



EAGLE ERA

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AHS ranked 2nd in FUSD, 39th amongst CA high schools, according to U.S. News

U.S. News & World Report updated a list of rankings of high schools in America late last month, in which AHS ranked highly

Vrajesh Daga | Staff Writer

Late in April, U.S. News & World Report released an updated list of high school rankings, in which AHS ranked 2nd amongst FUSD schools, 39th amongst all high schools in California, and 314th nationally, moving up 267 spots in this category since 2019.

“If we moved up in some sort of ranking, that’s a positive thing. I think it’s a reflection of the improvement that the school has made over that period of time and it’s something to be proud of,” mentioned AP Physics 1 and AP Physics C teacher, Mr. Shockley.

AHS’s improvement over the years is no mystery. “The Bay Area as a whole is known for people who grind academics and extracurriculars to get into prestigious colleges. I’d say that’s part of the reason why schools like AHS and Mission rise in the ranks,” said class of 2024’s valedictorian, Anuj Naik (12).

U.S. News places a high importance on academic coursework, and AHS’s rise demonstrates students’ budding interest in AP classes. “In 2019, we had one sec-



AHS rises through the official school ranks, reflecting the increasing academic focus of its students (PC: Vrajesh Daga (12)).

tion of AP Physics C and four sections of AP Physics 1. We’re now at three full sections of C and 5.5 sections of AP 1. So demand has grown steadily over the last five years,” recalled Mr. Shockley.

While many students focus on academics, some believe this may hamper other aspects of school. Class of 2024 salutatorian Rishabh Athreya (12) said, “The enthusiasm is not bad but has certainly diminished since my sister, class of 2019,

attended AHS. I think general school spirit is inversely proportional to school ranking. Since college admissions are only getting harder, it makes sense that people are trying to perform better.”

However, while U.S. News overtly displays the statistics—graduation rate, English and math proficiency rates, etc.—that are factored into its calculations, numbers simply cannot tell the full story. “I don’t put a lot of faith in individual rankings, frank-

ly. If we’re 39th, do I think we’re worse

than number 17? Or better than number 50? I think it’s not really relevant. If you take kids who are not well off economically, and they succeed, that’s hugely important and really reflects highly on the quality of education, as opposed to taking kids who are already doing pretty well,” analyzed Mr. Shockley.

Irrespective of the rising rankings and competitive spirit, the most important part of high school is succeeding. “I feel like the competitive nature has helped me, for instance, with success on my robotics team. As a freshman and sophomore, I was carried by upperclassmen who reached great success. So when I took over in junior year, I wanted to do better than them to prove to them and myself that we are a growing team,” stated Naik.

“If you want to perform highly in school, the competition keeps you on your toes,” advised Athreya. “You should always regard the competition as just a motivating force and not an ultimatum.”

Partying until the clock strikes twelve

Covering AHS’s 2024 prom, Amidst the Floating Lights

Alayna Jeong | Staff Writer

On May 4, both juniors and seniors of AHS enjoyed a fun-filled night at Lake Chalet in Oakland for their 2024 prom, Amidst the Floating Lights.

The line to enter the venue was jam-packed with eager students, dressed in dazzling gowns and sleek tuxedos. As students began rolling in, a multitude of them exclaimed compliments to one another and huddled close to combat the chilly air.

When doors opened, the flow of students paraded into the building. Some quickly went into the photo booth, and others went down to the docks with rumbling stomachs. On the right end of Lake Chalet was the dance floor which housed blaring music and flashing lights. Each song had students singing along while dancing to their heart’s content. On the opposite end and up the stairs was the dining hall. Here, students were able to spend their time together shielded away from the cold. The area was filled with chatter and music, even karaoke. From an emotional, solo performance of “When I Was Your Man” by Bruno Mars to a passionate, group cover of “One Step Closer” by Linkin Park, it brought a laid back type of livelihood.

When the theme was first announced to the students as Tangled, there was some dissatisfaction. Kylie Sakata (12) said, “I didn’t mind the theme, I

actually enjoyed it since I like the movie. I do understand if people didn’t because of the limited colors for outfits, but the way ASB announced it made it seem like an afterthought with little care, which made it less exciting.” The name change

The crowded stairs leading down to Lake Chalet was full of anticipation for hours of fun. Friends joined each other in line, trying their best to not step over any flowing dresses. While the night sky was opposite of how it was in the picture, students’ enthusiasm had yet to die down. (PC: Alayna Jeong)



to Amidst the Floating Lights was broader while still pertaining to Tangled. In a similar sense, Brittany Zaw (12) said, “I thought it was a really cute theme, but I know not a lot of people went with it. At the venue itself, there wasn’t really anything related; I was expecting lan-

terns. The dock, at the very least, felt very characteristic of the Tangled theme because of the water, boats, and lights around it.”

This was the seniors’ final high school prom, some having high expectations due to the success of last year’s. “[At California Academy of Sciences], it was really exciting, being able to go into the aquarium. We got to see the animals there, and overall, there was more to look at,” said Sakata. “Still, this year was more enjoyable because more friends were able to make it.” Enjoying the event was the highest priority for many, including Zaw, who said, “I didn’t go into prom with any expectations. I was there for the good food, music, and I was really excited to see what everyone would look like. That’s one of my favorite parts of formal events like these, and I was just there to have fun.”

With finals and graduation just right around the corner, Amidst the Floating Lights was an event that every senior wanted to remember. “I think I made the most of my experience,” Zaw pondered. “For both years, I had a lot of personal issues going on that I thought really affected my time at prom, but I still tried to make the most of it. I got to hang out with my long-time friend, and it was so nice to have that time with her. It felt really cathartic.”

School Bathroom
Vandalism
(pg 2)

New Principal
(pg 7)

C/O 2024 Post-High
School Map!
(pg 8-9)

Senior Wills
(pg 12)

Fremont Summer
Activities
(pg 16)

Vaping and vandals continue to plague school bathrooms

The state of the American High School restroom experience

Logan King | Staff Writer

“I just walked in, and the bathroom was full of people. They were all fighting each other on the ground and they were all vaping,” said sophomore Konnor Tan. Chaotic sights like this are unfortunately not uncommon in American High School bathrooms. Nearly every student who’s stepped forth into the one has noticed the unmistakable smells, clogged sinks, and often the presence of vapers. Tan described seeing students vaping in the bathrooms “almost every time” and sophomore Aanikit Saini described it as an “everyday” occurrence. In an interview with Inesh Inpanathan (11), a friend of several vapers, he said many start vaping to “relieve stress” and for “fun.” However, the social component and peer pressure also hook many students, “Some of them just say they do it with their friends,” said Inpanathan.

Punishments for vaping vary from case to case. Inpanathan said, “I know one of them got put in an after-school program. It was an hour every day, like detention, where they gave him a speech. Another one just got sent home and it was her first time so she just got a warning. And another one got caught with alcohol. And I think that guy and all of his friends got suspended for like a day or two.” However, these punishments from the school don’t seem to do much since all of these students are reportedly still vaping, according to Inpanathan. “It doesn’t get to the root reason why they want to smoke,” Inpanathan said. “It just puts a band-aid on it. If someone wants to do something, they’re going to try to do it. It’s got to be a personal choice to want to quit.” Even when these students attempt to leave vaping behind them, the addictiveness of vaping makes quitting chal-

lenging. “I know a guy who told me he quit cold turkey,” said Inpanathan. “And then a month later, he asked, ‘You want to go vape with me in the bathroom?’ And I’m like, ‘Bro, you told me you quit.’ And he’s like, ‘I can’t, man. Like it’s too hard.’” The struggle to quit vaping may be what causes scenes like the one described by Saini where “a group of 15 people were all going around sharing one pen” in the bathroom. In addition to vaping, vandalism and littering in the bathrooms continues to plague the restrooms. “I say the vandalism has gotten worse,” said Jason Chang (11), “because of the new freshmen. For some reason they have ruined the bathrooms. They keep throwing toilet paper and like peeing all over the seats. It’s really nasty.” Tan stated, “People are leaving juice boxes and gum to flood it. And breaking the toilet paper holders. Which makes it annoying to go to the bath-



The 700 wing boys bathroom once again victim to maintenance closures, possibly due to vandal caused damage. (PC: Logan King (12))

room since many of the stalls are flooded.” In the portable bathrooms, vandals have even drawn swastikas and written the acronym “K.K.K.” on the walls. As rule breaking in the bathrooms continues, attempting to regulate them borders on a thin line between student privacy and student safety. As to why students might vandalize the bathrooms, little explanation can be given other than Chang’s belief that “they weren’t raised correctly.”

