palestinian voices, trying to avoid major news sites because the US is very Israeli-backed and Israel is definitely the bigger one in that propaganda campaign right now. So seeing sources from inside of the area helps you actually understand it better, and you need to be careful because you never know who's writing that source.

You'll find a lot of Jewish people defending Israel's existence, even when they don't support what's happening, because they're worried that before even this current crisis has happened, anti-Jewish hate and anti-Semitism was already on the rise in the country.

Knowing the history makes you feel more like you want to bring attention to the governments who caused this issue, who brought Israel into creation and their motives behind it. Understanding why Israel exists is really important to understanding this issue. [The US government doesn't] care about Israel. They don't care about Palestine. They just want their oil and that understanding helps you to be able to fight better.

People need to understand that issues are more complex than they give them credit for and yet they can still be incredibly simple in who is right. You don't need to support Israel to understand the history of this issue. And understanding the history gives you more of an opinion on this that you can feel comfortable and secure in.

American High definitely has a more Palestinian population, which obviously is going to affect them. It would affect any of us if our ethnicity was being genocided in another country, that would affect all of us deeply. I know a lot of people here are participating in the boycotts to fight against Israel, and a lot of people are spreading news on social media, retweeting on Twitter, posting on Instagram. There are a lot of students who are spreading awareness.

## Finals should be after break

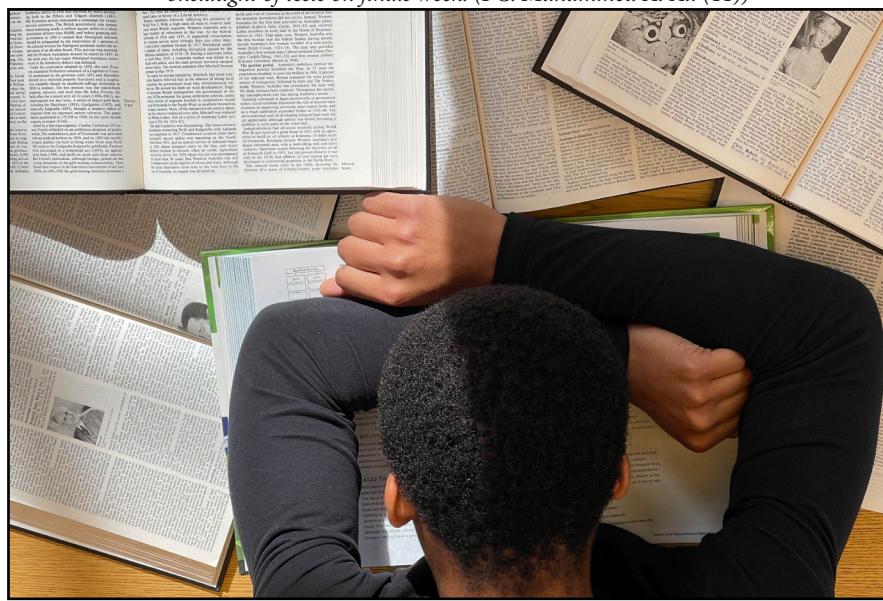
*The current school calendar worsens student performances on finals*

**Arya Kunisetty**  
Staff Writer

In the evolving landscape of education, the scheduling of final exams has become a major topic among students, educators, and parents alike. In the 2021-22 school year, FUSD scheduled the finals before winter break instead of after. However, this change cost students valuable studying time, increased stress on students, and caused students to forget much material over break.

The argument for scheduling finals after winter break is centered on the issue that students lose two weeks of valuable studying time over winter break. Since many teachers introduce the final after Thanksgiving break, students have two to three weeks to study for their finals. In these two to three weeks students study all the material that their six classes covered over the entire semester. The strict time frame rushes students to cram much information causing them to not get a full grasp of the curriculum before the finals. The two extra weeks in winter break would give plenty of time for students to study and would let them fully prepare for the most important tests of the semester.

*Busily studying for the upcoming finals in the library, Daniel Davis (11) is studying hurriedly for tests, looking through various books to cram as much as possible for the upcoming onslaught of tests on finals week. (PC: Muhammed A. Ali (11))*



## Social media, a danger to American democracy, should be regulated

*Social media's misinformation conflicts with the ideals of democracy*

**Royden Liang**  
Staff Writer

When people think of America, the first words to pop into their mind are typically liberty, opportunity, capitalism, and democracy. Each of these ideals are in fact related to freedom: freedom to live your own life, to make your own choices, to have your own job or business, and to have your own opinions. All of this is granted to US citizens through our government system, which was put in place to protect our natural rights.

American citizens are also granted the ability to have a say in who runs our government through a democracy. An authoritarian government will only tolerate one single opinion, that of the government's. What allows a democracy to correctly function is a tolerance of others' opinions. This will foster freedom of expression and speech, a principle not present in dictatorships.

Looking back at our modern society, it is obvious that tolerance of differing opinions is not widespread in America. Citizens will often refrain from what they want to say in the interest of political correctness, and this manifests itself in our political system when a candidate will only support the ideals of their respective party, or only promote popular opinion. One who does not do so risks losing elections, harming their reputation and wasting money spent to fund their campaign.

Additionally, political polarization in America has increased dramatically in the past 20 years. According to the Pew Research Center, "Republicans and Democrats are more divided along ideological lines – and partisan antipathy is deeper and more extensive – than at any point in the last two decades." Now we ask ourselves – what has happened in the last 20 years to cause this polarization? The answer: social media.

Social media was intended to be a way to connect the world. However, with the introduction of news feeds, algorithms, and new features in

In addition to not having enough time, the time crunch greatly increases the stress on students. As finals determine many students' grades, many students are under pressure to get good scores to lift their grades. However, the limited amount of time between Thanksgiving break and finals severely hinders the amount of preparation they can get. To not fall behind in their studying students stay up much later to cram as much in as possible. An extra two weeks of studying will not only allow them to catch up on their studying but also spread out the studying over several weeks.

Additionally, a post-winter break finals schedule could contribute to a more effective learning environment. Students would have the opportunity to address any gaps in their understanding during winter break, seek additional help, or review material without the pressure of imminent exams. This additional understanding could lead to higher scores on finals and thus better grades for students. In addition to higher grades on finals, the increase in studying over the break would lead to more knowledge going into the second semester preparing them for future tests and assignments.

The current trend of scheduling finals before winter break, may not be in the best interest of students' well-being and academic success. By reverting to the traditional practice of holding finals after winter break, educational institutions can contribute to a more balanced and supportive learning environment. This change would allow students to enjoy their holiday season as well as promote mental health, reflection, and a deeper engagement with the learning process. It's time to reconsider the academic calendar and prioritize the well-being of students.

## Social media, a danger to American democracy, should be regulated

*Social media's misinformation conflicts with the ideals of democracy*

tended to increase screen time, it has devolved into a feeder of biased, user-created information tailored to each user's opinions. Algorithms determine what type of posts a user is interested in (which is usually aligned with that user's views), and feed the user what they want to see, thus increasing screen time, resulting in more profit for the company.

An unintended effect of this is that the user becomes more polarized, as they spend more time in their bubble of personal truths. When the user is exposed to a view opposite theirs, they believe it is their duty to defend their personal truths, resulting in debates, arguments, flame wars, and even sometimes culminating in real-life violence.

