



Student injury triggered December AHS lockdown during lunch

Limited information from the school and police, no official info on a suspect

Vrajesh Daga and Logan King | Staff Writers

At 1:30 PM on December 14, 2023, AHS enforced a 10-minute lockdown. As per the Fremont Police Department’s report, officers responded to a medical emergency after a student suffered non-life-threatening injuries. No more information has been revealed to the general public.

Towards the end of lunch, students noticed campus supervisors gathering in the parking lot, followed by police officers and ambulances. Students attempting to eat lunch or go to ROP were turned away by authorities and then a lockdown was instated over the loudspeaker.

Specific details remain unclear. “We saw the paramedics treating the injured student, who was hyperventilating and breathing pretty harshly,” said one witness, who asked that the Era not share their name. “I did see them holding their abdomen on the right side of her stomach. It was slightly bleeding as well. But they were putting bandages over it.”

The presence of police officers and the proceeding lockdown had students and parents alike speculating about the cause of medical attention. The lack of gunshots and the nature of the injury led the witness to believe the injured student was stabbed. Adults on the social media app Nextdoor also claim the injury was a stabbing but, like students, spread numerous rumors and hearsay about how it was caused. Some cite a variety of unvetted sources, including a Tesla camera, unnamed administrators, and unofficial social media police scanner accounts like @scannerfremont on Threads.

Officially, Fremont Police and Fremont Unified School District have yet to make a subsequent press release with more information since December 14. At the time of writing this article, the police report is not



Multiple police cars arrived on the scene in the student parking lot on December 14, 2023, responding to a student’s medical emergency.(PC: Fremont Police Department (CA))

OFFICIALLY, FREMONT POLICE AND FREMONT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT HAVE YET TO MAKE A SUBSEQUENT PRESS RELEASE WITH MORE INFORMATION SINCE DECEMBER 14.

available to the public. This lack of concrete information has caused student and parent gossip to spread, none of which is based on hard facts or evidence and is more akin to a harmful game of telephone. A suspect’s arrest or even their existence has not been confirmed by authorities.

“I think I can understand why the school and police have released so little because they also have limited information,” said Rupert Fong (12). “They don’t want to say something too soon or misinform people. But on the flip side, people don’t know what’s going on and it increases panic.”

Physics teacher Mr. Benn said, “Even us as teachers, we don’t get the full story unless we’re directly involved. We’re not going to get the full story because of privacy and laws of

that sort.”

Social studies teacher Mr. Noori said, “In recent days, schools around the country and people are also more worried about lawsuits and confidentiality.”

While information about the cause of the incident remains uncertain, the resulting lockdown at the end of lunch also lacked clarity for some staff and students. “The school used the same bell that they would use to dismiss us. So I had a hard time distinguishing between it being a malfunction, or a lockdown or any

sort of emergency because we only have one other unique alarm for fire alarms,” said Raghuram Vungutur (11).

Vungutur continued, “The loudspeaker was a little muffled. So I couldn’t fully understand what was going on until everyone got quiet.”

In response to the confusion about what to do, the school required a presentation by all teachers during FLEX the following day about school lockdown procedures.

While Vungutur said the school did a good job of following lockdown protocols, he said, “I think to commence the lockdown, we would need a more unique alarm system. It can’t just be the same bell because the majority of people that I talked with afterward thought it was just a malfunction or something accidentally got tripped.”

Both Mr. Noori and Mr. Benn were at AHS (the former as a student and the latter as a teacher) at the time of a stabbing in 1995. Mr. Benn emphasized the need for student-staff communication to prevent further tragedies from happening at American: “If you see something, say something. If you see something going on that doesn’t feel right, let someone in a position of authority know, a teacher or a counselor, AP, or any adult. Things can be avoided.”



# Seniors face complications with the FAFSA

Changes to the the FAFSA application have affected students' ability to easily access the form; how it has influenced feelings about college applications

Nanki Kaur  
Staff Writer

For the 2024-2025 college application season, the release of the Free Application For Student Aid (FAFSA), which allows students to apply for financial aid, came with several complications, causing anxiety and stress in students across the country.

The FAFSA is released by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) typically in early October and allows students to receive government financial aid when applying to various universities and colleges. The amount of aid that each student is eligible to receive varies depending on a number of factors including family income, size, disabilities, housing situations, and more.

Each state and university has its own deadlines for the FAFSA application, making it crucial that students complete the form before the deadline for each school that they apply for.

Under the FAFSA Simplification Act, the form was adjusted to create a more accessible experience for users, and was soft launched in December of 2023 and opened intermittently to “monitor site performance.” In attempting to regulate the errors that would inevitably arise with the implementation of new changes to the form, the DOE has put in place a waiting room to “control website volumes,” which proves less “optimal” for users than expected.

“Waiting for it to open and having to ask friends and college students about how to answer some questions makes it feel a little annoying. But, I still think it's important to give aid fairly, and it is helpful despite the difficulties in applying,” said Sejal Zope (12) when asked about her feelings towards the waiting period.

Several students reported facing issues even logging into

their accounts, especially critical when each school has a different deadline.

“I applied to a school with the FAFSA deadline of January 12th, yet my account had not even been approved by then. Although schools state that it's okay if the FAFSA applications arrive later than the deadline, a sense of urgency is always present in not being ‘too late,’” Saransh Jain (12) said.

He added, “It opened at a time when the majority of high school seniors were on winter break, so the amount of support they were able to receive while completing the application was very limited.”

Major changes to the form, including a reduced number of questions and a removed

sibling discount, combined with the rough release have been met with mixed reactions.

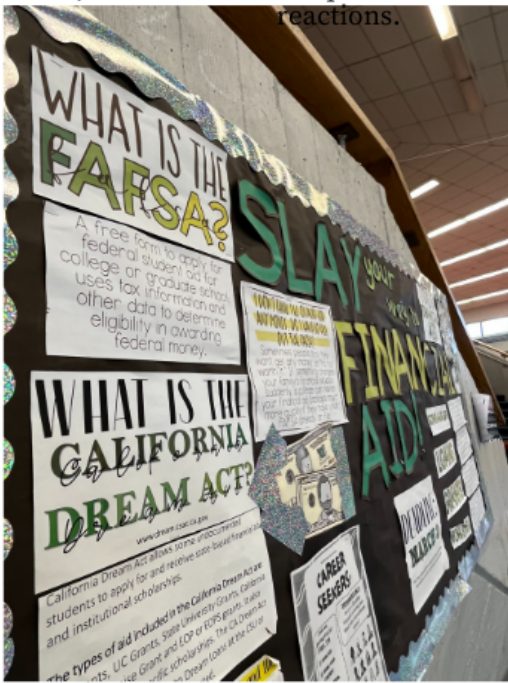
Marcus Yu (12), found that fewer questions made it easier for his family to navigate the form. “It's a lot of information, but I think it's not hard because

there aren't that many questions.”

Students like Zope have remained positive despite the hurdles that modifications to the form have created for students.

“I honestly think the entire college application process is a bit tedious and stressful, but at the end of the day, it's necessary to go through and the results will be worth it.”