Fremont youth unite during anti-war protests

The younger generation rallies together to voice their opinions

Aniya Badal | Staff Writer



Natalie Schmoyer (11), Aniya Badal (12), Haanee Badal, and Amber Schmoyer all participate in a protest outside of Boston Market/Jamba Juice on May 10th. (P.C. Youssouf Badal).

Students are currently taking the lead in pro-Palestinian protests, not only in colleges but in Fremont as well. Starting on May 10th, every Friday will be dedicated to an anti-war protest outside of Jamba Juice on Mowry from 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. Several FUSD students and longtime Fremont residents are participating. Natalie Renée Schmoyer (11), said at the first protest, “I’m here to show support for Palestine. The goal is to show

Fremont that we’re out here, and we care.” The protest was not limited to AHS students. Zoya Adil, a sophomore at Mission San Jose High School, said, “We’re showing the streets of Fremont that we’re not okay with what is happening, and they shouldn’t be either.” The power the younger generation holds is not being overlooked. Amber Schmoyer, a 2021 AHS alumna, said “As youth we have a lot of power to educate ourselves with the technology we’ve grown up with, and not just using that to spread aware-

ness, [but to] get out there and take action. One of our responsibilities with our knowledge is to get out there and spread it.” Social media has been a source of news for many, so “it feels good to get off people’s stories and say things out loud,” said Amber. Simrun Kattaura, a 2017 Irvington High School graduate, said, “The youth are just so disenfranchised, from corporations, from the bigger people, the politicians, anything above the working class level, that everything just kind of comes together. And this is the age of revolution, not just for Palestine, but for everybody. Liberation for Palestine will be liberation for all. So it is so important that the youth are here to show their voice, and it’s also amazing [that] their parents, regardless of how [they] feel, allow their kids to have the right to protest.” “It’s very important for the youth to understand that they have a big role regarding what is right, standing up for what is

right, and protecting the rights of all human beings,” said Asifa Qayyum, a mother of three FUSD kids. Marianne Hogan, a Fremont resident for more than 30 years, said, “Doesn’t matter how many people are here. What matters is that we remind the people who drive by in those cars, that this is a local matter. It’s a personal matter. It’s a neighborhood matter, we want justice for everyone. It’s a small world after all, and we care about justice in other lands. Especially the genocides that are paid for by our tax money. It’s our problem and we need to solve it. And we want to remind every one of them that we still care and we want them to see.” As a message to his peers, Yaseen Alfarra (11) said, “Everything counts, whether it be posts on social media, whether it be talking about it to people, whether if you’re in a club or a newspaper, and you’re writing for it, anything really. It all counts, especially if everyone starts doing it. It adds up.”

The true meaning behind AAPI month

In a majority Asian community, where does the relevance of Asian American and Pacific Islander month lie?

Kelly Wang | Staff Writer

With the month of May, the celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders comes to a start. However, with a 74.3% Asian population, it raises the question, truly how relevant is AAPI month to American High School?

AAPI month began in 1992 as a commemoration of the contributions of Asians and Pacific Islanders to America and a reminder of their crucial role here. It was a blatant call-out to a White-preferenced community who addressed Asians and Pacific Islanders as the “perpetual foreigners,” not pri-

oritizing equal treatment of these citizens.

But in the American High School community? Madyson Tran, a Junior at AHS, speaks of a different treatment of Asians.

“There’s not really any struggles because there’s no racism or racial slurs to be thrown out here because literally everyone’s gonna take offense to it.”

With this in mind, the meaning of AAPI month changed to Tran.

“I think people are really clique-y with their ethnicity. A lot of Koreans will hang out with Koreans and Chinese people will hang out

with Chinese people. A lot of the cultures in the AAPI community are really similar, like the holidays we celebrate or traditions we have, but they’re all somewhat also different, and I wish that we can grow that community. Not merge them together,” Tran laughed, “but to learn new things about everybody else’s culture. I think it’s fun, and I think it’s a good way to be more educated.”

Mr. Arora, an English teacher at AHS took a similar perspective towards Asia.

“I think of Asia as a place that’s very vast and broad, a majority of humanity lives in Asia. Asia

is full of so many unique, diverse cultures.”

He continues, “So when I think ‘Asian’ in general, when thinking about a Japanese person or a Chinese person or Korean or Indian or Pakistani or whatever that may look like, I find the term to be very clunky. I find it can be non-useful at times because I don’t see a necessary connection other than geography which is in itself a majority of the world. Going back to ‘what does it mean to be an Asian,’ with the difficulty of understanding that Asian identity, it also makes it difficult to understand what the month is if we don’t know about the identity.

“So I think the idea of an AAPI month depends on how you see the term Asian or the identity Asian.”

Along with the educating aspect of AAPI month, there are also some caveats to the term AAPI that this month brings awareness to.

Within the large Asian community, it is still important to remember the “Pacific Islanders” in “AAPI,” a sentiment expressed by Ana Taelang.

“I think in our community, [Pacific Islanders] are not as well known.”

“[For example] when you’re on Apple Music, you see the Asian Pacific Islander playlist, and there’s not so many Pacific Islander songs or artists on there in general. It’s more of [mainland] Asian artists, which is fine! Yeah, I feel like it’s all cool, [but] I think we’re just a little underrepresented.”

Mr. Arora adds, “Asian identity is so vast that it’s impossible to represent people effectively when you have such a broad label. It almost reminds me of the label ‘human.’ There’s so much that it means to be a human being. And you can’t really take the ideas of humanity and the diversity of humanity and put it in a paragraph...So, I’m sure, Pacific Islanders are [also] underrepresented in that term, but I think it’s a function of the term being so broad that it becomes meaningless.”



There are immense complexities within the term “AAPI,” making it a word with many interpretations but also much ambiguity needed to be addressed (P.C. Kelly Wang).

The best and brightest of MVROP

Coverage of the Mission Valley ROP student of the year ceremony

Fern Tigri | Staff Writer

Many students at American High will have experience in a Mission Valley ROP class at some point in their time at the school. Whether it be through AHS’ culinary arts or anatomy class, or through a class at the ROP campus itself, many students will get to try out one of these more specialized classes focusing on real world experience in a specific field.

“The MVROP student of the year awards are a way for Mission Valley to honor specific students who’ve gone above and beyond in their certain sector since they don’t have a regular graduation,” Chef Ryan Dennis, Culinary Arts 1 and 2 teacher for AHS through MVROP, said. “It’s basically the MVROP version of a regular graduation.”

One of AHS’ previous winners, Avril Durazo Jaramill (12) who won the award “from [her] Anatomy and Physiology class last year,” said of her experience with the event, “the award show

was very fancy. They had many distinct representatives at the event who gave speeches to the audience. I felt really honored to be receiving the student of the year award, it made me feel recognized for the work I put into the class.”

Many students were caught off guard when being told they were receiving the Student of the Year Award. “I won Student of the Year in the Game Design [category],” Kylie Misa Sakata (12), stated. “I’m still in disbelief. I feel like there were people in my class who are more talented than I am and can do more within the programs. I still feel like I’m learning the basics.”

Only a select few students per ROP class win the award. “A lot of teachers go solely off of academic stuff. Personally the way I pick the student I’m going to nominate is I look at my class and think about who is going to benefit most if they get the scholarship,” Chef Dennis said. “So I’m looking past who has the best academic performance in my class or the best attendance and looking more for who has that passion for cooking and who would benefit from being recognized. If

you’re only missing a couple assignments or a couple of attendance days, but you have that drive when you come into my class, you stay on task, and do what needs to be done to get the job finished, then you’re going to get nominated.”

After being nominated, students have the option to apply for a scholarship in their field of study, without all of the ROP classes being one of eleven sectors. However there is only one scholarship available per section. “I did not apply for the

scholarship because I didn’t think I would win,” Sakata told me.

Despite no American High Students receiving scholarship “The event was really nice and was held at a beautiful location. I felt proud to see my chocolate strawberries and all the other culinary classes’ strawberries lined against the back wall. They tasted so good, I’m such a big fan of chocolate strawberries and it was a perfect way to end off the night,” said Ella Knickerbocker (12).



The MVROP Students of the Year award recipients for Culinary 1 Periods, Ella Knickerbocker, Fern Tigri, and Christina Zou, and the Culinary 2 Student of the Year award recipient, Tyler Levinberg with Chef Ryan Dennis, teacher of the Culinary Arts classes at AHS (PC: Melanie Westover (MVROP Program Coordinator)).

Students, this is the time of our lives

Courageous students around the nation has proven that the kids have always been alright

Vincent Nghiem
Staff Writer

On April 15, 2024, the University of Southern California (USC) announced that student valedictorian Asna Tabassum would not be delivering her speech at the commencement ceremony for the university’s graduating class of 2024. In a statement published to the website of the Office of the Provost, Provost Andrew T. Guzman justified the final decision as a necessary measure “to protect students and keep our campus community safe.”