The effects of social media on society is already apparent. When COVID-19 hit, people speculated the origin of the pandemic. Because of social media, lies spread quickly among various platforms, obscuring the truth. Each person believed what they thought and wanted to be true, lest it be that it originated from China, was spread by 5G towers, was spread by the government as a social experiment, or that the whole thing didn't exist. The results were hate crimes against Asian citizens, bombings and burnings of 5G towers, and a spike in anti-vax movements, many of which resulted in loss of lives. The FBI reported a 77% increase in hate crimes against Asian-Americans between 2019 and 2020, and the National Library of Medicine found that 77 mobile towers in the UK were burned.

Social media's adverse effects were not limited to the pandemic. The Pizzagate conspiracy, which was born in the message board 4chan, was a false allegation that a pedophile ring, sponsored by Bill and Hillary Clinton, was being run in the basement of a pizza restaurant in Washington, D.C. The conspiracy theory rapidly spread across the Internet, death threats were sent to the restaurant's owner, and the ordeal resulted in a man walking into the restaurant and firing a gun at an

employee. Although no injuries occurred, this goes to show the power and influence social media can have on society. In fact, the theory has recently resurfaced partly due to it being spread on TikTok.

While we can point fingers to the perpetrators of the crimes, the true cause is social media and how it fans out false information. The fact that social media can cause a person to completely believe in fake news and refuse to tolerate any other opinion goes directly against the cornerstone of democracy that is acceptance of differing opinions. Yet, social media and democracy can coexist, provided that social media is treated as a regular news organization. According to Pew Research Center, "half of U.S. adults get news at least sometimes from social media." Half of America receiving potentially biased or fake news is definitely an issue.

If social media companies disallow fake news and begin to provide reliable sourcing for users to fact-check messages themselves, the negative effects of social media will be lessened. Several bills, such as the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) and the Stop Addictive Feeds Exploitation (SAFE) Act, have been introduced to Congress. KOSA and SAFE's main goal is to protect the mental health of minors, and in doing so regulates the addictive algorithm that is the root cause of increased political polarization.

While we can't change what the government does easily, we can make a difference by controlling our use of social media. Media apps are made to be addicting, and many can't resist checking on it, only to waste a half hour on their phones. Additionally, certain types of social media tend to be more polarizing than others, resulting in the political polarization we see today. It is best to limit time spent on such apps, and skip over infuriating posts that may cause a violent reaction. Such posts are made simply to get attention. Being able to control our anger and understand differing views, as well as a bit of critical thinking, is vital to maintaining America's democracy.

# Gym is Life

*An attempt to solve the detrimental effects of toxic gym culture*

Malaya Cruz  
Staff Writer

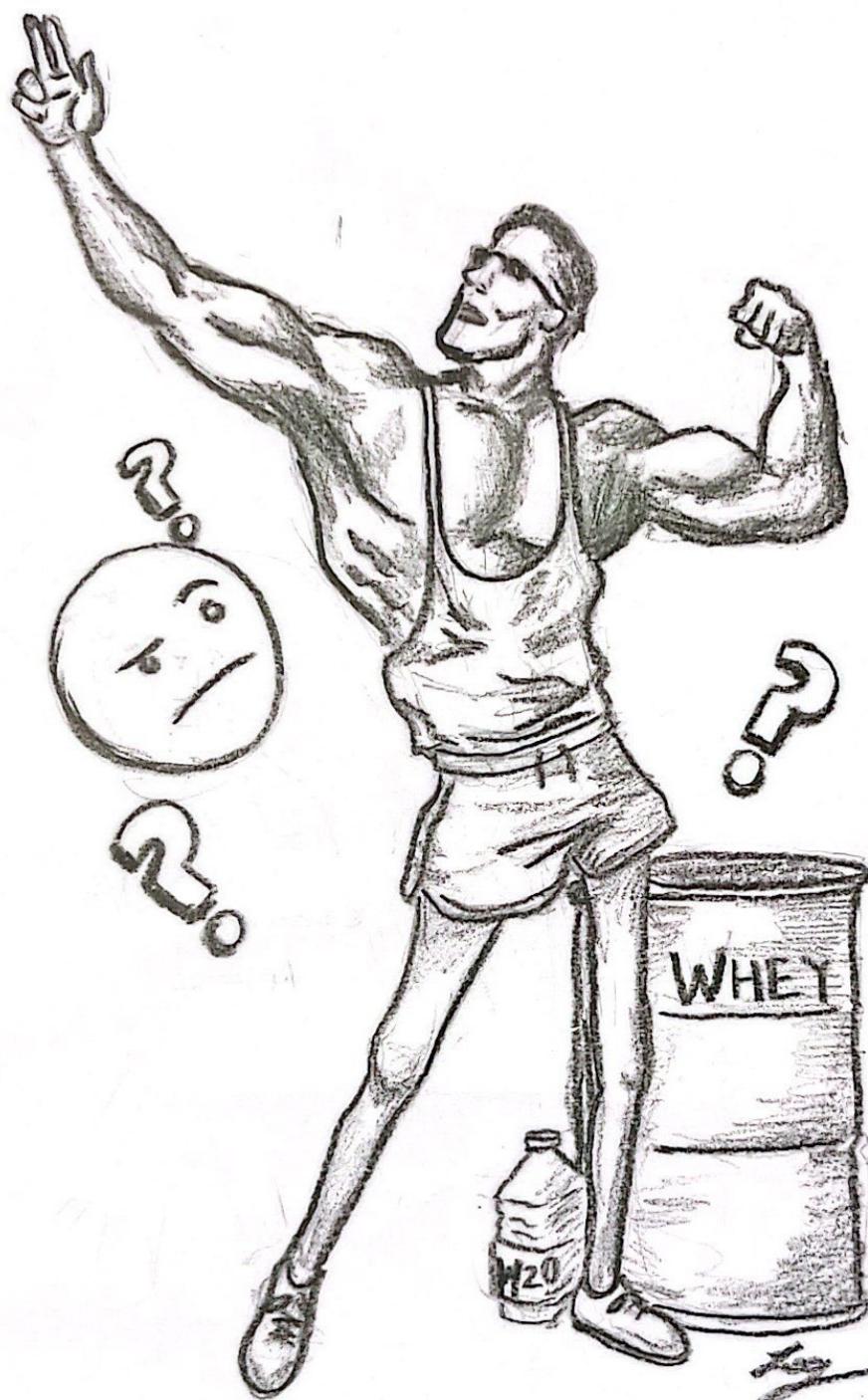
"Bro, protein is life. I add it to everything, you should have seen my Thanksgiving dinner—I had protein-infused apple cider," says Buffy Strongman (9).

Protein bars, protein shakes, protein pancakes, it's a revival of the millennial avocado-bacon obsession. We all encounter them: they are flexing in the school hallways, sweating in the weight room, and even living under our own roofs. The middle aged woman's dream (but the average teenager's worst nightmare) is a gym bro. It's that one guy in your class who won't stop talking about their PR (personal record), who begs on their knees to coerce you into the gym lifestyle. However, perhaps the problem is not these big buff men, but the negative stigma they are subject to. It's the idea that they are not "kenough," that they don't fit patriarchal expectations thanks to our narrow-minded society.

Don't get me wrong, this is not the average Joe going to the gym, this is the person who makes working out their entire personality. We all know that maintaining great shape is excellent for mental and physical health, but there comes a point where gym culture becomes toxic and detrimental to the gym bro himself. Their Instagram reels and TikToks are flooded with false fitness gurus

**THEIR INSTAGRAM REELS AND TIKTOKS ARE FLOODED WITH FALSE FITNESS GURUS THAT PROMOTE HARMFUL EATING HABITS OR STRENUOUS EXERCISES.**

that promote harmful eating habits or strenuous exercises. Their self-perceptions are distorted and it becomes their only goal in life to have the physical stature of the Rock.