**“But, I still think it's important to give aid fairly, and it is helpful despite the difficulties in applying” Sejal Zope (12).**



A financial aid informational board in the Rotunda. (PC: Nanki Kaur (11))

# San Francisco Board of Supervisors call for ceasefire, urgent humanitarian aid to Gaza

The city follows Richmond and Oakland in adopting ceasefire resolutions

Emaan Irfan  
Staff Writer

On January 9th, San Francisco became the largest U.S. city urging President Biden and Congress to send humanitarian aid and call for an extended ceasefire in Gaza with the release of all hostages in the region. The resolution was passed in an 8-3 vote in a compromise proposed by Aaron Peskin, president of the Board of Supervisors.

Supervisor Dean Preston and Hillary Ronen introduced the original resolution in December. The resolution, per Peskin's revisions, is now trimmed and includes language condemning Hamas and the Israeli government's attacks on civilians.

“All human life is precious, and the targeting of civilians is a violation of international humanitarian law,” the resolution reads.

In an interview before the vote, Preston stated that local politicians should speak up because people who are affected cannot make their voices heard in Congress. “Everyone is feeling this locally, the pain and the grief and loss. It is a major issue not just in the daily lives of people in the Middle East, but in the daily lives of people in our city,” he told the Associated Press.

Oakland unanimously passed a similar resolution, joining Richmond, Cudahy, and Long Beach. Other California cities have not followed suit. At a Berkeley City Council meeting, hundreds of people came to express their concerns and call for a resolution. The ceasefire proposals were scheduled for consideration, but were ultimately withdrawn.

Protesters calling for a ceasefire recently shut down traffic on a major bridge into San Francisco during the APEC summit, and the California Democratic Party recently canceled some events at its fall convention due to demonstrations.

“This is an issue that's touching the lives of thousands of San Francisco residents,” said Lara Kiswani, executive director of the Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC) to the San Francisco Chronicle. “The U.S. has the power to end this genocide — it could end today. If the Biden administration is failing to listen to the (nearly) 80% of Democratic voters calling for a cease-fire, of course, we'll look to local elected officials to show that San Francisco doesn't support this.”

On January 1st, protestors gathered outside Nancy Pelosi's San Francisco home. “We're asking for an end to funding for Israel's military machine and we'd like (Speaker Emerita Pelosi) to commit to really investing those billions of dollars here at home because people are hurting, people are sleeping out on the street here in San Francisco,” said protestor Cayden Mak to ABC News.

Some officials are expressing doubts about the effectiveness of such resolutions. “These resolutions will not end the violence abroad, but they do fan the flames of hatred here at home.” Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin said before a city council meeting. “That's a threat I cannot ignore.”

In her statement, San Francisco Mayor London Breed said, “Let me be clear: what happened at the Board of Supervisors does not speak for or on behalf of the entire city. I don't think any statement of resolution can do that. Our people do that. Our values do that.”

The Bay Area Jewish Community Relations Council and other groups are calling on the mayor to veto the resolution. An official clerk for the board confirmed to The San Francisco Standard that Breed returned the resolution unsigned. It will go into effect without her support.



San Francisco Supervisor Dean Preston and Supervisor Hillary Ronen at City Hall, alongside supporters after their cease-fire resolution was approved (PC: Beth LaBerge, KQED).



# Berkeley protests erupt as community unites to preserve People's Park

Advocates demand preservation amidst UC housing development plans

Amrita Venkatesh | Staff Writer

On January 4th, UC Berkeley initiated its plan to construct housing for unhoused undergraduate students in the city’s renowned People’s Park. Though the proposal was unveiled in 2018, after repeated back-and-forth conflict between the university and the city’s community, the school closed off streets surrounding the park to seize control of it and began construction in early January.

Since the early 60s, when UC Berkeley’s students united to combat political activity on campus in the city’s Free Speech Movement, and when the city’s residents came together to lay sod, plant trees, and build the park, People’s Park has served as a cornerstone of counterculture, primarily bringing refuge to unhoused people.

“The people in the Free Speech Movement took the fight to People’s Park. This pushed people to fight for open space so people could expand their focus, be able to communicate with each other, and be able to think in a greater environment,” said Aidan Hill, a former student of the university, former Vice-Chair of Berkeley’s Homeless Commission, and one of the city’s electoral candidates. “People have made so many memories over the last 54 years that the city and UC are trying to demolish.”

Lin-Rachel Altman, a longtime city resident, shares this sentiment. “It’s a space to

come together. It represents democracy,” she told *The San Francisco Standard*.

In an official statement, the school addressed those currently seeking shelter in the park by claiming the plan aims to service the needs of and provide supportive, permanent housing for more than 100 unhoused or low-income people. Dan Mogulof, Assistant Vice Chancellor of the school, told *The San Francisco Chronicle*, “The plans for People’s Park are a part of a broader housing initiative.” He continued, “We believe that the plans for the park not only align with the founding ideals of the park but represent a unique win-win-win in the community.”

Some community members, like Hill, believe there are faults in the university’s plan for simultaneous housing for students and the park’s homeless residents. They told the *Chronicle*, “The problem with those designs is that the people at the park won’t be housed in the housing development. It displaces the community.”

Many students have reasons to support the housing plan. “UC Berkeley houses the lowest percentage of students of any of the UC campuses,” Mogulof said. The university claims that the construction of the 17-story building would provide necessary housing and better amenities to over 1,100 undergraduate students.

The push for more and better student housing has inevitably captured student interest. A survey conducted by the school in May 2022 revealed that student support for the plan had reached a

growing two-to-one margin.

Kashvi Bhatia, currently enrolled at UC Berkeley and an alum of American High (2023), said, “It’s true Berkeley has an extreme housing crisis. Obviously, students want better housing. At this point, many students, including myself, have two other roommates and are forced into a double with really old facilities.”

Bhatia added, “At the end of the day, people are living in the park. It’s not fair to remove people if they aren’t given some sort of alternative.”

Of various options for alternative construction sites, one particularly stands out to Hill. “The Chancellor’s mansion, called University House, is the site I believe is the most important one to advocate for building student housing on. Not only is it vacant, but the Chancellor told me herself that she only wants to use it for parties and events.” They added, “The idea of having a mansion sitting empty while you’re trying to destroy a park that’s beloved by thousands of people is the highlight of the contradiction we’re facing.”

Nevertheless, Hill emphasizes that the fight for preservation is overwhelmingly rooted in maintaining pride and resilience. “We’re here because we want to save the park. It’s not because we don’t have anywhere else to go. It’s because People’s Park is our home,” Hill told *CBS News*.



Students seen protesting the university’s student housing plan at People’s Park. (PC: Beth LaBerge/KQED)





# Why students are inflexible about FLEX

*FLEX is an incredibly productive tool for students and the school*

**Hana Balderrama | Staff Writer**

In early January, the FLEX committee released a survey for students to indicate the main usage of FLEX, worrying numerous students that it could spark the limiting of FLEX. FLEX is an important part of school, benefiting students academically and mentally, helping students develop time management skills, and encouraging productivity.