The administration’s concern for security was motivated in part due to pro-Israeli student groups’ complaints regarding Tabassum’s views. They implied that Tabassum’s support for Palestine on social media rendered her unfit to be a speaker. Two days after Guzman’s announcement, students at Columbia University in New York City began the first pro-Palestinian campus encampment in the U.S., uniting to protest the university’s financial investments in companies connected to Israel. As similarly motivated additional encampments were established on several campuses across the nation—including right in our own backyard at UC Berkeley, a historical bastion of student activism—the effective censorship of Tabassum’s speech became symbolic of institutional resistance against the voices and freedoms of students.

While the image of student protests has certainly been revitalized, it has never fully departed our cultural consciousness. Whether it be the Vietnam War or the civil rights movement, being a student has historically situated students in a unique position in domestic and global history. Confronted with the realities of the world around us, we are led to question and reevaluate ideas and institutions of old—many of which are inextricably connected to the very same entities that provide us our education in the first place.

The result is the merging of student and protestor identities, where students utilize the privilege they have to directly address, pressure, and ultimately change the collective “establishment.” In particular, the recognition of this privilege we hold as students is crucial. It is one thing to learn, but we are ultimately responsible for putting the knowledge we gain

into practice. Tabassum herself is a great example of this: she possesses a minor in Resistance to Genocide, so it feels only natural that she would incorporate what she learned into her speech. Knowledge without application is merely useless fantasy, and certainly, the thousands of student protestors across the U.S. are aware of this fact. They know that the price of speaking truth to power is one that must be paid by any means, that discomfort and disturbance, while not ideal, are necessary to bring attention to the mission for change.

However, these protestors have found themselves in conflict with other antagonistic parties and even the schools that claim to protect them. Indeed, harrowing footage of protestors at the encampment at UCLA, whose members were met with sticks and fireworks wielded by aggressive Zionist attackers, have been spread online, with particular disgust targeted toward the absence of campus police at the encampment to protect protestors from the attackers. Rather than provide a safe haven for student protestors and their freedoms, these schools have appallingly invested resources into suppressing them, thereby betraying their supposed commitment to their students. Day by day, it becomes increasingly impossible to think of these institutions of higher knowledge in their once noble light.

On May 10—the day Tabassum would have delivered her speech to thousands of people at USC’s commencement ceremony—she released her speech to several news media outlets. Most of the text in the transcript, however, is deliberately blacked out based on Tabassum’s own decision. After all, it wouldn’t have mattered what Tabassum would have said on stage that day; USC, like many other colleges would have done, simply balked at the thought of one of their students actually utilizing the knowledge she cultivated through her studies. Even so, we should take this as biting proof of the power within our words as students—how, when we stop expecting the role of student to be a passive one and instead manifest our textbook education into action, students can truly become champions of the “real world” we are being prepared for.

Just Give Us the Exam

Originally intended to alleviate pressure on students in the final weeks of the year, final projects accumulate until they overwhelm

Jessica Li
Staff Writer

The taste of summer is on your tongue. Freedom is within sight: the golden days of forgetting the date, forgetting how to handwrite, leaving American High School, maybe for good, so long as you get through these last few weeks. Your teacher hands you a final project rubric instead of an exam. Hooray! you think, I would rather put in effort for a guaranteed decent grade instead of stressing over a know-it-or-don’t test. Until the rest of your teachers do the same.

Think dozens of Google Slides and recordings upon recordings. If you were an English Honors freshman, recall the four-to-six-minute research speech. If you took a language class, maybe you had to present in that language. Creative electives have their appropriate creative products (animations, art pieces, etc.), and my deepest sympathies lie with the AP Physics 1 roller coaster construction crews, who may stop seeing marbles when they close their eyes anytime soon.

Alone, these projects might give students a much-needed reprieve from traditional exams and AP testing season. Together, they rear the daunting chimera heads of time management.

Dhara Patel (12), who has five final projects lined up for her, said, “My chemistry and physics projects feel like they’re just to keep us busy. I also have one in gov, as well. The senior project is the most fun but also the most stressful. And the statistics project feels too rushed as it’s entirely within the span of AP season. I wish we had a more reasonable deadline.”

As with the logic of every supposed win-win scenario, final

projects may be meant to give teachers an easier time with grading as they are often done in groups. This is also wonderful news for social loafers who, particularly by the end of the year, have deemed their grades so unsalvageable that they might as well sit back and relax. Understandable—why do the work for no reward? This is less fantastic news for the people doing the carrying.

“I typically assign roles based on my groupmates’ past experiences,” said Nathan Leung (12), final group project victim. “However, this doesn’t always work out and I have had to resort to completing projects by myself.”

Leung recalls one of the most challenging periods of high school: his AP Physics 1 cardboard roller coaster project.

“We had approximately two-and-a-half weeks in class to work on [it],” said Leung. “I was up all night the night before the project was due, fixing all the contraptions and ensuring we met the requirements. Overall, the project was more stressful than the 3 AP tests I took that year.”

After this year’s AP season, Patel affirmed, “These next two weeks are more stressful than the entirety of first semester.”

At a certain point, the dreaded two hours of a final exam may be the best alternative to this prolonged suffering.

Leung said, “Studying typically takes two to three days for a moderately difficult exam, when big projects can take up to two to three weeks. Although I like getting hands-on work done, in some cases I’d prefer to take a test and get it over with sooner.”



The gallery of AP Physics 1 final roller coaster projects await annual additions (PC: Jessica Li (12))

Our political culture is sick — with distrust

The focal point of our ailing political culture in America is deep-seated distrust.

Ananya Balaji | Staff Writer

We are in a nation divided. You probably have to look no further than any uncivil Reddit thread on politics or a recollection of a recent heated family dinner turned debate. But if you're still not convinced, consider the growing body of research bringing forward statistics ranging from a near-doubling of partisan animosity to a suggestion that ideological silos are on the rise with far-right and far-left individuals alike sharing a lack of people in their circle with opposing political views.

We also needn't look far to understand why this threatens our democracy: the pillars of democracy are compromise and healthy discourse. With those under siege, we are seeing immediate effects, with no significant legislation having been passed since Obamacare as a result of vicious bipartisan gridlock. Solutions to this have been vocalized; comedian Jordan Klepper, who frequently covered political issues as a correspondent on The Daily Show, posits in his recent TED Talk that an important part of the solution is pushing for more civil, productive discourse in our culture and honoring how concession is another important skill for us all to progress as a union.

What we may be missing, however, is the greater story that's

underpinning this. Ever since the Pentagon Papers got leaked, we've seen a transition in America to a far more tumultuous relationship with the trust in the government. We saw this re-emerge in the Obama administration with Edward Snowden exposing the NSA.

Even with my limited, high school experiences as a leader, I can tell you: this is a reflection of leaders who are unwilling to be blunt with the public. It takes courage to have candor: to put plainly what's on the mind of the rich and the poor, what people's fears are on both sides of the spectrum—to get to the heart of any issue. A dearth of that courage has never been lower. In a TIME article titled "The Lies Are the Story in Today's Politics," author Brian Stelter posits that "Falsehoods [from politicians] are often about protecting personal brands, political futures, and self-interests."

And herein lies the issue. Fearing the public, leaders are unable to confront problems with any level of straight-forwardness. The consequence, however, has been dwindling trust from a public that, at

large, no longer believes in the ideal of the ethical politician. Conversely, politicians don't believe in the concept of a rational voter, instead taking the liberty of misconstruing the truth in order to puppeteer our futures. Maybe those suspicions aren't too far off either—let's not forget the kinds of things your average Redditor spews and consumes.

Things get more muddy when we consider this distrustful dichotomy extending to our multi-dimensional relationships with businesses and the press. Growing socialist sentiment from Gen Z means businesses aren't free from scorn, and with the kind of yellow journalism on the rise because of social media, it's reasonable to cast skepticism on the press too.

The antidote? Perhaps America, from all our community stakeholders—political leaders, businesses, the press, and citizens—could learn one skill: straightforwardness. Happiness is, after all, connected to honesty: in a report published by the American Psychological

Association, a study established connections between improvement in mental and physical health and telling the truth. If we extrapolate that phenomena from an individual to collective scale, it's plausible to assume not only our individual but cultural satisfaction levels soar if we all were just more blunt with it. In turn, this could open doors to more productive discourse that probably won't satisfy everyone 100%, but will leave everyone a bit more at ease.