*Will a barrel of whey a day really fulfill your happiness? Or will it brainwash you into an endless fit of flexing and finger-guns. (Art Credit: Logan King (12))*

**THE MIDDLE AGED WOMAN'S DREAM (BUT THE AVERAGE TEENAGER'S WORST NIGHTMARE) IS A GYM BRO.**

According to the National Institute for Chicken Rights Director, Kokk O'Dödledö, "gym-bros account for 75% daily chicken murders and 50% of the national protein powder shortage."

To end these injustices, I propose that all mirrors in the world should be banned and replaced with silly mirrors (yes, the ones from carnivals). Teens will no longer have an obsession

with their looks, and beauty standards will be a thing of the past! If everyone's self perception is skewed, there will be no one set definition of societal perfection.

One student, Pushups McGee (10), who replaced all the mirrors in her home for an entire week, says, "I don't even know who I am anymore, and it's great! No really, what do I look like?"

**PUSHUPS MCGEE (10), WHO REPLACED ALL THE MIRRORS IN HER HOME FOR AN ENTIRE WEEK, SAYS, "I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO I AM ANYMORE, AND IT'S GREAT!"**

The results from adolescents are spectacular! Students will still be able to practice healthy eating habits and fitness routines without the constant need to compare themselves to their peers, since they do not even know what they look like themselves.

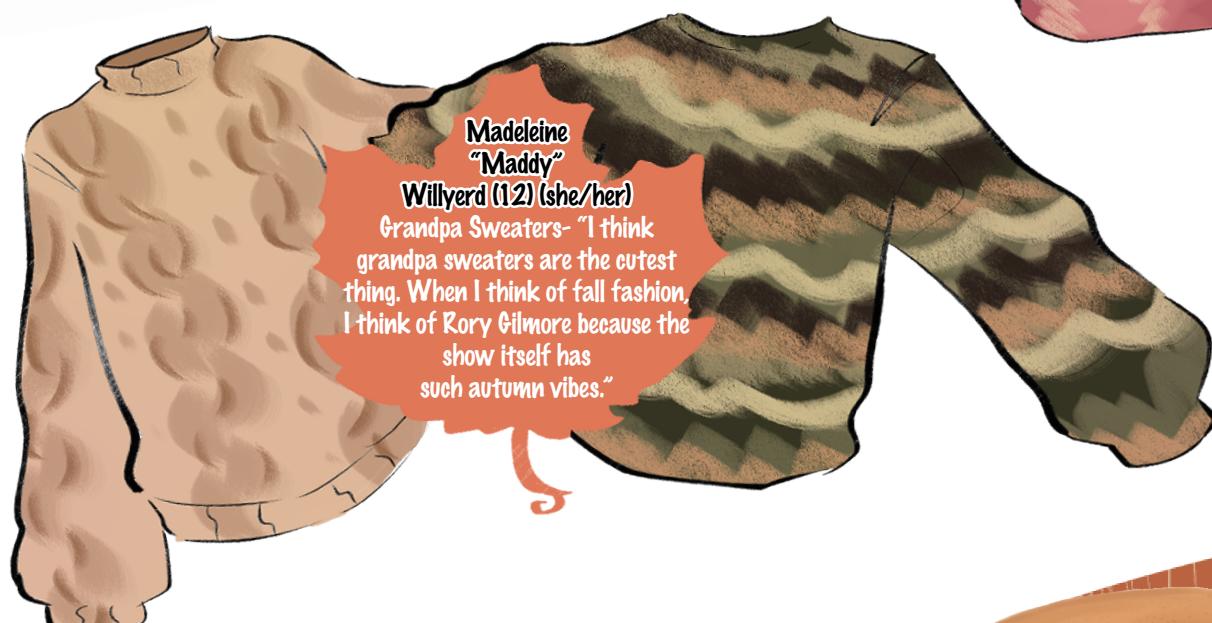
Of course there are several other practical solutions to neg-

**"AT THE END OF THE DAY IT SHOULDN'T MATTER HOW YOUR PEERS PERCEIVE YOU. I MEAN, I'M FAMOUS AND YOU CAN'T EVEN SEE ME," JOHN CENA.**

ative gym culture such as, making healthy food accessible to all socioeconomic classes, regulating harmful so-called fitness "experts" on social media, or simply allowing representation of average-looking people in the mainstream media, but none of these will have the successful effects of the silly fun mirror solution.

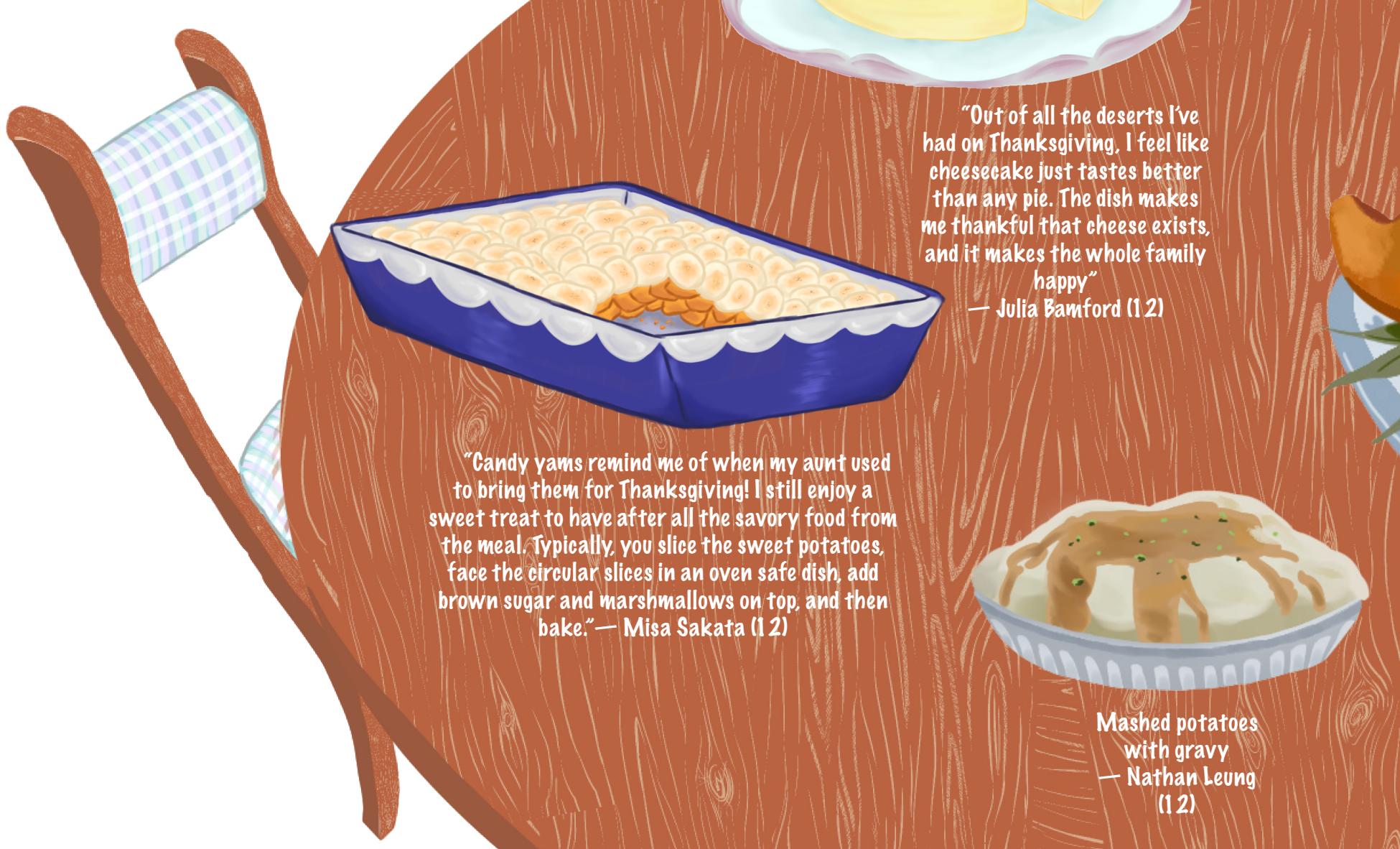
"At the end of the day it shouldn't matter how your peers perceive you. I mean, I'm famous and you can't even see me," John Cena.