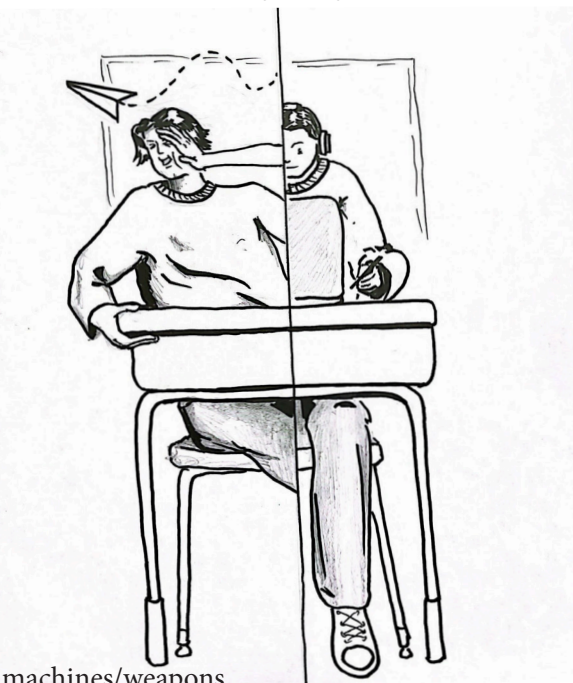
Many students utilize FLEX to work on homework and classwork, as it is time to complete academic work during school without getting even more assignments. Prajacta Bagayatkar (12) stated, “I mostly use it to do my homework or any extra-curricular things I need to catch up on, instead of staying up to do it at home [because] I like to sleep at one o’clock at night and not three.”

Additionally, during FLEX, students can meet with teachers and work with fellow students on group projects. “I’ve done quite a few French group projects and used FLEX for it. And it’s very useful when people can’t meet outside of class. It helps everybody meet up and finish things,” said Natalie Renée Schoymer (11), “[and] if FLEX was taken away or limited, I would have to do over an hour of homework a night at home, which would greatly affect me because I wouldn’t have as much time to get stuff done. And my sleep schedule would be pushed back which I was just able to get in check. And I wouldn’t be able to commit as much time to my extracurriculars and sports.”

FLEX is also used as a mental health break, something that some individuals view as unproductive. Whether taking a power nap, recharging your social

battery, or even socializing with friends, a period between rigorous classes is necessary if students want to avoid burnout. With a Wellness Center and Social Emotional Learning curriculum to build a support system in the school, mental health time needs to be validated and accepted. How each person manages their mental health is unique and often goes beyond the 15 minutes in the Well Center or a quick SEL activity; FLEX is a perfect opportunity to decompress during school, for those who need it. Students are allowed to (and should) be more than academic

(PC: Logan King (12))



machines/weapons.

“I think mental health with FLEX, it’s why many people are against it because they say that ‘Oh, people waste time.’ But sometimes you need

to waste time to not go crazy – you need time to destress. FLEX is a block of time to be productive or just calm down from all the stress you’re going through because it’s high school. I see seniors sleeping and stuff and I know they’re up all night doing their college apps or work. Prioritizing your mental health is productive,” said Bagayatkar.

The most cited reason for the limiting of FLEX is the inappropriate usage of it, such as socializing with friends, sleeping, and working on non-school related things. However, “when people are socially connected, they are more likely to make healthy choices and to have better mental and physical health,” according to the CDC. With sports, multiple clubs, and homework from six teachers, students have little time to interact with their friends and take a break. The FLEXibility that comes with FLEX specifically empowers students to make the best decisions for themselves, in their distinctive situation. Time management is a key skill in college, as students must juggle their social and academic lives, while also setting up their careers. With FLEX students can make trade-offs – decisions that they could not make in class – whether it is studying for an important test next week, completing homework, or taking a break to breathe, students have the freedom to adapt this period to what they need it to be.

Limiting FLEX disempowers students academically, socially, and mentally, but mainly by taking away the little independence and freedom students have. The 53 minutes between first/second and third/fourth period is the most powerful asset American High School has.

## The Deadline Dilemma

*Students’ issues with the 10pm assignment deadlines and why it should be changed*

**Ella Knickerbocker | Staff Writer**

Imagine coming home from three hours of an intense track practice, absolutely dripping in sweat, your stomach rumbling with a ferocious hunger, and on top of that, having daunting anxiety over an assignment due that night. Interrupting your night routine most inconveniently is the 10 pm homework deadline. You have to put off eating and showering in favor of rushing through a demanding assignment, not having enough time to put actual effort and thought into it. The early deadline does nothing to help procrastination and is an ineffective attempt by teachers at getting students to sleep earlier as they will submit the assignment at hand, and then turn their attention to the work from six other classes that are equally as taxing.

This is not a fictional description: this is Madeleine Willeyerd’s (12) daily routine. The time and commitment she needs for athletics requires her to forfeit precious homework time. “I think the 10 pm due date is unrealistic for student-athletes because [it] makes a greater impact on the completion and the accuracy of any assignment needed to be turned in,” Willeyerd stated, “I run cross country [along with] track and field [and] practice usually ends around 5 or 6 depending on where we meet. Since we don’t have a track [at our school] we have to go all the way to Tak which takes up more time for me. When I finally finish and go home I am exhausted; my [only] thoughts are to eat dinner and shower.”

The mutual hatred over the 10 pm deadline is not exclusive to athletes but applies to anyone participating in extracurricular activities. “I

think that the 10 pm deadlines add a lot of stress to students with after-school activities. When something is given during or after class and is due 10 that day it becomes an issue. For example, my rehearsals usually last till about 6, so I don’t get home until 6:30. Then I’ll need to eat, shower, get dressed, reset a bit and it’ll be around 8 by the time I’m finished. Having so little time to start and finish homework from multiple classes can stress me out, making it harder to finish due to panicked thinking and lowered motivation,” expressed Jarod Reyes (12).

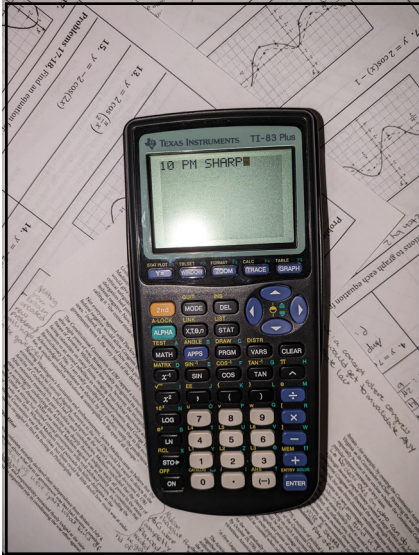
If students have such strife with the 10 pm deadline, then why is it so popular among teachers and what do they wish to achieve by plaguing students with this annoyance?

“Knowing that students procrastinate, [the teachers] know that if we implement the 11:59 pm deadline, we are setting students up to stay awake until at least midnight to complete assignments.” Ms. Luong commented, “Whereas with the 10 pm deadline, even if you procrastinate, you’re done by 10 and can go to bed. That being said, if you have after-school activities, obviously that time frame is extremely tight. Still, I am fond of the 10 pm rule because not all students are doing extracurriculars, so it does force them to sleep earlier.”

A common myth believed among teachers is that assigning earlier deadlines forces students to go to bed earlier. This couldn’t be more incorrect. Students will sacrifice their sleep in favor of studying, completing other assignments due the next day, or scrolling mindlessly on social media. As much as teachers try to interfere with students’ lives outside of school, they can not change

a student’s sleeping habits. Yet, if teachers feel the need to make a deadline at 10 pm I at least ask that they keep an open mind like Ms. Luong who said, “Personally, I just ask students to come and let me know if they have something preventing them from achieving the 10 pm deadline, and I will grant them an extension.”

The response to the 10 pm deadline is negative, with complaints of no free time, no time to put thought or effort into assignments, and is ultimately a reflection of the school system failing its students. Teachers need to understand that moving the deadline earlier in the night does not inspire students to go to bed earlier but stresses them out more. Letting students have until the next class period to turn things in—contrary to the 10 pm deadline—allows for more thought and consideration to be put into assignments, bettering the quality and understanding of schoolwork.