As Brene Brown, prominent American scholar on social research in the areas of shame, vulnerability, and leadership puts it, "There is no courage without vulnerability. Courage requires the willingness to lean into uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure." Shedding our armor of eloquence will inevitably leave us all feeling a little naked at first—but when the reward for our bravery could be greater contentment and wellness for all of us and the healing of a nation divided, perhaps it's a risk worth taking.

Fundraisers to Fun-raisers

Why American High needs more fundraising events

Ella Knickerbocker | Staff Writer

In March, American High held its first-ever Spring Fling Craft Fair as a Grad Nite fundraising event. This event gained unexpected traction and raised significant funds. With how well the event went, we can expect this to be recurring, and maybe others will start to pop up. These events—while being amazing for raising money—bring not only the American High community together, but also the Fremont community.

The annual Holiday Boutique made many optimistic about the attendance of the Spring Fair. "It was the current fundraising committee that decided on trying a spring event," Laura Dauzat, founder of the American High Holiday Boutique, said, "I think the word got out to all that attend the Holiday event annually, so I expected a good turnout!"

Many students from American High got wind of the event and were enthusiastic about a break from their stressful schedule. "I was expecting the small businesses, but not the yard sale type booths," Kymberlee Dosch (12) comments. "I think it went well! There were interesting vendors and a good turnout—at least I think so—the park-

ing lot I was in was full of cars."

The unexpectedly amazing turnout gave students a fun thing to do on the weekend and gave the Fremont community a fun event for everyone to attend. Dosch says, "I think these events bring the community closer together. People can socialize with others, volunteer, and support local small businesses."

These events are proven to have a large turnout and it is plain to see that many people enjoy the fundraisers at American High. While we have wonderful events that bring in large funding for Grad Nite, we could have more in the future to fund other school events.

"I think fundraisers could be hosted for prom," Dosch states. "I wish the school did more fundraising events because they are a reason for me to get out of the house and I feel like I am making an impact."

Julia Joseph (12) said, "As a prom commissioner, having more funding for prom would let us have a wider expanse of what we could have at prom and we would not have to give anything up because it is not within the budget."

Fundraisers are more like fun-raisers at American High, giving everyone in the community a break from school or work to attend an event intended for fun, socialization, and most importantly, a good cause.

Senior Year's Priceless Memories Come With a Price

Discussing the problematic expenses of Senior year activities and events, and how students have to balance exhaustion, financial trade-offs, and an unpredictable future

Mylo Herzog | Staff Writer

"I know people save up for college, but maybe we should start saving up for senior year," said senior Britney Zaw (12). Senior year: the last stretch of high school, the end of the strenuous, academic race. And for many seniors, it's the final, dying breath for their wallets.

Seniors anxiously anticipate these accumulating expenses from school dances, senior-centered festivities, and college applications. However, despite these financial conundrums that they face, students often believe the notion of their senior year being fun-filled and sentimental, with the last memories and school events being more significant than in the past years.

But maybe these gleeful memories, these fleeting moments of high school are worth the expenses. Maybe they are worth the dismemberment of your limbs, maybe that small slip of paper that permits you to go to prom is worth selling your kidney. "I work too, so I feel like I have to be extra careful about what I spend. But if I want to be more involved I have to do even more work to budget everything," said Zaw.

Senior year, despite promoting these fun festivities, proves to be everything but cozy and comfortable for both students' bank accounts and mental health. To even fathom

opening up your wallet just to spend more could make the average senior student. Students drop their dollars for senior festivities and the preparation for them, they become the masses storming for a sliver of financial aid for their colleges. The concept of these expenses are dreadfully taxing, both literally and figuratively.

"I'm stressed out of my mind because applying to these colleges gets so expensive, and I just don't want to spend that much money because senior year in general is making my bank account cry," said Zaw. Seniors heave the weight of stress upon their backs, and yet their desperation for a break is pulverized by financial burdens. For senior year, taking your mind off of the encompassing future carries a lofty price.

Limbless and broken down, many seniors claw at the ground trying to see the end of senior year. But, at the end of the finish line there is still a fee, a fine to pay just to walk across the stage. Even beyond high school, there lies an endless amount of expenses to pay forward and pay back. "Outside of high school, we just have to find ways and different alternatives to getting around these expenses," said Zaw. "The more life you live, the more expensive it gets."

The Lore of ‘24

Seniors passionately discuss their deranged American High School experiences

Malaya Cruz
Staff Writer

With summer just around the corner, the annual case of senioritis unsurprisingly plagues our soon-to-be graduates. They wander the hallways purposelessly (in the brief moments they are actually present) desperate to escape the confines of American.

Excelling in high school academics is no longer a priority once the exciting prospects of college and adulthood take the stage. Desks once used by quick note-taking hands are replaced by heads leaking drool, and classrooms once ringing with eager participants now echo with snores. In fact, when asked to describe their senior experience in one word, various seniors described them in several—their poor listening skills yet another reflection of their academic negligence.

“It’s been very unique. Obviously, we had online school and I came back to physical classes and got humbled real quick. You had to actually start doing work, had to memorize it, couldn’t just look up the answers,” said AJ Torrado (12).

Tiamaye Carlton (12) said, “Chaotic. It was so chaotic, depressing, stressful, oh my God.”

And Jai Kaushik (12)—who was closest to responding with a single word—merely groaned aggressively when prompted with the question.

And as the senioritis rolls in, the confessions roll out.



Ready to leave the high school environment, Tiamaye Carlton (12) is just one of many seniors affected by a case of senioritis. (PC: Malaya Cruz)

that. The 300 wing is not the time and place to be sucking the soul out of your significant other,” said Torrado. “There are some people who kiss next to SAC, and seeing them kissing next to the ‘sack’ is just, man, that’s just an experience, man.”

To Carlton, the classroom environment is equally as insufferable. She makes her hatred apparent for socratic seminars in particular.

“I will not miss socratic seminars. I hated those so much. I hated those so much. I hated those so much,” said Carlton. “It turns into an argument every single time.”

Perhaps all the seniors needed was a taste of freedom—an aspect ironically absent from America’s most patriotic school. Off-campus lunch is one coveted privilege they wish they had experienced.

“Honestly, it’s very inconvenient that the one school that is right next to a sushi place, a boba place, a liquor store, Hot Love, and multiple restaurants is not allowed to be off campus for the 30 minutes that we have lunch. That is idiotic,” said Torrado.

Of course, contemptuous memories from a few seniors should not skew the venerable image of American High School.

“Just have fun, it goes by so quick. No more school, no more friends in two weeks,” said Carlton.

They offer brief words of wisdom to underclassmen before they abandon them for good.

“P*ss with your pants up and don’t leave any tires in the restrooms, that’s all I ask for,” said Torrado. “Just lock in.”

Critical Collegiate Catalog

You’re next class of 2025!

Angelina Li
Staff Writer

For some seniors, the college decision was quite apparent. Instant, even.

“UIUC over UCI. Extra letter, extra coolness point,” Patrick Xiao (12) shared.

“Wasn’t Riley in Inside Out from Michigan?” Ananya Balaji (12) asked in response to why she chose UMichigan the millisecond she heard back. Minnesota, actually, but good effort!

Others have agonized over this life-altering (shattering) decision.

Hence, I am here for the last time to bestow morsels—nay, mounds—of advice on anyone with the “commit” button in their future.

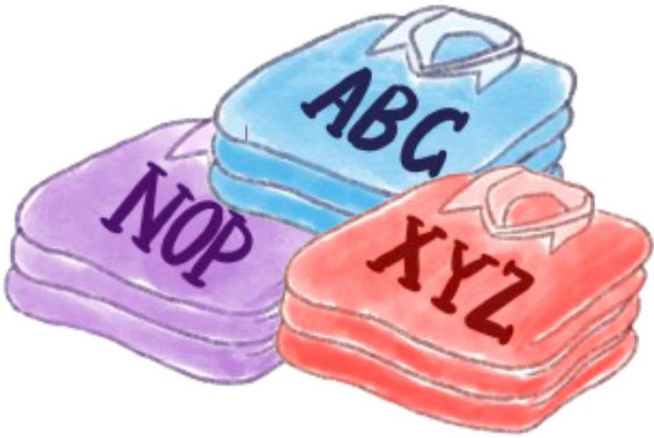
It is imperative you consider the networking capacity you will have at your school, assuming you want a standard post-college.

Personally, I chose my college to infil-

The insane pricing of merch, of course, shall not be tread lightly.

Hence, I suggest going to a school with a name so famous fast-fashion stores sell their collegiate clothing for half-off! Harvard, Yale—it’s really not that difficult. Just think: an Ivy League education at a fraction of its (merch) cost!

This next idea may be a smidge too radical if you are not for the rah-rah Bay Area grind



It would be a shame to let the stacks of college merch retail stores go to waste (PC: Angelina Li (12)).