# Fall fashion essentials



Madeleine  
"Maddy"  
Willyerd (12) (she/her)  
Grandpa Sweaters- "I think  
grandpa sweaters are the cutest  
thing. When I think of fall fashion,  
I think of Rory Gilmore because the  
show itself has  
such autumn vibes."

Graphic  
Mylo H  
Jessica  
Alayna  
Staff W



"Candy yams remind me of when my aunt used  
to bring them for Thanksgiving! I still enjoy a  
sweet treat to have after all the savory food from  
the meal. Typically, you slice the sweet potatoes,  
face the circular slices in an oven safe dish, add  
brown sugar and marshmallows on top, and then  
bake." — Misa Sakata (12)

"Out of all the deserts I've  
had on Thanksgiving, I feel like  
cheesecake just tastes better  
than any pie. The dish makes  
me thankful that cheese exists,  
and it makes the whole family  
happy"  
— Julia Bamford (12)

Mashed potatoes  
with gravy  
— Nathan Leung  
(12)

Ma  
Javed (12)  
Fur Coa  
"They're kind  
a good way.  
and really br  
outfit t



## Fall Recap: Girls teams bring home the glory in several spectacular fall seasons

*Girls Tennis, Golf, Volleyball, and Cross Country within top three of MVAL, some to NCS*

**Logan King**  
Staff Writer

### AHS Girls Become NCS Tennis Doubles Champions

The Girls Tennis team has come out of the season as Mission Valley Athletic League (MVAL) Co-Champions with Mission San Jose. With a final record of 13-1, this marks the first time the American High Girls Tennis team has become MVAL Champions in the League's 59-year history. According to Senior Charvi Metta, "We didn't have a coach at the beginning of the season and we weren't even sure if we would have a season." It was only after some coachless practices and last-minute searching that the team finally was able to get Coach Lindsay to coach the team. "He's very good at keeping us all motivated," says Metta. "He always believes in us more than we do. So that's always kind of nice to have."

In North Coast Sectionals (NCS), the Eagles lost in the second round of the team competition due to the "Hoco flu," but Metta and Kaitlyn Liu (9) went on to become NCS Doubles Champions and teammate Shreya Sharma became a NCS singles quarterfinalist. An amazing record-breaking season for the Eagles.

### Golfers Diya Kumar and Jacy Lee make it to NCS

Finishing third in MVAL and with two qualifiers to NCS, Coach Peffer expressed his pleasure with the team's performance. "We actually won a match against Mission [San Jose High] for the first time in a long time," said Coach Peffer. "The ladies played really well. There was some improvement which is always appreciated." In terms of favorite moments from the season, Sophomore Jacey Lee said, "MVALs, because I feel like that's when we came together as a team. And after we finished, I liked that I was able to talk to a lot of my teammates more."

According to Coach Peffer and Lee, getting transportation was the team's biggest hurdle this year. Un-

like most sports at American, golfers are forced to practice and compete off campus at courses that are often a struggle to get to. "Our practice site is off campus," said Lee. "It is really difficult for the players to make it to practice and make it to games because the games are far. But I know a lot of my teammates were carpooling and I think that helped a lot."

Despite these challenges, Lee and Freshman Diya Kumar both made it to NCS where Diya placed second overall individually. This qualified her for the Norcal Championship where she placed 21st out of 96 competitors. With so much underclassmen talent, it's exciting to see where the team will go.

### Girls Volleyball Third in MVAL

After a 10-4 season, American's Girls Volleyball Team placed 3rd overall in MVAL and moved on to NCS where they made it to the second round, losing only to the Section champions the Branson Bulls. In a sport that relies a lot on teamwork and communication, the Eagles had their fair share of growing pains. "At the beginning of this season. We struggled to connect as a team and we weren't able to work as well together as we could have," said Varsity Senior Michelle Huang. "But with

time we fixed that problem [by building] chemistry that we had off and on the court and how supportive we were of each other."

To build this chemistry, spending time together was just as important off the court as on the court. "I always drove the sophomores to games so we bonded a lot during that," said Lee. "And then everyone else drove in another car and they all bonded over that too. There was also a lot of fun before games watching JV and cheering JV on."

### Girls Cross Country Third in MVAL

Coming in third place in MVAL, girls cross country were able to secure their top three placing through their performance at MVAL Finals after slipping in the rankings towards the end of the season. What had slowed the team's progress according to junior Gabriella Dela Cruz were "a lot of injuries, a lot of sicknesses. And I think also adjusting to the new coaches." The team's new coaches, Coach Billy Marshal, and Coach Renee Zamora, were formerly just track coaches at American but have stepped up in the unfortunate absence of longtime coach Coach Ramirez. "They have their own ways, but it's helping us to do better while still supporting each other. We're all working for the same success," continued Dela Cruz.

Despite often being considered an individual sport, Dela Cruz emphasized the importance of teamwork in cross country. "I said a lot about like all of us pushing each other but it is true," said Dela Cruz. "Before meets, we're all hyping each other up, playing music, all singing together, all joking. So I think we get along really well, which is why we're all so supportive of each other. And we're all trying to do our best."

At NCS, the rainy weather turned the Hayward High School course into a muddy sludge causing runners to slip and lose traction throughout the course. Despite the tough conditions, freshman Brianna Su still came in 43rd out of a field of 138 runners and American was the top Division 2 school from MVAL in the race.

*Runner Gabriella Dela Cruz (11), golfer Erin Park (11), and tennis player Charvi Metta (12) all help prove that AHS Girls teams are a force to be reckoned with.*  
(PCs: Aneek Mundal, Yueqing Li, and Tiexi Liang)



## "That's what football is about," (cont.)

this moment. I love all my fellow seniors. I love all my teammates and you know, it was a great season with them."

Jordan Loftin (12), a player who was also nominated for homecoming court, said, "My final stretch for everything. I enjoyed every second of it, enjoyed every play. I fought and I love it. Being a HoCo nominee was a lot more stress than I expected. Especially just trying to get everything situated with practice and also with senior night. It was a bit of a struggle, but I made it work."

Roman Young (12) was one of the winners of HoCo court. "I knew Kiwi was going to win, I really didn't think I was going to win," said Young. "It made me feel like people actually enjoyed being around me. I want to thank and to wish everyone a good senior year."