The average mountain of homework a student has to rush through in such little time. (PC: Ella Knickerbocker (12))



# Wiping Away the Concealer on Sephora Kids

Analyzing the misbehavior of “Sephora Kids” and how they are misunderstood by older generations

Mylo Herzog | Staff Writer

Drunk Elephant, Sol De Janeiro, and “self-care smoothies,” all to prevent wrinkles and maintain perfect, porcelain skin. But for a 10 year old? Scrolling through endless amounts of TikToks, you have probably stumbled across Sephora workers and customers complaining about young girls and preteens rampaging and ransacking the makeup and skincare displays, and even harassing workers and customers alike.

When asked about what experiences Simrun Sarn (12) has heard about from peers, she says, “They’ve been ruining everything. They’re mixing all the products together at the store, and making messes. It’s disrespectful to the employees.”

Alongside the employees’ horror stories, verbal harassments are shot towards the customers. “I almost fought with a 10 year-old for a rare beauty lip oil and she called me a slur,” Sephora frequenter, Ashya Yin (12), says.

These Sephora 10 year-olds are notoriously deemed as spoiled, inconsiderate, and concerning for what the future generations could become. Yet watching these stories and finding the common threads between them makes one wonder if they are the ones to blame. Maybe they aren’t the hellspawns we perceive them to be.

While the actions of these girls are inexcusable, they should not be faulted for their behavior and want to own all the products that they simply do not need. “These kids are exposed to influencers talking about makeup,” Sarn says. “The way they discover these things is because their parents are letting them to their own devices.”

This begs the question of why parents may remain a bystander in the wake of makeup mayhems. “Most of

“Parents will just let their kids walk all over them. Being a doormat for your kids isn’t parenthood,” Sarn says. “It’s neglect.”

this generation is raised by Gen X and Millennials who were often shunned or strictly parented by boomer parents,” Yin says. “It’s likely they’re putting in efforts to not repeat the cycle of their parents. Victims of Sephora Kids suspect that these generations’ parenting styles do not help children form respectful behaviors. “They allow their kids to do whatever they want to shut up. They’re not teaching their kids common decency,” Sarn says.

Because of the lack of guidance and structure, these kids act out because their grasp on any consequences they could face is underdeveloped. “Parents will just let their kids walk all over them. Being a doormat for your kids isn’t parenthood,” Sarn says. “It’s neglect.”

What comes with this push-over style of parenting is negligence. Most parents will resort to using phones and tablets to distract their kids. “They give kids iPads so they won’t bother them, and having unrestricted access to the internet introduces kids to content that isn’t suitable for their age range,” Sarn says.

Technology and content creators are raising these young girls, not their parents. “The content a child indulges in affects their behavior, morals, and self-esteem.” Yin says. “Not monitoring the media your child intakes can give them misaligned ideas because they’re easily influenced at that age.” Ideologies from older content creators nurture these children, molding their self perception and the way they present themselves to the world.

Behind the layers of Drunk Elephant and concealer, “Sephora Gremlins” are simply just kids. Kids who have not been provided with healthy discipline, kids that have been raised by influencers in the beauty industry that preach superficiality, and kids who have no place to go. “Especially because of the pandemic, everyone is reliant on social media for entertainment, so everyone just stays inside to go on their devices. Not only is it the parents, but it’s society’s dependence on the internet. So, it makes sense that kids have nowhere else to go,” Sarn says.

In many ways, we as a society are a part of this problem. Influencer culture in the beauty industry finds its ways onto screens of young girls, encouraging them to be like their favorite content creators. “I think the media, especially towards young girls, pushes a standard for them to be socially accepted,” Yin says. “You can’t be too young because you can’t be sexualized or marketed, and you can’t be too old because you’ll be undesirable, and this idea is fed to easily-influenced kids.”

Even at their young ages, the aspiration to follow the trends that the influencers and crowds spread is always prevalent. “Maybe these girls come off as rude and spoiled because that’s how we perceive them to be,” Yin says. “Being seen as cool and fitting in is an important aspect for kids around this age, and it feels like a lot of pressure that it drives them to act out.”

Our societal ideologies of beauty and misunderstanding of the younger generation is a problem, but our urges to better understand and help guide them can be a solution. “It’s important to reassure younger generations that it’s okay to be young. I’m not saying restricting social media is the answer,” Yin continues, “But, guiding these kids, being more firm, and bringing awareness to what it can cause is important.”



Malaya Cruz (12) poses as the typical Generation Alpha girl, enamored by the Sephora and Ulta Beauty bags. (PC: Mylo Herzog (12))





Ryan Gosling



Britney Zaw (She/Her) (12)  
"Men usually do not serve, but the women literally slay. I just wish Ryan Gosling wore something more colorful, or accessorized more, but he looks like some background character, even though he starred in such a colorful movie."

Ian Budiman (He/Him) (11)  
"This Dolce dress is not conventionally attractive, because it cuts between multiple styles of dresses so harshly. Like a prom dress to wedding lace dress, to a very structured black dress."



Fantasia Barrino

Grace Wei (She/Her) (12)  
"She actually looks pretty good but, I don't know why on Earth mermaid tails are back now. It's not even a proper mermaid. It's like a knee length mermaid. Why is she wearing the equivalent of a trash bag on the bottom? Who does this flatter?"



Dua Lipa

Aniya Badal  
Angelina Li  
Alayna Leong  
Fern Tigri  
Mylo Herzog  
Staff Writers



Sarah Snook

Crow Zhao (Any pronouns) (11)  
"I think her dress looks unfinished because of all the sheeriness in the fabric. You can see her legs through the skirt. The top part of it looks very lazily put together. What is it trying to be? A top? A bra? It's unflattering. I'd make her dress opaque and bind the lace together with basic fabrics because there's so many different kinds of laces."



Mr. Elam (Nominated for: Best teacher, Most Comfortable Classroom, Best Classroom Environment, Mom)

"It's incredibly flattering. I think that one of these is definitely deserving and I think three of these are absolutely not. I'll let you pick. But that's incredibly flattering to even be considered. And shout out to all of the wonderful students who made this nomination possible."



Mr. Stephou (Nominated for: Best teacher, Most Comfortable Classroom, Best Classroom Environment, Mom)

"Thank you! . . . from . . ."

Mrs. Martin (Nominated for: Most Entertaining, Most Likely to be a Stand-up Comedian, Most Intimidating)

"This is very exciting, and my third freshman agree very much!"

Brief History

In 1944, an informal awards ceremony for Hollywood successes led to wins of numerous Academy Honors and Best Film. As the ceremony grew, statuette winners, the ceremony winners. Currently, awards range from 2 (for best picture). The legacy of the Golden Globes.

81st Golden Globes

Lily Gladstone was named best actress for her role in Killers of the Moon (Blackfeet and Nez Perce heritage) to win the award. she gave a powerful speech to her community with her speech. speaking about the Indigenous woman back in 1973 faced discrimination.

To understand the significance of Gladstone's win (and the first Indigenous woman back in 1973 faced discrimination. At the 45th Academy Awards. Sacheen Littlefeather on behalf of Native Americans won the award due to how the film industry treated the Indigenous people.