At college, however, you may not have that same level of sisterhood. No worries, though. Before you select a college, just look up how helpful classmates are on Reddit—that’s a euphemism, of course. I’m not trying to get my diploma taken away for, again, not admitting anything but merely dispelling my savvy.

Last but certainly not least, the ranking. I didn’t feel the need to extend this piece of wisdom as it feels obvious, but I digress.

Why on God’s green earth would you choose to go to a state school providing a similar curriculum and more attentive faculty and the premise of standing out more and a potentially less toxic environment and at an acceptable cost when you can attend an IVY LEAGUE!! I love leagues—they’re so posh.

Don’t listen to the haters. The thought of living away from your loved family and friends?

The financial situation? The imposter syndrome? The fact that the college doesn’t actually have the major you want but certainly the prestige? The ability to thrive as a whole?

Who spends thirteen years of their life laboring over their education to choose a school based on those lame, invalid concerns? Could be me, but I’ll never tell.

PERSONALLY, I CHOSE MY COLLEGE TO INFILTRATE RICH PEOPLE’S CIRCLES. I PLAN TO COSPLAY AS A RICH SOCIALITE WHO IS IN A LOVING AND UNKNOWNING-ON-ONE RELATIONSHIP WITH HEARST CASTLE’S HEIR

trate rich people’s circles. I plan to cosplay as a rich socialite who is in a loving and unknowing-on-one relationship with Hearst Castle’s heir. Catch me on your “for you” page in a few months for becoming best friends with Olivia Rodrigo.

mindset, cover your retinas.

This is not an admission of guilt, but it would be like me telling you the Earth is round when it is heptagram-shaped if I said that AHS is the beacon of academic honesty. I prefer to call us an academic community of like-minded and caring individuals who bond together in generous ways in the face of adversity because the other term is rather degrading and honestly, plain mean.

No Cap Recaps: FUSD Board Meetings

Closing off the year with a better understanding of what’s going on in our school district among difficult and complex conversations ranging from budget cuts to facilities needs.

Ananya Balaji
Staff Writer

May 8

- Superintendent Cammack’s departure from FUSD is announced as he moves to serve San Ramon Unified as their Superintendent. The Board took action to proceed in next steps to recruit a new superintendent.
- FUSD Sustainability Update spotlighted recent improvements like transitions to electric buses, support to school gardens, passed resolution to forward Educational Response to Climate Emergency, CLEEN Network, transitioning away from landfills, and more

April 15

- This special meeting was a focused session dedicated to addressing our Long-Range Facilities Plan, a master plan for the future of facilities developments of the district.
- The discussion on April 15 focused on observing issues at a high level, considering abstract things like the priorities we will have in where our money will go and how we will consider the adaptability of classrooms as they will need to stand the test of changing facilities needs in the future.
- While the assessed facilities needs of our district near 2 billion, we will only be able to obtain a maximum of 900 million in funds. That would also be under the assumption that we get the public to pass a bond measure funding our facilities. Further investigation into the status of efforts to get the bond passed are a potential area to look more into.
- Other considerations were more logistical. An example of such logistical questions is deciding between repairing old buildings or bulldozing them for complete reconstruction, with different pros and cons for each approach on a facility-by-facility basis.
- While the tone of conversations on April 15 were high level, the facilities team of FUSD is already having to think at a granular level. They conducted several “Site Profiles” which were presented to the Board and public, which contain detailed on what the exact status of facilities is at each FUSD site. While the completion of these Site Profiles is ongoing, American High School’s is ready for viewing on FUSD Boarddocs.

April 17

- Board Budget study session featured clarification for Board members and community members on the Board perspective of the budget. A need for budget cuts of ~30M was confirmed, taking effect in the 2025-26 school year.
- For context, budget cuts of this magnitude under the jurisprudence of a local government entity are uncommon, the last one of this size arguably tracing back to the 2008 financial crisis.
- Input from community stakeholders, especially students, will be paramount as we approach these difficult conversations in the future. Trustee Jones noted inevitably how this will “touch people,” suggesting layoffs, and a previous Board conversation posed the possibility of making cuts to our library programs. However, the Board vocalized a commitment to fighting against that eventuality and focusing on dispersing the financial burden of cuts across as many people as possible to minimize any one group taking the full blow. The Board approved small-scale layoffs (affecting only a few people) of classified employees at a prior meeting already, with a resolution confirming this brought forward at this meeting as well.
- This discussion occurs amid collective bargaining negotiations with our teacher’s union, FUDTA, for their next 3-year contract.
- The Board also received our California School Dashboard Report, providing expected discrepancies towards historically affected groups like ELD students, homeless students, low-income students, and more but also demonstrating some progress for these groups as well. The district reaffirmed a commitment to working towards improving these results.
- The Board approved new textbooks for Spanish and French with the currently used editions going out of print.

For more information, don’t hesitate to visit FUSD Boarddocs for meeting recordings, meeting minutes, and upcoming meeting agendas. You can also learn more about the FUSD Board of Education and other key district information via the district website.

There’s a New Principal in Town

As Ms. Barrington leaves, Mrs. Sharma will be the new American High School principal next year

Hana Balderrama
Staff Writer

With Ms. Barrigton leaving American High School for Thailand, Mrs. Sharma, the current vice principal, will assume the role of principal next year. Sharma is extremely excited about her new position with lots of ambition. Teachers and students also look forward to having a ‘home-grown’ administrator in charge.

After accepting her new position, Sharma shared, “Being a parent of AHS alumni and a teacher at American has given me a unique perspective of the needs of our students and staff. I want to be able to continue doing my part in making American a place where all students and staff feel like they belong.” Demonstrating her deep connection, appreciation for AHS, and passion for supporting students.

Numerous teachers were involved in the position interview process and contributed to the decision, such as Mrs. Martin, who is thrilled about the announcement. Martin, an English Honors 9 and AP 12 English teacher and a representative in the interviews, stated, “Part of what I like about her is she still really understands what it’s like to be a teacher. And she is supportive of teachers. And her passion for the school, and the fact that she knows this school will make the transition really

smooth. But she’s tough too, she’s not afraid to have hard conversations, and make the hard choices—I like that in a leader.”

AHS teachers are excited to have a principal who will always advocate for their needs and understand the challenges of teaching—Sharma is the best of both worlds. “We’re very excited to have her. And I think she is very well respected on this campus,” Martin said.

Beyond teachers, students have also voiced their opinions on Sharma’s transition. “She’s responsible. She’s been here since my older sister was here. And all the kids seem to like her for the most part. She’s always going around talking to everyone, so I think it’s good for the school,” said Arjun Makineni (11) when he learned about Sharma’s new role.

Makineni also shared how Sharma personally helped him, stating, “A couple of weeks ago, someone took my phone during the Springfest. And the attendance clerks weren’t helping me. I went to Sharma for help and she talked to them, and they actually had a phone which ended up being mine.”

Sharma expressed that her goal, for next year, is to “Grow in all aspects of the job and support the amazing work happening at American.”

Northern California -----

Congrat
6/02

UC Berkeley
Tyler Carmel
Vrajesh Daga
Sirivennela Gade
Sruthi Ginka
Saransh Jain
Krish Patel
Harshil Pathri
Arya Prince
Vincent Nghiem

UC Davis
Rachel Johnson
Yusuf Khan
Kirtana Poikayil
David Song
Pamela Wang
Raymond Yu

UC Merced
Mayank Arora

UC Santa Cruz
Camille Garipova
Crystal Fan
Nishita Mekala
Akshera Paladhi

Ohlone Community College
Liam Abinales
Alex Aguilar
Elijah Boo
Kiristen DeMesa
Avril Durazo Jaramillo
Aiden Fedaly
Lucy Indorante
Sosana Lopez
Logan Pagsolingan
Greyson Peters