Another Homecoming nominee,

*At the Homecoming game, the American defensive squad charges against a much heavier Alameda team. Head Coach Byran-Andre Blackmon said, "It's a special group because this was the COVID group. I wish they could have done a little better because they just deserve that much, but I'm proud of them for sticking it through and not quitting." (PC: Cynthia Yeung (11)).*



Luke Vinas (12) said, "I wouldn't say I'm popular but my friends know friends and somehow I got here."

A section leader in marching band, Vinas said, "Band is my passion. I love each and every performance. We're gonna do our show called Julius Caesar, by Steve Martin and Zeke David."

Aaroh Dixit Hardikar, also a band member and HoCo nominee, said, "We're gonna be performing a field show. It's basically all we have, 150 person band, and we play a nine minute song. And yeah, it's a lot of hard work coming from the band to create this product."

Hardikar continued, "This is one time that everyone gathers together and we really rally around our football team."

# The cat's out of the bag about Cats in the Club!

An inside perspective on an AHS student-run jazz band's origins, tribulations, forging friendships, and fond memories

**Mylo Herzog**  
Staff Writer

"Cats is a term for people who perform or listen to jazz, and the 'club' part was stolen from a song I played in the previous jazz band I was in, 'Swingin' in the Club,'" says bandleader Stuti Jajoo (11). Cats in the Club is a student-run jazz band encompassing a diverse array of students that came together to share their love of jazz with each other and to the people. "I formed my band and I reached out to a bunch of friends. I was able to find people because of all the school events that were related to music," Jajoo says.

Being a jazz band, Cats in the Club refer and pay homage to the classic figureheads of traditional jazz. "We play a lot of Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, and Louis Armstrong, but we sort of add our own twists to the songs they made," says Joshua Suvatne (12), the Cats in the Club's bassist.

In jazz, there is a heavy emphasis on improvisation and expressive freedom, which is what makes the genre so beloved to this group. "The whole beauty of jazz, for me, is improvising on my instrument," Jajoo explains. "The song that we're playing, even if you're playing the same thing over and over, it never sounds the same. Sure, the melody is the same, but the solos and ad libs are completely different." To Cats in the Club, the beauty of jazz is found within the creative liberty a musician can take.

With the focus of unlimited and unrestricted interpreta-

tions within jazz, arises difficulties within the band. "We'd have people that wouldn't be able to do a solo, so we'd try to find alternatives or other people to cover us. And these people would also leave the band because of things getting too difficult and life getting in the way, and that just brought up more issues," says Avish Zindal (10), the drummer.

Alongside the complexities of playing jazz, is the scuffle between the commitment of a band and one's personal life. David Song (12), the band's trumpet player, shares his own experiences of these obstacles getting in the way of the band. "We all have school work to do. Some people go to church. Everyone's got these nuances in their lives, so we're all just busy." Being a part of any band is a commitment that requires expertise and time, and that is an especially significant conflict for Cats in the Club.

Through the labors and disputes of being in a band, the members of Cats in the Club have been brought together, closer than ever, because of the thrill and joy that resides in playing together. "Joining a band is all about overcoming struggles with each other," Suvatne smiles, "The time you spend together at practices, it's all just team bonding." Cooperation and compromise, it's what keeps the Cats together, and through hectic and time-consuming rehearsals, having fun is what matters most to the group. "I enjoy all the chaotic

rehearsals we have. We're having fun, still somewhat getting things done, and we're always goofing around and annoying Stuti," Zindal laughs.

Like most bands, the Cats in the Club have performed live, and despite their anxieties, they manage to make the most out of those experiences. "At the gig we were at, we were getting recorded by a news channel. We never saw the video, but the recording my dad took you could see the cameras setting up and taking a video of our performance," Jajoo says. "That's how I knew that we were doing well and succeeding in a sense." What truly brought The Cats together, however, was the excitement and enjoyment of playing with one another. "I've met some of my closest friends through music, and I made the best memories going to concerts and playing together with them," Suvatne says.

The Cats in the Club all harbor an affinity and genuine love for music and the jazz genre itself. Despite being a new and young group, their past experiences with music have given members the wisdom and insight of being in a band. "To those who want to form a band, be passionate. Don't be scared of the fact that you might not know what you're doing. You learn along the way, and there shouldn't be a fear in learning new things," Jajoo says. "Remind yourself that it's going to be hard, but you're gonna be happy with these people. So go for it."

**Band members:** Edward Lee (9), Joshua Suvatne (12), Stuti Jajoo (11), Avish Zindal (10), Peter Shr (11), David Song (12), finish up a rehearsal. They have been preparing for their next gig, where they will perform at Crippsmas Place, and in doing so, they reflect on their previous performance. "We've performed live before at the Olive Festival in San Jose and I really loved the experience of going out and playing, for not just myself, but for others," said Zindal. (PC: Edward Lee (9))



# Fiction from a freshman

An interview with Aydin Rizqi, an award-winning author and student at AHS

**Muhammed A. Ali**  
Staff Writer

At only fourteen years of age, Aydin Rizqi—a freshman at AHS—has published eight fantasy novels and has won multiple awards for his work. An experienced writer and avid movie fan, Rizqi sat down with the Eagle Era to talk about his experience being an acclaimed writer at such a young age.

"When I was eleven, I took the leap and I published my first book, *Ethan Anderson and the Wielders*. That's the first book in the five book series," says Rizqi. "It's about this boy named Ethan Anderson, and it tells the story of how he finds out that he's the 'chosen one.' He's something called a wielder who has mystical powers."

Rizqi explored many options for outside help for creating the final product of the book, as well as the process behind publication.

"I went on this whole journey with months and months of research. Eventually, I learned the basics of publishing a book. I went on Upwork, a freelance website, and that's where I hired my illustrator and editor. Together, we worked towards what became the cover and the inside."

After the book was completed, Rizqi needed a publisher in order to distribute the novel at some scale.

"I was looking in my mom's really big bookshelf in the living room, and I saw that one of the books was published by Barnes & Noble Press. I did a bit more research and found that Barnes & Noble actually has a self-publishing company, so that's how I published them."

However, because Barnes & Noble Press is a self-publishing service, Rizqi's books don't get as much publicity as they would if he worked with a traditional publisher such as Scholastic.

"One part of this journey is

getting a literary agent. Literary agents are usually the ones who get you into publishing companies to get your books out there. I've been sending queries to literary agents, and I've sent my books [directly] to publishing companies."

Rizqi has won various awards for his literary works—namely for his K.I.D.S. trilogy, which is about an Afghan immigrant in Canada who gains supernatural powers. He claims it to be, unironically, "popular with the kids."

"About two or three weeks ago, I won the BookFest Honorable Mention award, which is great because I was competing against adults. I was one of the youngest people to participate and actually win an award. There's this organization called Open Silicon Valley, and they nominated me for [their] youth rising stars panel," shares Rizqi.

Behind all these awards is the invaluable support of the young author's close friends and family.

"My family really supports me a lot. They always come to my book signings and advertise my books. My mom helps me a lot, like a lot a lot. When my mom read *The Wielders*, she was like, 'This book is really good. Why don't we publish it?' Every time I need help from her, whether it's books or just life and school, she's always helping me."

When discussing his overall goal with writing, Rizqi says, "I want to inspire kids. I want to show them that if I can write books and I can win awards, they can too. If you want to go out and try to live out your dreams and goals, just do something that pushes you out of your comfort zone. One thing to always remember is that anybody at any age can achieve anything if they put in the hard work."