Littlefeather for advocating for Native Americans. Ali Wong also became the first actress of Asian descent to win Best Actress for her role in the Netflix series Beef. Wong, both of Vietnamese descent, deserved representation to her community, a step away from microaggressions and outright racism in some Hollywood circles. Steven Yuen became the second actor of Asian descent to win Best Actor in a limited series, also in Beef. Notably, Yuen is the first full Asian American to win, but half-white Darren Criss was the first Asian American to win the 76th Golden Globes.

Rather than a clearly failed "joke." Koy goes on to give a powerful monologue. Koy's hosting proved to be a turning point needed regarding diversity in Hollywood.



History

ceremony for the film industry's  
ental titles such as Best Actress  
ony shifted from handing out scrolls to  
ncreased the number of categories and thus  
7 categories (13 in Television, 14 in motion  
obes now reaches its 81st celebration.

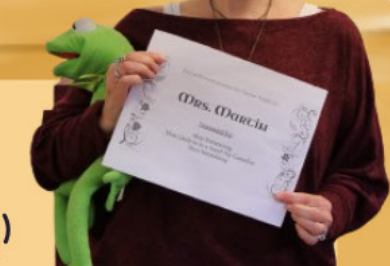
Historic Wins

lers of the Flower Moon. As the first Indigenous  
took her time to embrace her cultural roots and  
ing in Blackfeet language.  
nd standing ovation received), another young  
a starkly different reaction.  
lf of Marlon Brando (of The Godfather) refused  
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Koy went from poking fun  
at Oppenheimer's longer  
screenplay to describing  
the Barbie film as based on "a  
plastic doll with big boobies."  
missing entirely the point of women being  
more than just their body.  
n taking accountability for his  
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han (Nominated  
g a Homie, Most  
ll teacher)

.Who is this  
a?"



period

Hit Cinema of 2023  
+ Anticipated Movies  
of 2024

Contro-  
versies

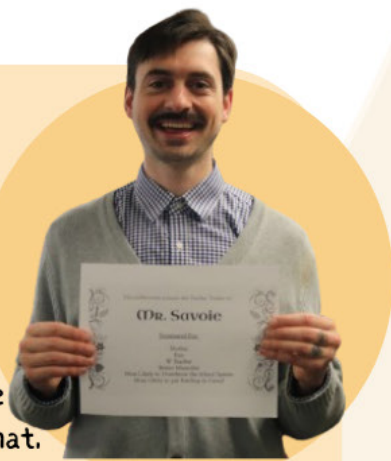
Jo Koy was the  
second Asian  
host of the awards  
show (following Sandra  
Oh), and his crowd  
was more than displeased  
with his "humor."

Koy went from poking fun  
at Oppenheimer's longer  
screenplay to describing

the Barbie film as based on "a  
plastic doll with big boobies."  
missing entirely the point of women being  
more than just their body.

Mr. Savoie (Nominated for:  
Mother, Ken, W teacher, Benito  
Mussolini, Most Likely to  
Overthrow the School System,  
Most Likely to put Ketchup in  
Cereal)

"All of this rings so true. The last one  
though... I don't get it. I haven't tried that.  
but that doesn't mean I'm not the most  
likely to do it. I've been called Mother at least once. I don't  
know about Ken. Never been called Benito Mussolini before.  
but I do like trains that run on time. Truthfully, I'm  
honored. This is an extensive list. I feel like I [get] to  
put this in a place of prominence."



Chef Dennis (Nominated for: Being a  
Homie, Funniest Guy Ever, Most  
Interesting Recipes, Best Music Taste,  
Funniest Spouse Stories)

"Thank you!"



Rishaan Joshi (11)

The Holdovers (Oct 27 2023)

"We watch [an] incredible trio. We  
follow them as they live through a  
week of Christmas Break and they  
all kind of learn to get along with  
each other. It's basically just  
cinematic hot chocolate."

Nour Adham (10)

The Conjuring 4:  
Last Rites (Release Date  
Unknown)

"I've watched all the previous ones  
and I really enjoyed them. I am a  
big fan of horror movies!"

Sukha Yang (12)

Mean Girls (Jan 12 2024)

I'm really looking forward to the  
musicality, and I really like the  
actor who portrays the main  
character."

The  
Holdovers

THE  
BOY  
AND  
THE  
HERON

THE  
IRON  
CLAW

MEAN  
GIRLS

THE  
CONJURING  
LAST RITES



# Kiratraj Sanghera makes history on the hardwood

AHS basketball’s starting center becomes the school’s all-time points leader

Daniel Davis | Staff Writer

On December 27th, 2023, against the Orland Trojans, Kiratraj Sanghera (12) scored his 1,000th career point in an American Jersey. Just a month later, January 24th, against Newark Memorial, Sanghera became American’s all-time leading scorer.

Ed Villatoro, American Basketball’s Varsity coach and Sanghera’s coach for 3 years, said, “The record right now is 1211 points. That’s a record that has stood since 1990, so that’ll be a huge accomplishment for him to reach that.”

Having broken this record against Newark, Sanghera said in a postgame interview, “All the hard work is finally paying off and I’m proud of myself.”

Additionally, Sanghera broke the single season scoring record for a sophomore athlete while averaging 14 points per game. He followed this by averaging 18 points per game and breaking the single season scoring record for a junior athlete.

For Sanghera, high school achievements are just the beginning. “My head coach came up to me and said it was a great accomplishment, but he knows there’s more to come, we still have games to go. So he told me he was proud of me and he was like, ‘keep your head down and keep grinding and there’s more to come.’”

For now, more to come may mean team success. “My personal goals are similar to my team goals. We really want to make playoffs. We haven’t

made playoffs since 2013,” said Sanghera. “Mind-set wise, just whatever it takes to get the team to win. Just go into the game with the mentality like just do whatever to win. Whether that is going out and scoring a bunch, or maybe I go out there and I do other things like rebound, play defense, pass the ball.”

Both team success and individual scoring can only be achieved through teamwork. “Jordan Bucko (12), Sahaj Bahia (12). I met them when I was in fifth grade, and I’ve been playing with them and they’ve just been sticking with me,” said Sanghera. “a lot of chemistry, especially with Jordan. We know each other’s roles on the court.”

Bucko, a longtime teammate of Sanghera’s said, “[team chemistry] makes a big difference. We know each other’s strengths and weaknesses and we use that to our advantage on the court, being able to put ourselves in positions to score and help our team win.”

Villatoro agreed, “it’s a wonderful individual accomplishment. But for him to score that many points, the players have to look for him and get him the basketball, set screens to get him open. So even though he’s scoring the points, it’s a team effort to get him in that position.”

Ravneet Sanghera, a former American student, who attends games to support her brother, said, “I feel like his sportsmanship has gotten really good over the past three years. If [his teammates]

make a mistake, he’s always going to be there to give them a pat on the back and I feel like that’s something that’s really needed to keep a team together.”

Bucko said of Kiratraj’s support, “He’s been with me through the worst days and the best days. He works so hard, gives me motivation to do better as well. He’s allowed me to become the player that I am today.”

Kiratraj’s actions have not gone unnoticed by his coaching staff. “To be a leader out on the basketball court, if you learn those skills now, you can apply those skills later on in life,” said Villatoro. “And it’s going to pay off for him later when he gets to college and becomes a young man, and goes into the working world.”