CSU Chico
Vik Bhalla

CSU East Bay
LasJohn Griffin

Chabot Community College
Christain Coffey-Dodd
Silas Hughes
Nathaniel Fajardo

De Anza College
Manpreet Singh

Foothill College
Numa Zarifyar

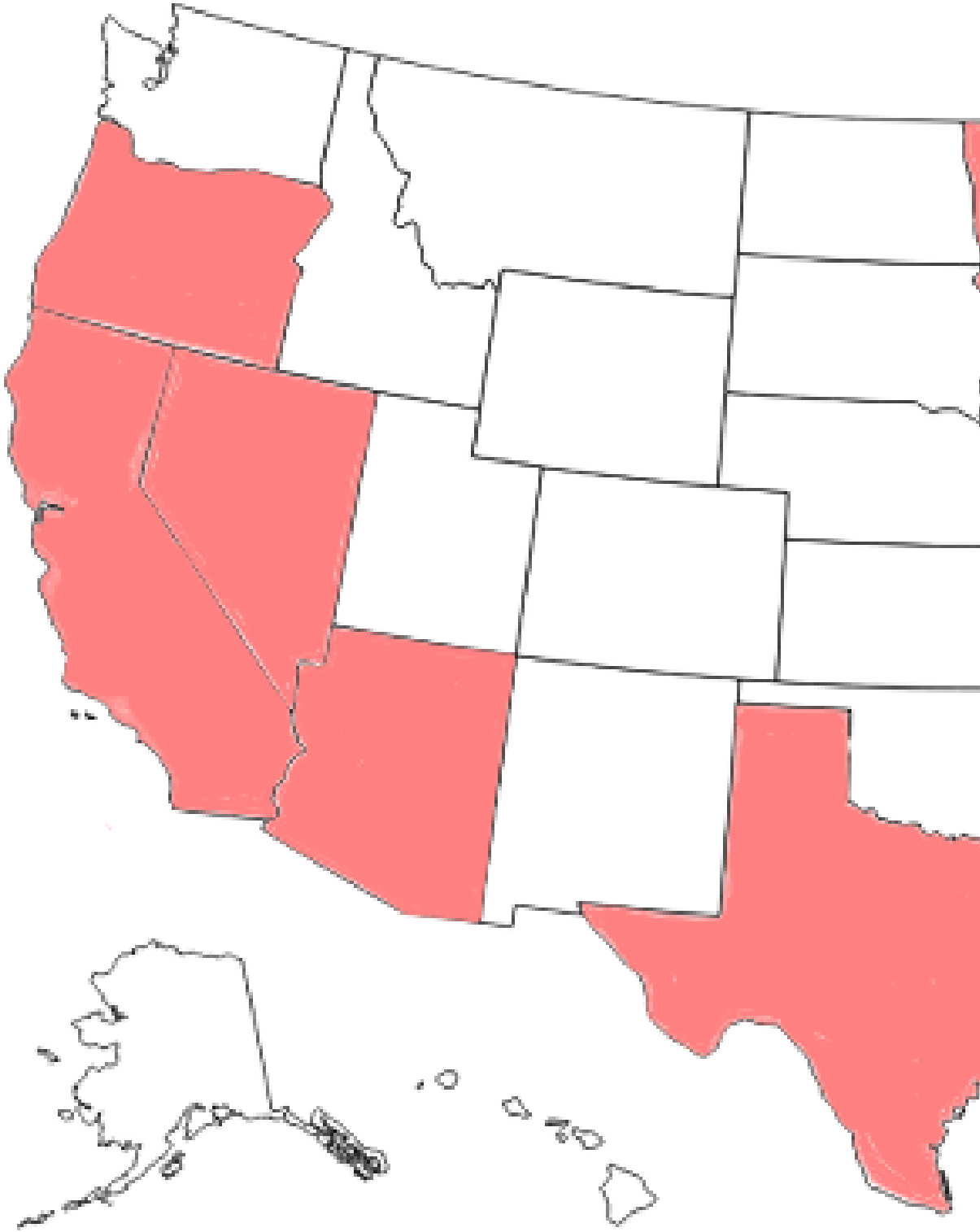
Las Positas Community College
Sophia Alimagno

Pitzer College
Vir Patwardhan

San Jose State University
Kiarra Bautista
Rachel Chung
Jack Couthren
Noah Flores
Mylo Herzog
Nimissha Kartikanand
Rajveer Kharod
Krish Nair
Sebastian Neal-Judd
Catherine Shuwen
Sanjay Srikanth
Zuo Sun
Tanvi Tomare
Harshitha Venkateswaran
Anabella Villegas
Katherine Yu

Santa Clara University
Julia Bamford
Nathan Cao
Melody Ho
Krish Jajoo
Dylan Morgan
Ben Tran

University of the Pacific
Christina Pham



----- *Out-of-State* -----

Arizona State University
Andrea Lee

Boston University
Dhara Patel

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Donavan Tse

Fisk University

Aiyana Thomas

Florida State University
Sukha Yang

Georgia Institue of Technology
Naman Verma

Indiana University Bloomington
Aaroh Dixit

Julia Joseph

Kettering University
Audrey Ammerlaan

Loyola University New Orleans
Vaishnav Desabhatla

Northeastern University
Visisht Kakkirala

Grace Yao
Surya Chelliah

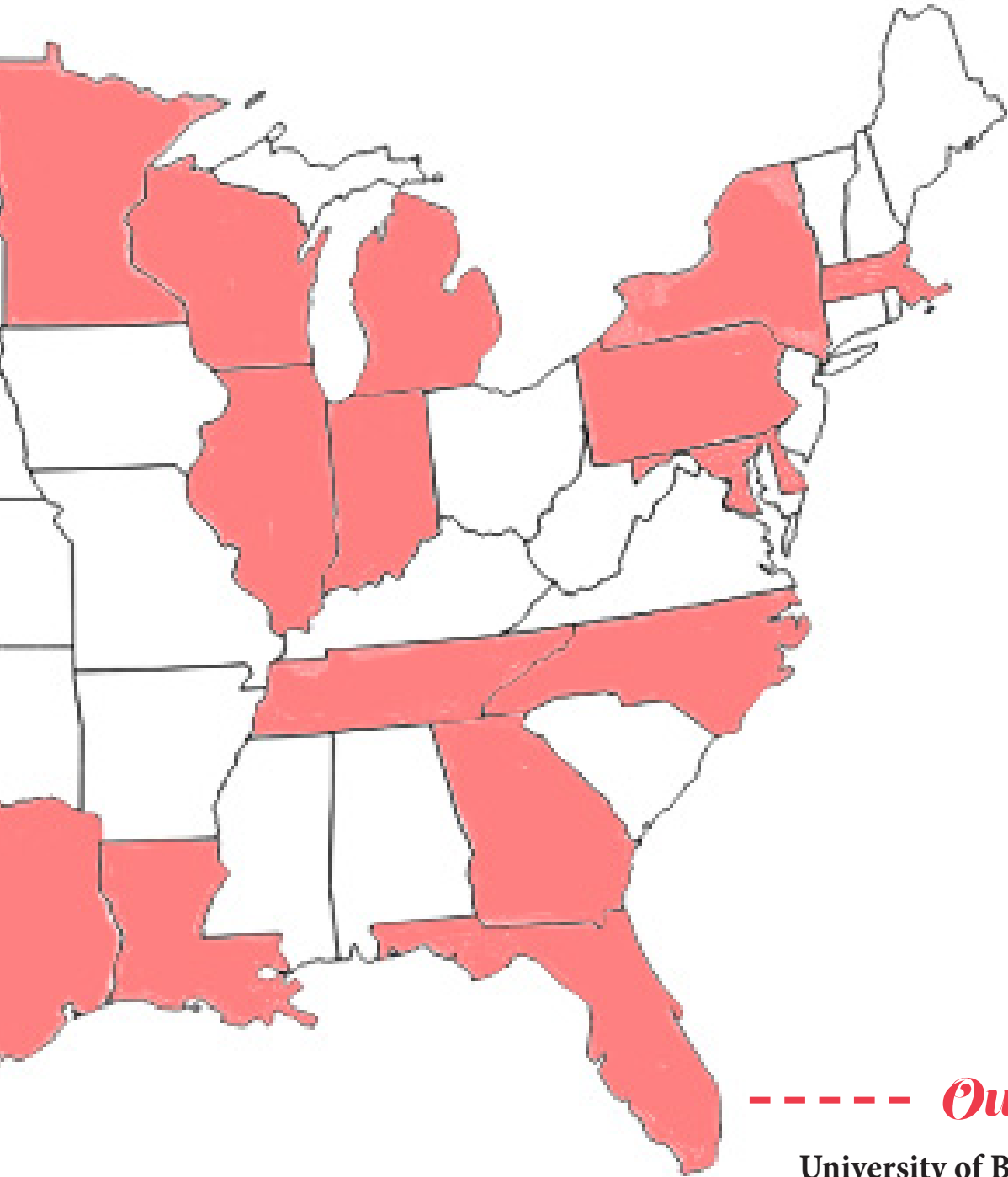
Paradise Valley Community College
Brady Chan

Purdue University
Vishal Bhat
Koushik Chikku
Miles Davy
Kabir Gupta
Anand Raghunath
Pranav Ravindran

Graduations

2024!