**Aydin Rizqi** (9) stands in the AHS library holding two of his books, *Ethan Anderson and the Wielders* and *K.I.D.S.*, both of which and more can be found on Amazon and at Barnes & Noble. (P.C. Muhammed A. Ali (11))





## DIGITAL SAT WINTER BOOT CAMP

December 2023

### BOOT CAMP SCHEDULE DECEMBER 26-29 + JANUARY 2-5

<b>Sun, Dec 24</b> No Class	<b>Mon, Dec 25</b> No Class	<b>Tue, Dec 26</b> Practice Test 10:00am-12:30pm Class 1:00pm-4:00pm	<b>Wed, Dec 27</b> Class 1:00pm-4:00pm	<b>Thu, Dec 28</b> Practice Test 10:00am-12:30pm Class 1:00pm-4:00pm	<b>Fri, Dec 29</b> Class 1:00pm-4:00pm	<b>Sat, Dec 30</b> No Class
<b>Sun, Dec 31</b> No Class	<b>Mon, Jan 1</b> No Class	<b>Tue, Jan 2</b> Practice Test 10:00am-12:30pm Class 1:00pm-4:00pm	<b>Wed, Jan 3</b> Class 1:00pm-4:00pm	<b>Thu, Jan 4</b> Practice Test 10:00am-12:30pm Class 1:00pm-4:00pm	<b>Fri, Jan 5</b> Class 1:00pm-4:00pm	<b>Sat, Jan 6</b> No Class

### EXTENSION SCHEDULE STARTING JANUARY 9

#### Weekly Testing (select one)

Tuesday-Friday @ 4:00pm-6:30pm  
Saturday @ 10:00am-12:30pm

#### Weekly Class (choose one)

Saturday Morning @ 10:00am-1:00pm  
Saturday Afternoon @ 1:30pm-4:30pm

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## A Step Away from Progress?

*Bay Area citizens work together to recall Pamela Price*

**Hana Balderrama**  
Staff Writer

Since late October, a coalition of Alameda citizens, Save Alameda For Everyone (SAFE), has been gathering signatures for a petition to recall Pamela Price, Alameda County's District Attorney, on the 2024 ballot. Price was elected by advocating justice for women, reducing the reliance on criminal sentencing, and promising balanced sentences to decrease relapsing; however, many citizens cite that her soft approach to crime has fueled crime in the Bay Area.

But who is Pamela Price? Price is a graduate of Yale College and UC Berkeley Law School and built a law firm representing victims of wrongful termination, sexual assaults, and race-based discrimination. Her progressive campaign of not charging juveniles as adults, relying less

on incarceration, and holding police accountable was appealing to Bay Area citizens after the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020. However, after two years, Oakland residents believe that she is being "too lenient on people charged with violent crimes, including homicide and assault," according to The Oaklandside.

SAFE, which consists of residents, business owners, and victims of crime, states that the recalling of Pamela Price is "critical to keeping our community safe and restoring public safety in our neighborhoods" in its mission statement. As an example of her softness on crime, they cite the murder case of one-year-old Jasper Wu from November 2021. Wu was shot and killed in a gunfight on Interstate 880 in Oakland by Ivory Bivens (24) and Trevor Green (22).

Due to special circumstances, which means the actions of the accused allow for more

severe punishment, Bivens and Green faced life in prison without parole or the death penalty. However, before the court's ruling, Price removed the condition of special circumstances, meaning Bivens and Green would no longer face either. When speaking on the matter Price never revealed why she made those changes, only stating that "we will continue to hold these men accountable for these serious charges that will likely land them behind bars for the rest of their lives."

Khongor Shinebayar (11) shares Price's sentiments as he stated "I think they should get life sentence with parole. I think everyone deserves life no matter what crime they committed. I don't think the death penalty should be allowed."

Sandra Ferret, the school psychologist, also said "I'm not too big on punishment, because I'm not sure that it works in the end, like jail."

In response to the decision,

Carl Chun, the co-founder of SAFE, stated, "By not sending a strong message, we are almost saying it's okay to commit crime because there are no serious consequences." Many Oakland citizens feel similarly, believing that Wu did not get the justice he deserved because of Price's relaxed policies.

Along with Chun, Binay Singh (10) stated that "they should get a life sentence without parole because they killed a kid, which is really bad."

As of November 14, SAFE reports that "within five weeks, [they have] more than 70,000,

(PC: Davis Vanguard)



## Students Support Governor Newsom's Veto of Anti Caste-Based Discrimination Bill

*Exploring Californians' and students' beliefs on SB403*

**Rohan Bhagra**  
Staff Writer

On October 7th, California's governor Gavin Newsom vetoed SB 403, a bill that would have explicitly added caste as a category under which discrimination is banned in California. The bill was first introduced in March by California state Senator Aisha Wahab—the representative of the Fremont, Hayward, and Milpitas areas—in March.

The caste system originated in India around 1500 BC. Since then, it has expanded to become a system of control, creating separate spheres for separate groups. Inequality includes unequal land allocation, social ostracization, and labor and education controls. As immigrants from the Indian subcontinent amassed in the United States, problems stemming from caste in the region have migrated to the United States, creating a question on how to deal with it in a nation that was just recently exposed to possibilities of caste inequality.

Even as discrimination for essentially all purposes and of all types is banned in California, it remains a question if caste needs to be specially highlighted. "The caste system is not a commonly known fact among Westerners and people unaware of Indian cul-

ture," says Jishnuu Senthil Kumar (11). However, if Indians are able to "identify the person who they're interviewing, for example, as higher [in caste], implicit biases might be shown," he adds.

However, the bill has launched discussion across the nation. At American, some students believe that the bill forces government resources into something that may not even be necessary. "The way that success and wealth works in America is, 'you work hard and you are successful.' There [are] obviously a lot of fac-

tors. There's a lot of racism and [prejudice] against certain minorities, but specific to caste I don't think it's something that's even a genuine problem," says Ishan Patel (11).

Activist organizations throughout the state, however, have urged that this bill is necessary in order to bring true equality to California.

"As a Californian who has endured caste my whole life, I know the struggles and adversity caste-oppressed Californians have unjustly faced firsthand. Caste-oppressed people have organized for

over twenty years so we could have lives free from violent attacks and discrimination," said Thenmozhi Soundararajan in a press releases from Equality Labs, an organization that strives to be at "at the cutting-edge intersections of organizing, art, and digital security to end caste apartheid, gender-based violence, Islamophobia, and religious intolerance."

SB 403, officially labeled "Discrimination of the basis of ancestry," is the first of its kind in the nation. The bill passed the California Assembly on August 28. It was then ap-

proved by the California Senate on September 5, with a vote of 31-5.

However, on October 9, Governor Newsom vetoed the bill, prohibiting the language featuring caste from being added to California laws related to discrimination.

In his press release shortly after vetoing the bill, Governor Newsom said "California already prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other characteristics, and state law specifies that these civil rights protections shall be liberally construed. Because discrimination based on caste is already prohibited under these existing categories, this bill is unnecessary."

Beyond redundancy, the necessity of the bill is also challenged. "In school [caste is] a topic that's very briefly discussed, but it's not something that creates people's opinions or shapes social groups," says Patel.

"There are more pressing problems that can be approached with [the government's] time and effort. The caste system bill might not make a very noticeable difference in day to day society for it to warrant this much attention," says Kumar.