Playing against Newark Memorial, American’s all-time leading scorer Kiratraj Sanghera (12) rises over three defenders. AHS Varsity Boys Basketball head coach Ed Villatoro said of his time coaching Kiratraj, “It’s been an amazing experience, his outstanding attitude just makes it really easy to coach and his effort, just overall positive energy makes him a great person to coach” (PC: Daniel Davis (11)).



# The Streak is Over: American Boys Varsity Basketball Finally Defeats Logan

Game coverage of American Boys Basketball’s rivalry matchup vs Logan

The streak is over. Defeating James Logan for the first time in eighteen years, the American High School Varsity Basketball capped off the “White-out” event with a 67-60 win.

Two days after Kiratraj Sanghera (12) notched the all-time scoring leader record for American Boys Varsity Basketball, the Eagles had a brilliant opportunity to secure the elusive win against James Logan.

“In practice, we have been playing more live basketball—five on five, four on fours, and one on ones,” said Aaron Tai (11).

With tonight’s win against Logan, American has five games left to hold off surging Kennedy and make a move on second-place Washington. Their standing in MVAL will play a pivotal role in their qualification and subsequent seeding in the NCS playoffs.

“The expectation going into this game is that the game will be a dogfight,” said Jeffery Wu (11). “It is one of Logan’s worst years and we have to capitalize on that,” Tai added.

And capitalize they did. Early in the first quarter, American went on a strong run, going up by ten points. However, Logan fought back, ending the quarter with a small lead.

In the early stages of the second quarter, both teams played extremely tight defense. But with about four minutes remaining in the half, the floodgates opened. Turnovers and excellent shooting fueled strong runs from both teams that brought the Eagles to a 26-25 lead with two

minutes remaining in the quarter.

American possessed the ball at the end of the half with a golden opportunity to take a six-point lead, but an erratic pass prevented last-second points. At the half American led Logan 29-25.

American built off their second-quarter success, coming out fluid on offense and hitting multiple three-pointers on a run that took them up by 11 points. It seemed like finally, all the live basketball from practice translated.

With their best chance to beat Logan in over a decade, the Eagles took a three-point lead into the fourth quarter. If they were going to win, their stars would have to shine. And in his first full game as American’s all-time leading scorer, there was no bigger star than Sanghera.

Cheered on by a raucous home crowd on spirit night, American inched closer and closer to the elusive win. Strong defense and timely shooting gave the Eagles a 62-55 lead with mere minutes remaining.

And their stars came through in a big way. Sanghera put up ten points in the fourth quarter and sprung multiple breaks with blocked shots and steals. Jordan Bucko, in ultimate control, hit a clutch three pointer and went three-for-four on free throws. In the final seconds, he fought through the content of two desperate Logan defenders and iced the game. The eighteen-year- long streak was finally snapped. The Eagles, with the help of their stars, won the dogfight. Final Score: American 67 - Logan 60.

American watches on as Jayden Smith scores a free throw to make it a 59-55 game with 2 minutes remaining. (PC: Rohan Bhagra (11))



Rohan Bhagra | Staff Writer



# AHS Seniors take on the college application process head-on

Advice for lowerclassmen on the college application process

Royden Liang | Staff Writer

As the first semester of the school year ends, so do college applications for seniors at American High. Along with the completion of the application process are many lessons learned; lessons that can be passed down to lowerclassmen anticipating this defining event in their lives.

Sanika Sharma (12), who got into early decisions for Cornell, says, “We had this fear that we weren’t going to get into any good schools, and it was kind of you shoot as many shots as you can and pray that one of them works out. I applied to more than 20, which was just way too much.”

The first part of the process is choosing which colleges to apply to, and campus visits can be a major factor in deciding. Luke Viñas, who applied to the U.S. Naval Academy, said, “Try to visit as many campuses as you can. You wouldn’t really want to go there if you can’t see yourself [going there]. Maybe the school in Arizona is freaking hot all the time. If you don’t like the hot weather, why would you go there?”

The essay was the most challenging aspect of Sharma’s applications. “I was most stressed about writing all these essays. Just don’t try to overthink it. What to you might seem like a big deal is not that big of a deal to the person reading your essay.” Viñas suggested, “Don’t be afraid to let your personality shine through in that application. You can use whatever kind of language you want to express who you are as a person. Don’t be shy.”

As for how to approach the essay, Viñas recalled, “You have to know what you want to write about before you actually start writing. In the beginning I just started writing random stuff, because I didn’t know what to write about yet. But once I locked on to exactly what I wanted to write about, everything started to flow.”

Just as important as the essays are extracurriculars to beef up your transcript. Viñas, who is part of the marching band as well as the wrestling team, said “Being in extracurriculars in general made me more confident.”

For Sharma, extracurriculars were not always related to her major: “Even though I’m majoring in STEM, I think some of my most meaningful extracurriculars were non-STEM,” Sharma recalled. “When you’re writing your extracurriculars, it’s a list, but when you’re writing your essays, that’s when you actually have to talk about what is meaningful to you.”

Recommendation letters, the last part of the process, were mostly uncomplicated. Sharma initially stated that she had not faced any challenges. However, she soon recalled, “For some schools you need to look into the website. Even if it says one teacher rec and one counselor rec, look into the website, because for specific majors or specific colleges within the university it needs to be a math teacher or it needs to be a science teacher.”

Viñas was required to get a letter from a senator or president, as part of his application to the Naval Academy. He stated, “It’s a pretty straightforward process. It’s a whole nother application that you have to do. Since my dad is in the military, I get the option of doing a presidential nomination which is an easier process.”

As Viñas finished up his applications and began the transition to college, he took a lesson learned from high school, advising, “Know when things are due and how much time you have to do it. [Keep] on top of everything, have a schedule.”

Sharma gave some parting advice for other high schoolers anticipating the application process: “Do something that you’re passionate about, and try to balance your time,” Sharma stated. “Not everything you do has to be what colleges want. I think that you should kind of focus on what you actually enjoy, instead of a checklist that you’re trying to check.”

Viñas reflected on his high school experience, saying “Don’t try to rush things. Enjoy your time. You don’t know when it’s just gonna end, because...it’s gone by super fast.” As for applications, Viñas stated, “You got it. It’s not that hard. Just do it.”

# Behind the “Sea-nes” with The Little Mermaid

American students in the recent StarStruck production of *The Little Mermaid* show us “Part of Their World” onstage

Malaya Cruz | Staff Writer

“My British accent is atrocious. For the imitation of a British accent, it’s atrocious, but it’s funny for the stage. It does its purpose because though Grimsby is a proper [character] he is comedic relief in the show,” said Jai Kaushik (12).

From January 12-28, StarStruck, a professional youth theatre company based in Fremont, held nine shows for a live musical adaptation of the hit movie, *The Little Mermaid*. Senior Jai Kaushik plays Grimsby, Prince Eric’s right-hand advisor, and performed onstage with fellow American students, AJ Torrado (12) and Benjamin Chen (10).

Torrado in particular had high hopes before the production initially started, and was eager to relish the opportunity of participating in a highly-regarded musical.

“Obviously, it’s a cult classic. Since everyone knows the songs, you’re mainly breaking out into songs, like ‘Under the Sea,’ everything like that,” said Torrado.

Despite being unseen by the audience, students continue to express their love for the show through song and dance backstage—a reflection of the infectious passion that comes with being a part of the musical experience.

“Honestly, it’s less of the performing and more of the experience of putting on a production that is so insanely awesome. Performing is fun and all, but with this show, for me it’s not even about being on stage. It’s about—because backstage we have these little screens that show us what’s happening on stage—watching that and being like wow.”