Southern California



- UC Irvine

Andrea Chan
Emily Cruzada
- UC Los Angeles

Jessica Li
Sahil Puranik
Alfred Ukudeev-Freeman
Enrica Waugh
Sienna Yung
- UC Riverside

Kymerlee Dosch
Sophia Lo
Raadha Shah
- UC San Diego

Logan King
Zing Li
- UC Santa Barbara

Amish Gaur
Raghvi Sharma
Yash Sujit
Rushabh Taneja
- University of South-
ern California

Angelina Li
Cruz Madrigal
- Azusa Pacific Uni-
versity

Caleb Kuo
- Cal Poly Pomona
University

Chloe Cho
Sahil Hotchandani
- CSU Channel
Islands

Angela Sandoval
- CSU Fullerton

Nakul Sharma
- CSU Long Beach

Ella Knickerbocker
- San Diego State
University

Ishika Mallikarjun

Other

- Marine Corps

Anthony Nushwat

Out-of-Country

- University of British Columbia

Anusha Bhatia
Malaya Cruz
- University of
Oregon

Hana Balderrama

- Andre Sun

Reed College

Mira Legates
- Luke Vinas

Texas Tech
University

Nessya Shapiro
- Trevor Dollins
Miraya Jain
Gayathri Nair
Sanvi Singh
Alan Yom

University of Madi-
son, Wisconsin

Spruthi Koneru
- University of
Michigan

Ananya Balaji
Charlotte Jen
- University of Roch-
ester

Nihithasri Anepally
- School of the Arts
Institute of Chicago

Jay Bittner
- Tufts University

Kelly Wang
- University of Min-
nesota, Twin Cities

Samika Mallik
- University of Texas
at Austin

Mahitha Mamilla
Pranav Raguanth
Shambhavi Tyagi
- Texas A&M
University

Nikhil Nagboth
Shakkthi Sadagopan
- University of Illi-
nois, Urbana-
Champaign

Ishita Chaurasia
- University of Mary-
land College Park

Neelim Mollick
- University of
Nevada, Reno

Connor Christman
- University of Texas
at Dallas

Bhoomi Sidda

California Highway Patrol attempt to clean up San Francisco

Governor Newsom has deployed the CHP into San Francisco and Oakland to control drug sales and other crimes

Logan King
Staff Writer

For the average Bay Area teen, San Francisco is the premier destination for concerts, dates, and just hanging out with friends. However, safety in the city has long been a growing concern. Senior Joshua Suvatne visits San Francisco about once a month and admitted feeling unsafe around the city sometimes in “far places away from all the main foot traffic and in the BART station where there were just crazy people.”

Bay Area native and AP US Government and Macroeconomics teacher Mr. Noori rarely visits the city anymore and attributes San Francisco’s crime issues to frustration over the economy and weak policing. “There’s a lot of situations that small families are struggling with as the middle class is being squashed,” said Mr. Noori. “There’s a huge homeless population in San Francisco. You have a lot of lax policies the past few years, almost not being very punitive to people who wanted to Snatch and Grab.”

In addition to violent crimes, drug sales and use in San Francisco have been on the rise with accidental overdoses up 40% at 204 deaths from January to March 2023 according to Kron 4 news.

To address these concerning statistics, Newsom deployed around 20 California Highway Patrol (CHP) Officers to assist San Francisco Police according to NBC Bay Area. These officers were specifically deployed to the Tenderloin to crack down on drug dealing.

“This is not about criminalizing people struggling with substance use,” said Newsom on the Governor’s website. “This is about taking down the prominent poison peddlers and their connected crime rings that prey on the most vulnerable, and harm our residents.”

“THIS IS ABOUT TAKING DOWN THE PROMINENT POISON PEDDLERS AND THEIR CONNECTED CRIME RINGS THAT PREY ON THE MOST VULNERABLE AND HARM OUR RESIDENTS.”

Today, a year after introduction, according to Kron 4, the Highway Patrol has “issued more than 6200 citations, arrested more than 500 people, and most importantly to their mission, captured nearly 700 lbs of fentanyl in total. That’s enough to kill half the country.”

After visiting the Warfield Theater in the Tenderloin, Suvatne recalled feeling safer because of Highway Patrol officers: “Having police presence after our concert is always great to make sure that people don’t get run over or hit.”

Additionally, Suvatne himself reported seeing positive effects of the CHP crackdown. “In the UN plaza area around City Hall I’ve noticed that there was a decrease in the amount of open air drug markets. A couple of times I had gone there and seen people sitting down on the side of the street, maybe doing or selling drugs, but now I don’t notice that as much anymore.”

However, Kron 4 noted that while accidental overdoses from the months of January to March fell in 2024 compared to 2023, this was only a 5 person drop from 204 deaths to 199 deaths.

“It’s a multifaceted issue. It’s more complex than I think the news makes it,” said Mr. Noori. “I don’t think there’s one quick fix to it. I mean, the city has obviously looked at

some of the policing policies and maybe it’s time for new leadership.”

“I DON’T THINK THERE’S ONE QUICK FIX TO IT. I MEAN, THE CITY HAS OBVIOUSLY LOOKED AT SOME OF THE POLICING POLICIES AND MAYBE IT’S TIME FOR NEW LEADERSHIP.”

Despite criticisms, this February, Newsom announced the deployment of an additional 120 CHP officers in the Oakland East Bay area that, in just four days, resulted in “71 suspects arrested, 145 stolen vehicles recovered, and four crime-linked firearms seized” according to ABC7 News. These officers along with the introduction of a new police chief after a year of vacancy in the position could be the lifeline the communities of Oakland need.

When visiting San Francisco, Suvatne said, “depending on where the spot is some spaces are still unsafe and all that. But then some places like near the UN plaza area are actually, I feel more safe now. It just depends on where you go.”

Governor Newsom added around 20 new California Highway Patrol officers to San Francisco last year to clean up the Tenderloin (Art by Logan King).



Believe it or not, you should enjoy high school!

A cautionary tale about how you spend your time during these four years

Vincent Nghiem
Staff Writer

Listen closely. I deliver this message upon my dying breath, my legacy as a senior of American High School: if you haven't gotten three internships, received four letters of recommendation, and developed a cure for cancer by eight years old, you're practically doomed. Erase those pitiful fantasies of yours from your head—you're not getting into an Ivy.

Modern college admissions culture, especially in the Bay Area, has gained something of a notorious reputation. The objective to get into a good college through some nebulous, apparently foolproof formula of internships, research, competitions, and baseless nonprofits (don't lie; most of them are nonexistent) hangs like a spectre over many students' junior years, twisting peers into opponents and youth into a miserable pregame for the rat race. You may be familiar with communities such as r/ChanceMe on Reddit, a digital museum where high school students exhibit their academic and extracurricular "statistics" and receive, in exchange, the likelihood of their admission to particular colleges (often predicted, ironically, by other high schoolers). Alternatively, you may have encountered videos in the same clickbait vein posted by Instagram accounts such as @standout.search and @limmytalks, boasting ominous, purposefully manipulative titles such as "The Biggest Summer Activity Red Flags for High School Students." Collectively, these are the primary culprits of the increasing popularity of this culture of intense academic competition.

But I'll let you in on some insider information, some trade secrets I've gathered as a senior. Sure, that secret get-accepted-quick formula of lore might exist. But there is no four-year-long equation, no matter how enticing, that is worth sacrificing your happiness in high school.

It feels awkward, almost dystopian, to feel the need to advise high schoolers to enjoy themselves. Personally, I generally

followed this advice throughout high school: I spent most of my time pursuing things I actually liked, or at least was intrigued by. For example, the fact that I'm writing this piece in the first place is a consequence of my end-of-sophomore-year decision to pursue the field of high school journalism. That in itself began as a supplement to my larger personal love for writing, and even though I've ultimately decided to enter a STEM field, I have never compromised that interest in favor of forcing myself to suffer under experiences I knew I would be unhappy with.

However, it would be dishonest to refuse to admit that the aforementioned heralds of admissions hysteria enticed me too. But I can speak from dreadful experience that buying into this toxic dialogue of competitiveness and "maximizing yourself" will only make you more stressed rather than prepare you for the tense environment of the admissions process. Unsurprisingly, equating yourself to a handful of numbers, statistics, and extracurriculars attached to your name can lead you down a path of ruinous self-devaluation destructive to your self-esteem and well-being.

This isn't to say that you should completely forget the prospect of college application season, an impending reality for most of you. However, give yourself grace—the world will not end if you do not get into a prestigious college. But things will certainly go awry when you stop demonstrating genuine passion in what you choose to do. So avoid that which would diminish you and constrain your youth into a resumé-sized box; instead, experiment, explore, and indulge in your interests. Because your future is not predestined, regardless of where you end up, so use that wiggle room and protect that sparkling essence inside of you, that which defines you more than a three-digit GPA or a shiny-looking extracurricular could ever do.