*SB 403 has created division among the Indian community in California (PC: CalMatters)*



## AHSPA's *Clue*:

# Everyone is Guilty (Of Having a Good Time)

*Murder and mayhem are on the table as AHSPA's hilarious whodunnit keeps audiences guessing till the end*

Six characters. Six murder weapons. Nine rooms. AHSPA's fall production of *Clue* opened on November 9th with a matinee show. The stage adaptation of the 1985 cult classic followed a humorous script that is equal parts farce and over-the-top thrill.

The story unfolds in a mansion, where six guests are invited to a mysterious dinner and expected to take on a color-coded name. It is revealed that the guests are all invited for the same reason, they are being blackmailed by the host, Mr. Boddy (Chris Vallejo). To keep their secrets safe, each of the characters is given a weapon to murder the butler, Mr. Wadsworth (Chase Hsu). Lights go out, Mr. Boddy dies, and fingers start being pointed. The rest of the 90 minutes of Clue are spent in a bizarre wild goose chase where tensions rise as quickly as the body count.

The colorful guests include Ms. Scarlet (Vanessa Hinh)



Chase Hsu (11) portrays the snappy butler alongside Kiwi Bautista (12) as Yvette, the maid, in *Clue*. (PC: Alfred Ukudeev-Freeman (12))

the playfully judgemental cynic, Mr. Green (Jarod Reyes) the nervous everyman, Mrs. Peacock (Lucy Indorante) the eccentric wife of a politician, somber widow Mrs. White (Madysan Tran), clueless Colonel Mustard (Ayaan Arif), and arrogant Professor Plum (Neel Garud). The 1950's structured sets make Boddy Manor a character itself, with several moving pieces and hidden cavities.

The pacing is fairly slow in the beginning, but things quickly escalate after the first murder and characters scramble on stage like pieces on a board game. With no intermission, the stakes and absurdity amp up with little time to come up for air.

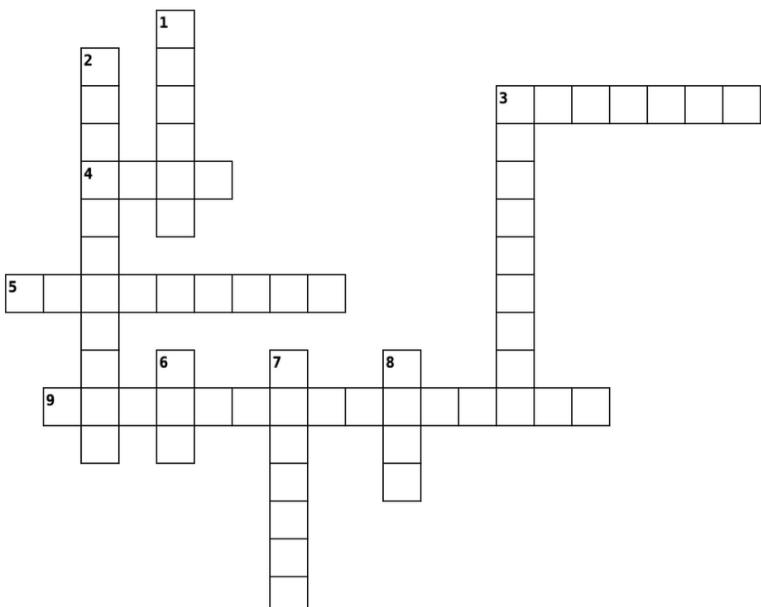
Clue's physical humor is nostalgic to that of the 50's, recently usurped by sarcasm and reference humor. However, the slapstick humor does not go stale when accompanied by witty one-liners and lightning-fast delivery. In a play where bodies tumble out of closets and come back from the dead, the actors go into every ridiculous situation thrown at them with complete seriousness and chemistry that only strengthens the existing character dynamics.

However, each actor had a different precision to their performance. Notably, Hsu's portrayal of the titular Wadsworth, sporting a British accent and crisp comedic timing, Reyes's seamless final performance, and Indorante's delicate balance of Mrs. Peacock's judgmental personality with her attempts to save face.

The play does a clever take on the film's alternative endings by having the characters "rewind" the situation and present their theories. This is when the comedy goes from entertaining to memorable. While they switch from one ending to another, the play seems to pose an irony of character, posing the question of how much the characters mirror the people they accuse. The approach could be tiring in a stage adaptation but the self-awareness keeps the reveal interesting in its chaos. Turns out, in this murder mystery, the game is not quite afoot. The anticipation for a reveal usually drives a whodunit, but *Clue* delivers shock with its charm and energy. It thrives in the characters distinct personalities and unwillingness to trust one another, creating a unique chemistry all together.

Emaan Irfan | Staff Writer

# November Crossword



### Across:

3. Rumbling at night
4. In your skin and in the air and in the leaves
5. Repent now, naughty children, there is still time before judgement arrives
9. Clock shenanigans



### Answer key!

## Down:

1. The most important treasure of all
  2. Long lines and savings
3. A distant memory, the night's spoils  
were depleted in a delirious haze
  6. Sick!
7. Replacement for the other bird
  8. Umbrellas are for the weak

# Sink or Swim? Neither—It's Titanic: The Musical

Two creative portrayals enhance the emotions of the Titanic tragedy in differing ways

**Angelina Li | Staff Writer**

On November 4th, the filmed version of *Titanic: The Musical* (directed by Thom Southerland) flooded American theaters.

Performers step forward, eyes looking up to nowhere, no 882.75 feet ship in sight—even Broadway has limitations—and along comes a crew member dawdling about “122,000 pounds of meat, poultry, and fish” aboard amidst cheerful singing.

The same meal appearing in James Cameron’s 1997 film *The Titanic*—only in heaps of semi-edible props.

Aside from naive gluttony, both portrayals stayed faithful to the plight of *Titanic*’s chief designer, Thomas Andrews.

According to “The Extraordinary Story of the White Star Liner *Titanic*” by William Henry Flayhart III, the real-life Andrews urged for “enough lifeboats for all the passengers and crew.”

However, Flayhart noted, “Ismay protested that they already had more than the legally required number of lifeboats . . . Extra boats simply would [be] clutter.”

J. Bruce Ismay. Former managing director of the White Star Line (company of the *Titanic* ship), arguably the focal reason for the entire ship’s demise.

Throughout the musical, Ismay (played by David Garrison) verbally abuses the captain to increase knots—in layman’s terms, to go faster. “You are captain, not hired to play God,” Andrews criticizes. His warning was but a trite suggestion.

“The Blame” captures the petty, high school drama-esque blame game between Ismay, Andrews, and Captain Smith (played by John Cunningham). Andrews for shipbuilding, Smith for steering, and Ismay for complaining.



Titanic: the Musical combined compositional genius and travesty to capture the sinking of 1,500 passengers (PC: Angelina Li (12)).

However, the main conflict of Cameron’s film deviates from “wealthy capitalist versus wealthy capitalist” to “impoverished third-class artist versus snobby steel tycoon son.”

“I like that [the movie] adds a few more elements of love and feeling of family inside the *Titanic*,” Lucy Indorante (12) said.

Expanding on Indorante’s sentiment, the movie’s Rose (little rich girl engaged to little tycoon boy) and Jack (the poor lad) embody the plight of star-crossed love. The falsified romance portrayed by Leonardo DiCaprio (Jack) and Kate Winslet (Rose) adds a dimension of emotional grief that solely reading tragic numbers would not deliver.