Acting in a production of this scale even allows actors to leap boundaries by transforming into characters that in no way represent their “ordinary” selves.

“[Performing] allows me to do stuff that I wouldn’t normally do as AJ myself; it lets me be a different person. For example, for *The Little Mermaid*, I get to be a hot crustacean. I wouldn’t consider myself a hot crustacean, but, you know, you have to learn how to play that role.”

Transforming into characters, such as this “hot crustacean,” not only allows performers like Torrado to grow, but aids others in their personal developments. Take, for instance, the unified environment he is able to craft with his fellow castmates.

“It’s mainly little kids and being an older kid, you get the chance to guide them. They’re always going up to you for questions or trying to just understand how life is as older teenagers.”

And, of course, the relationship between the performers and the audience is one that is unparalleled. There is an inimitable reward that blossoms mutually between the audience and the performer, where performers’ artistic talents are gifted with heart-felt emotions from viewers.

“When I did *Freaky Friday*, two years ago, my first ever musical, my heart would be pounding, shaking—I wouldn’t be able to move. As you do it more, obviously there’s still going to be nervous[ness], but you look out into the crowd and it’s less anxiety and fear and more just enjoying the moment,” says Torrado. “For

*The Little Mermaid*, you see lots of kids in the crowd, and when you see them clapping, when you see all their reactions, it makes you smile. Everything’s genuine.”

Divya Eashwar, a sophomore, is one of several lucky students from American who had a chance to experience the stand-out production, and observed the determined perseverance the AHS students exhibited through their performances.

“If you want to act, it’s inspiring to see someone that you know who’s from your school onstage. Jai was on the stage for most of the [show] and it was his first ever StarStruck production,” Eashwar said. “It shows that you don’t need so much experience. You just need to practice and want to do it—you put your mind to it, you can do everything.”

However, the performing arts scene in our Bay Area communities remains unknown to many. Kaushik advises unknowing locals to seek out local theatres and musicals in order for them to get the recognition they so rightfully deserve.

“Go watch them—a lot of people don’t know they exist, even me in particular. For somebody that’s done theater for four years, I didn’t know StarStruck existed until about a year and a half ago, which is insane given how massive and impressive they are,” says Kaushik. “Once people watch the shows, the general consensus I’ve heard is, ‘Wow, I want to come back and watch more of these.’ Help the local performing arts gain traction by just telling people that, you know, they’re around here.”

The cast of Starstruck’s *The Little Mermaid* smiles brightly as they sport flashy costumes resembling all the colorful creatures of the sea. (PC: Rosaura Sandoval)





# A "Cymbal" of a New Era

Winter percussion program makes comeback after 5 years of cancellation

Siena Encarnacion | Design Editor

It’s so over. You’ve just committed the biggest robbery of your life—an intergalactical heist that’d make headlines for decades to come. Within minutes, your pursuers inevitably have you surrounded, their alien bodies armed with... drum sets? Timpanis? Xylophones? Are you being... serenaded? Not quite. The music comes to a close, and you’re hit with the sinking realization—you were simply caught in the American Eagles Winter Percussion’s novel space-themed performance.

After five long years of season cancellation, the Winter Percussion program at American is in the midst of preparing their 2024 program, a musical performance centered around a lunar heist, for upcoming NCBA winter competitions.

“[For those who don’t know,] Winter Percussion is an extension of the marching percussion, [however,] it’s only [the] percussion section competing,” explains Avish Zindal (10), percussion co-section leader. “[During the] regular marching band [season], there’s battery percussion, which would be drums, big bass drums, snare drums, tenor drums. Then in the front [ensemble,] there’s the mallet, ox, timpani, etc.. [It’s] similar to fall marching band, in which there’s competitions across different schools.”

Winter Percussion has had a long history at American, dating back to 2004, when they had their first show.

“About 20 years ago, a student came up and said ‘Hey, Mr. Wong, we want to do this thing called Winter Percussion.’ Then they came up with the arrangements for the music,” reminisces Mr. Wong, the band teacher at American.

“They wrote the show, the drill, got students involved. It’s been very student-led for quite a long time.”

However, despite the rocketing growth of American’s marching band post-COVID, Winter Percussion struggled to return.

The primary reason? Zindal recalls the indifference the program has been met with in the past few years.

“[After COVID,] we’ve tried getting [Winter Percussion] started up [again,] but the main problem was lack of interest,” he reveals. “Last year, we [only] had four people sign up—we couldn’t get [the season] started.”

Nonetheless, their passion for this musical family has been rekindled, and, thanks to the joint efforts of many underclassmen and Mr. Wong, the extracurricular has finally been reestablished on campus.

Zindal proudly notes that “with all the incoming freshmen, we’ve been drilling [it into] them, saying, ‘join Winter Percussion, join Winter Percussion, *please* join Winter Percussion.’ With that, we now have a 16-person [section!]”

“For this season, we’re hoping to get top five [at our competitions,]” he continues. “Future goals would include raising the number of members.”

Raghuram Vungutur (11), an experienced band member yet a new percussionist, elaborates on their process to achieve the latter goal—practice. Though early in the season, members dedicate their Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday afternoons for rehearsals. Vungutur explains the process behind their rehearsals, saying “[So far] we have separate practices. We have front ensemble [practicing inside] 708, the band room, [while] battery is practicing inside the rotunda. During Saturday rehearsals we come together so we understand where everything fits [musically.]”

“It’s fairly early, but the students have al-

ready learned half the show,” adds Mr. Wong. “We’re in a good spot right now.”

Still, being a new program at American, percussion members face their fair share of obstacles—one being that “they’re a lot younger and newer to this whole thing,” Mr. Wong elaborates. “As the teacher, [I’m] a little more involved. I wrote the drill for the students and put the music together for them. [I’m] looking forward to [them] having [a] successful season this year.”

And in spite of the hurdles they’ve faced, percussionists are eager to put out a passionate performance—a show that’ll be outta this world, one might say!

“The decided theme,” Zindal says, “is [a] lunar heist.”

“Battery, which are drums, [are] going to be astronauts, [while] front [ensemble], which [are] the mallets and [mostly] the non-drums, [are] gonna be aliens,” details Parker Spielmann (10), percussion co-section leader. “And then the story is like, we’re exploring space for resources, and then we fight aliens! [The aliens] don’t like that we’re stealing their stuff.”

Whether this group of students is reenacting interstellar war crimes or tirelessly rehearsing on Saturday afternoons, one fact remains clear—Winter Percussion may be here to stay for coming years.

As Vungutur explains, “if you’re interested in joining Winter Percussion, Winter Guard, [Winter] Drum Major or just any music program, just try it! It’s okay if you don’t like it, but [try to have an] understanding of it. I bet you’ll definitely enjoy any music program that you do, because music is life—you’re either listening to a conversation, listening to the radio, listening to just ambient noises. In a sense, that’s all music. That’s why I say you can’t live without it.”

Winter Percussion members are depicted in the midst of rehearsal in the rotunda on a sunny Saturday afternoon. (PC: Mr. Wong)





# Mildly Malicious Girls: the teen comedy classic is joined by a modern, “plastic” remake

A film adaptation of the Broadway musical of the original, Mean Girls (2024) revisits and modernizes the cultural phenomenon that shaped a generation.