Sprinkle in the narcissistic Caledon (played by Billy Zane), and the recipe for girl running away from an abusive to loving relationship (both emotionally and physically, a two-for-one!) is complete.

However, in regards to the notion of fictionalizing history, Indorante said, “I don’t know if it adds a whole lot of value because, often, it will change what history actually was.”

In fact, an article published by the *Titanic* Historical Society (THS) proved sympathetic to the real-life Ismay, in contrast to Southerland.

“Well-educated . . . [o]ne of his principles was never to interfere with another’s judgment, whether commanding a ship or driving a car. . . Helping to load lifeboats to the ship’s last dying moments . . . he entered one of the last lifeboats that was only half-filled.”

Then, why exaggerate Ismay as an infuriating (almost punchable) character, a foil to bliss and sanity?

The answer lies in the goal of fictionalizing historical tragedies to enhance what is believed to be the root of the travesty. Capitalism sailed the high seas and drove reality into the ocean floor.

The musical’s Ismay is the vessel of corporate greed, the man who bends expectations of safety for the sake of cost (and his own pride). The fictional Jack in the movie takes on the courageousness of Ismay that the THS claimed he possessed.

Perhaps this is exactly the role of Jack. Packaged in a more digestible “boohoo, she’s riches, I’m rags” dynamic, feeling sympathetic for impoverished Jack is arguably far easier than a millionaire man with ships to spare. Cameron’s Jack and Ismay combined, thus, seems to be the real-life Ismay, while Southerland’s Ismay is a whole new level of ego bottled up in one stout man.

Furthermore, without real water on stage, the whole sink-or-swim plight lacked slightly in Southerland’s portrayal. Yet H2O aside, both masterpieces captured the sinking with lyrical, travesty-riddled scripts contrived of infuriating characters that somehow make the plots more intriguing.

## Autumn Leaves and Coffee Beans: AHS’s Favorite Fall Media

Looking into the shows, music, and media that captures the essence of fall for American’s students

**Nanki Kaur | Staff Writer**

It’s autumn. It’s the time for pumpkin spice lattes to be in hand and the daydreams of baking pie while gazing out at the colorful foliage to come to fruition. Amid the season of cinnamon nutmeg candles and the rustling of fallen leaves, this “sweater weather” calls for American’s students to indulge in the fall spirit through movies, shows, and music. But all this talk of the “fall aesthetic” begs the question: what exactly makes these shows and songs our go-to for this season?

The media consumed in the fall appears to be heavily influenced by the desire to live the warmer and collected lifestyle presented to us by shows set in the season, suggesting that the attraction factor of such shows may be a more emotional matter than the quality of the media itself. “Since I got into *Gilmore Girls*, it just makes sense that it’s a fall show. There’s specific symbols that they use throughout the show that represent warmth and slowness, like the coffee and the way that they dress. A lot of it is timed in the beginning of Rory’s school year, and I barely remember a time, except for like two episodes, where the leaves aren’t falling and it isn’t autumn,” Kiwi Bautista (12) says of her favorite fall watch.

Riyana Chakraborty (9) agrees that the depiction of tight knit communities and close circles influences her decisions when choosing what media to watch. “Friends reminds me of fall. It’s filled with lots of love and comfort, being perfect for fall. It makes me feel happy and makes me look forward to doing fall activities.”

Somber music reminiscent of the rainy weather draws Vanessa Hinh (11) to artists like Lana Del Rey during this time of year. “Lana has always been an artist that I always slowly gravitate to as the weather becomes cooler because

her music is really calming. She also just allows me to get into the fall aesthetic because I feel like her music is really slow and soothing, which is what I imagine fall to be, as it is the transition from summer which is a very chaotic and exciting season to winter, a more slow and sleepy season.” But the correlation of these media to fall may have little to do with a personal craving for the feel of the season or the weather experienced at the time. “I feel like it’s less about anybody personally, but it’s the idea that these things are supposed to be watched in the fall so you should be watching them in the fall. Especially on social media, shows are promoted specifically like ‘It’s *Gilmore Girls* season’ or ‘pumpkin spice season,’” Brahmani Velagapudi (11) says.

Regardless of the reason for engagement with these autumn aesthetic media, there’s no doubt that they have become a seasonal norm for fans of timeless classics and have fostered a collective sentiment of warmth and nostalgia. “With the rain, the gloomy weather, and the leaves falling, these shows and somber-type music just make for a comforting environment,” Bautista says.

*The Gilmore Girls* title scene, a fall favorite, and scenery reminiscent of the season. (PC: Jade Suszek (Niner Times))



# COLLEGE INSPO

## UC EDITION

Angelina Li  
Staff Writer

In a survey, 26 students from the class of 2024 shared their major aspirations for the Universities of California. For those unsure about their higher education pathway, you may be inspired by these choices.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
GENERAL BIOLOGY  
PHYSICS  
ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING  
PSYCHOLOGY  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE  
COGNITIVE SCIENCE  
CHEMICAL ENGINEERING  
DESIGN  
ECONOMICS  
MOLECULAR BIOLOGY  
NEUROSCIENCE  
CIVIL ENGINEERING  
APPLIED MATH  
MEDIA STUDIES  
BIOCHEMISTRY  
NURSING  
ACCOUNTING  
DATA SCIENCE



## Veterans Day at American

Understanding the perspectives of teachers who are veterans or have veteran family members

Logan King Staff Writer



Mr. Rojas

Sergeant, Marine Corp, 2000-2013

*How do you think your service in the military has impacted you as a person and your identity?*

"It's one more thing I add to who I am. I am Rafael Rojas. I am a Mexican-American. I am a brother. I am a military veteran. I am a teacher. So it's just another thing that I added on to a long list of things that I'm a part of."

*And building on that. How do you feel your experience with the Marines has impacted your teaching style?*

"One time it made me extremely overconfident, cocky, arrogant, and definitely unreasonable. But I was told repeatedly by some people, I'm not agreeing with all of them, to be a little bit more flexible to understand that high school students are human beings that need to be given a little bit of flexibility. Some part of me says okay, that's true. I can understand that I can give you the flexibility, but another part of me is bothered by that because standards keep going down and I'm a strong believer in keeping standards high no matter what."

Ms. Roberts

Her father served in the Marines from the 1980s-2000

*Is there anything that you wish students or other civilians understood about growing up in a military family or about the military in general?*



"You're going to have friends, a community wherever you go. I am from a small town in eastern North Carolina. And there are people I knew when I was a kid growing up that have been stationed out here in California and been able to come and visit to reconnect with, which is really neat. There are difficulties and sacrifices that come with having a parent who is gone for extended amounts of time. But at the same time, you build this community with these people because they've gone through it as well. So there's a relationship that we have with one another. Maybe it's someone who comes from a military background. You can look them in the eyes and say like, 'Okay, you get it.'"



Mr. McIoy

Lieutenant, Navy, 2006-Present

*What is the best way students can recognize, honor, and show appreciation to veterans such as yourself?*

"A lot of times people will say things clearly out of obligation or guilt, but make sure if you choose to say anything that it's genuine. Visit places like the Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno. The USS Hornet in Alameda also has some real history. It can really help people to look outside their own comfort zone and realize there are people who are doing things for them ... Now, a lot of the Bay Area doesn't want to acknowledge its military history. We're so far inside the castle that we don't even see the walls."

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