Jessica Li | Staff Writer

January 12 saw the release of Mean Girls (2024) in theaters as fans new and old delved into the jungle halls of North Shore High. Viewers follow homeschooler-turned-new-girl Cady Heron (Angourie Rice) throughout her assimilation into the notoriously popular clique led by apex predator Regina George (Rene  Rapp) known as the Plastics. A perpetual nod to the 2004 original, the film is peppered with “fetch” callback lines and recycled scenes that are given a flashy makeover—but what’s beneath the surface?

As a modernization, Mean Girls (2024) succeeds in diversifying its cast. Regina George’s loyal followers feature Bebe Wood as Gretchen Wieners and our Bay Area’s own Avantika as Karen Shetty. Auli’i Cravalho and Jaquel Spivey play Janis and Damian, both flamboyantly gay art kids (rejoice! Janis no longer ends up with a man for compulsory heterosexuality!) who pressure Cady into infiltrating the Plastics.

The film is attentive to the prevalence of social media in teen lives today: Cady’s rise as the new queen bee is accompanied by virality while Regina’s dethroning is reimagined through unflattering meme edits. The internet elevates the students at North Shore High above mere subjects of the Plastics. With cyberbullying, anyone can be a mean girl.

“The writer made the students just as dislikeable because they’re propagating the same kind of harm that Regina does,” said Andrea Zhang (12), who previously commented on Bottoms (2023). “Regina gets the same kind of abandonment by the school ever since people had a reason to hate on her. It was pretty interesting how she had this whole riches-to-rags arc.”

Yet how mean are the characters really? To make room for decorated but forgettable musical numbers, directors Samantha Jayne and Arturo Perez Jr cut iconic scenes portraying the raw viciousness that girl-world is capable of.

Instead of calling a mother under the guise of Planned Parenthood to condemn her daughter to abstinence for life, Regina snarls at her mid-song. Terrifying! There’s no four-way call that reveals the gossip

and in-fighting between the untouchable Plastics. Regina no longer sashays down the hallways to throw pages of mortifying rumors over her shoulder; she drops the Burn Book on the ground and waits for students to discover it. Would Regina George pass up an opportunity for drama?

Beyond sacrificing nuance, Mean Girls feels rinsed out and timidly censored. While joining the nerdy Mathletes team was originally described as “social suicide,” the phrase was changed to “socially ruinous” which, respectfully, no one would say. Coach Carr’s relations with junior girls are completely removed when predatory adults should be anything but ignored. The movie shies away from controversy when teens would dive right in. We’re mature enough to discuss these ugly topics, but the film doesn’t seem to agree.

Nevertheless, as a musical film intended to entertain, Mean Girls delivers an engrossing two hours from a boisterous start to its chaotically celebratory prom.

“I enjoy the whole part of it,” Zhang said. “I like the execution at the end even though it’s kind of out of character. It was silly to see.”

“Silly” might be the best word for Mean Girls (2024) with its glossy performances masking half-hearted, plastic themes. The expectations for sequels and remakes are understandably difficult to fulfill, especially for a contemporary cult classic of this scale. Not every teen movie needs to be “that deep” or thoroughly address the dimensionality of the high school experience—but an attempt wouldn’t have hurt.

In the Burn Book cutout inside AMC Newpark 12, Angourie Rice as Cady Heron stands with Rene  Rapp as Regina George before canonically snide character introductions of the cast. (PC: Jessica Li (12))



# 21 Savage’s American Dream: A Review

A look into the recent creative conquests of Sh yaa Bin Abraham-Joseph (21 Savage)

Vaishnav Desabhatla | Staff Writer

Over the past month, artist 21 Savage announced and released the trailer to his now-defunct biopic american dream: the 21 savage story, starring Donald “Childish Gambino” Glover. In support of the “film” (which was revealed to be fake and used as a marketing ploy), Savage also released a full-length soundtrack, serving as Sir Savage’s latest solo album since 2018’s i am > i was.

The album has an impressive list of features from Travis Scott, Lil Durk, Summer Walker, Mariah The Scientist, Brent Faiyaz, Burna Boy, Mikey Ekko, and Tommy Newport, and multiple songs produced by longtime collaborator Metro Boomin. Standout features from the album include Burna Boy, Summer Walker, Brent Faiyaz, and Mariah The Scientist.

The album’s first track “american dream” opens with Savage’s mother, Heather Carmillia Joseph, performing a segment of spoken word speaking about the sacrifices she made in order to ensure 21 Savage would achieve his American Dream. The track then smoothly transitions into “all of me,” which smoothly flips Rose Royce’s “Wishing On a Star.” Contradicting the fairly well-known Rose Royce sample of the second track the album also has samples from deep in the crate like the ominous flip of Elza Laranjeira’s “Serenata Do Adeus” on the track “redrum,” where 21 alludes to murder through the phrase used in The Shining, “redrum.” “redrum” is also the only track on the album with its own music video. Filmed in England the video acts as a sense of homecoming for 21. The video opens with vibrant colors and shots

of England’s landmarks as a narrator contrasts the perspective of an American outsider to caricatures portrayed by the media.

Savage’s signature nonchalant flow courses throughout the album as he smoothly transitions topics from remembering peers who have passed away to speaking about his “pescatarian shooters.” The album’s outro “dark days” has a heartfelt verse that stands out as it encourages the youth to “stay in school” and “love yourself.” Though 21’s lyricism has come a long way since his debut, he still falters sometimes. There are an awful lot of “bathroom bars” such as “it smell like gas / I think somebody pooped” and “Live on a toilet / I stand on my sh\*t,” adding a spot of seemingly out-of-place humor on the record.

But, the record’s purpose is not only to serve as a solo album but as a soundtrack for 21’s could-be full-length biopic that could star Donald Glover and Caleb McLaughlin releasing on Independence Day of 2024, right in the sweet spot for a summer blockbuster. The fake trailer, consisting of 21 rapping his song “all of me” with cuts to clips from the “movie” ranging from McLaughlin playing a young 21 and Glover playing an older 21. All of this is fun to think about, but there’s no doubt that Savage thinks he should have a movie made about his life, especially considering that he’s given audiences so much autobiographical material already. But then, Savage himself canceled the biopic, refusing to wrap up a career that still has plenty of steam left. After all, he’s got a lot more records to make and a lot more life to live.



Getting in the swing of things can be hard, especially with new classes and challenges to tackle. We can all recall the icebreakers, schedules, and tweaked class routes. After embracing the trial and error of the first semester, Eagles have taken on the new year, ready to spread their wings.

**How will/do you work on stress management?**

"Sometimes I get a little out of focus, so what I plan on doing is listening to music to calm down."  
-Lasjohn Griffin (12)

"I keep a daily journal at night and try to get sleep. It's important to stick to a bedtime routine."  
-Minh Dang (11)

**What are your academic goals this year?**

"Get at least a four on my AP exams. I will try to finish on time and study ahead instead of cramming."  
-Emily Su (11)

"I want to focus on motivating myself to get work done on time and building on what I've already learned."  
-Daniel Chen (11)

"I want straight A's, to manage time better, and to find more time to do stuff I actually enjoy."  
-Riya Kulkarni (11)

**What are your goals regarding extracurriculars?**

"I tutor after school. I hope I can make their lives a bit easier by being there."  
-Vinayakshara Ramisetty (11)

*Emaan Irfan  
Staff Writer*

Vincent Nghiem Staff Writer