Now Opening: The Major Mart!

Be free my little birdies!

Angelina Li
Staff Writer

Freshman year during COVID (yes, that again), I was schoolwork and schoolwork was me. Even at badminton, all I could think about were my essays and how losing that one point would mean that I was undeserving of my grade.

Sophomore year, as I agonized through Mrs. Martin's class, I again hyperfixated on the need to achieve a near-perfect chemistry grade. At 2:00 AM, I would scroll through my fifty-eight page study guide. I would tuck my study guide into my sleeve and study molecular structures while sprinting the mandatory PE runs.

I definitely loosened up during junior and senior year, but I still prioritized my grades. However, when you get the lowest test score out of the entire population of AP Calc BC kids, any other grade becomes a celebration, and suddenly, keeping a 97% and higher does not matter anymore.

This is all to say that despite how much I cared immensely about my academics, the premise of my actual future was left unconsidered.

Perhaps the most glaring testament to how random my major selection was that when my friends asked me what sociology was, all I could tell them was that it had something to do with society. Go figure. I did settle on sociology in the end as I plan to attend law school. A social science degree felt the most preparatory for what I would be focusing on in the future.

While I truly do find sociology interesting (thriving in the AP histories helped), it would be a lie to say that the notion of an easier college acceptance didn't influence my major decision.

I know I'm supposed to say that you shouldn't choose a major in hopes that your chances of getting in will increase. In reality, I spent hours researching just that.

Yet, based on the sheer dichotomy between my interest in humanities versus the lack thereof in STEM, it was genuinely a mere coincidence that I happened to enjoy a field with less competition.

Sure, you can apply for communications and request a major change to computer science, but as I am going to assume you are doing this to get into a prestigious university, it is not as easy as just asking your academic advisor.

Be confident that what you have done throughout high school will get you to where you need and your future efforts will continue to foster your path.

Speaking of my aforementioned aversion to STEM, I truly am thankful to have lived in this Bay Area landmine of grind-mindset STEM-thumpers. While I'm not going to delude anyone into believing that the academic culture here is entirely integrity and roses (we know, they know), the willingness of AHS students to help each other in such difficult subjects is not always shared amongst other top high schools.

While I still think the left-hand rule and right-hand rule are just physicians twiddling their fingers abnormally, the logic capabilities I have honed from my STEM classes play a crucial role in my ability to be critical in my thinking and writing.

Writing college essays, of course, has become one of the most sought out skills to have. A 4.0 GPA is not enough anymore. As much as someone else can help you edit your work, the voice and stylistic choices you embellish your essays with are what portray the unique you that colleges wish to accept.

This ties back into my previous point of choosing a major entirely different from your passion, as your "why major" essay will fall flat. Your other essays revolving around your extracurriculars and life will also be in vain if you fail to communicate the passion you have for your major (in so far that you actually have none).

As much as those poignant, emotional college essays circulate in popularity, you don't truly know what unique combination of efforts actually landed a person into a college. Claiming that their essay got them into a college without actual confirmation is jumping to conclusions.

I think by now you probably have heard that the college admissions process is truly a gamble, the school name doesn't matter, this and that. Instead, I am going to congratulate all of you in advance for wherever you will end up in the future.

And if where you are accepted into college still marks how you feel about your efforts (and that is a completely valid feeling), just remember that you will always have other chances to be selected. An internship, a job, or even a transfer to another university.

Sorren Chaudhury, currently a college freshman pursuing a major in social studies education, reflects on the importance of senior events: "It seems lame now but go to the senior events. That time for friends is crucial when you're in a sea of finals and applications, and they're the last events of high school."

ADVICE FROM AHS ALUMNI

Areeba Asaduzzaman, currently a freshman at UC Santa Cruz, underscores the value of balance and seizing opportunities: "Enjoy it! Being a senior is an accomplishment in itself! Get involved and be friends with everyone... Don't stress too much over post-grad."

Jessica Le, now a first-year student majoring in psychology at UCLA, emphasizes the significance of embracing the present: "For the Class of 2025, my main advice is to understand that things will turn out the way they are meant to... Study hard and work hard, but also don't forget to make lasting memories."

Karampreet Kaur & Ella Yam
Staff Writers

Senior Wills

A funny tradition from 1974, where graduating seniors will something physical or conceptual to juniors, sophomores, and freshmen.

Aniya Badal & Hana Balderrama
Staff Writers

I, Henry Supnet, will a squirt from a squirt gun to Aidyn Dalling (10).

I, Sowile Shakib, will ownership of the tables and Instagram group chat to Usman Mujaddide (10).

I, Neelim Mollick, will my final apologies to Benjamin Qiao (11).

I, Jack Couthren, will my status as the school’s emo boy to Rishaan Joshi (11).

I, Samuel James Timothee Mercado, will my discuss throw length to Kai Uk (10).

I, Rae Quintana, will my spot on the couch in Coach Kimo’s class to Elizabeth (10).

I, Tyler Levinberg, will my spot in Coach Kimo’s class to Dhruv Patki (11).

I, Karampreet Kaur, will \$30,303,000 to Autumn Tuthill (11).

I, Saud Faruq Mansoor, will my space in the fridge to Fatima Mansoor (9).

I, Trevin Agutos, will kindness to Kylie Agno (11).

I, Enzo Emami, will the uncredited role of 3D printers manager to Nivedha Radhakrishnan (11).

I, Nisanth Nimashakavi, will 35 cents, 4 pesos, 84 yuan, and 92 rubles to Ryan Puntero (9).

I, Aung Hein, will a lovely communication to my younger brother, Zwe Aung (11).

I, Nikhil Sharma, will my spot in drama class to the class of drama.

I, Dillon Dedhia, will my exercise bike to Mr. Cooper.

I, Prajacta Bagayatkar, will my kidney stones and all of my Incognito tabs to Meera Patil (11).

I, Logan Pagsolingan, will the last of my motivation to finish high school to Sydney Pagsolingan (10).

I, AJ Torrado, will the name of AJ down to AJ Cristobal (11).

I, Christina Zou, will my delulu to my silly distance track girlies.

I, Fern Tigri, will my love, time, support, and advice to Haylee Tigri (9).

I, Sanvi Singh, will all my Calc BC knowledge to Lauren Kong (10).

I, Mylo Herzog, will my joyous whimsy to Emaan Irfan (11).

I, Joshua Evan Suvatne, will my love and support to Latayjah Kennedy (11) and Avery Pemberton (11).

I, Connor Cruey, will all my old school papers/ now trash to Grace Long (11).

I, Julia Bamford, will the organizational skills I never had to Mahiya Rade (10).

I, Sahasra Ottikunta, will the Hindu Culture and History Club to Srijani Vutukuri (9).

I, Sosana Lopez, will my Rojas notebook to my brother, Abram Lopez (9).

I, Hana Balderrama, will my love for The Smiths to Allysa Romero (11).

I, Aniya Badal, will my fake French accent to Natalie Schmoyer (11).

Dual Perspectives

The duality of senior year: all APs vs. students with extreme senioritis

Ella Knickerbocker
Staff Writer

Senior year is a time for fun as more student events are held, everyone is looking forward to graduation, and stresses are lifted during the second semester for everyone already committed to their future plans. However, for some students, the AP grind never yields. This balance between senioritis and locked-in academic weapons are on two opposite sides of the

On the contrary, some students at American do enjoy their AP classes and take them because they want to challenge themselves. “I’m thugging it out American High School style,” Garipova said, “I love my APs, but it’s hard to manage my mental state and try to enjoy senior year when I have to be so school focused.” Academic weapons are only one extreme on this senior spectrum and

“First of all, I’m going to community college,” Indorante explains, “Most colleges don’t accept AP exam scores anymore because they don’t hold the value they used to have. Everyone takes AP classes now. If you go into a room full of kids and ask ‘Who’s taking an AP class’ it will probably be over half of them. You don’t stand out by taking APs anymore.” “The value of AP classes, especially here is going down,” Garipova agrees,



An AP tryhard, Mylo Herzog (12), cram studies for 6 AP classes while a senior slacker, Fern Tigri (12), dozes off in front of them, showing the true duality of senior year (PC: Ella Knickerbocker (12))

“At American High, everyone takes every AP possible so taking them is just normalized.” Despite both groups of seniors seeming like they are completely contrasting, they are in harmony when it comes to having no time for leisure. “I have no free time,” Roberts says, “All of my classes give me so much work and now I have projects in all six classes.”

senior spectrum. Christina Zou (12) explains “I only took one AP in my sophomore year and only two in my junior year so I thought I would do a gradual one, two, three. But AP Gov and Econ turned out to be two separate AP classes so I guess I’m taking four.” “I’m taking four AP classes,” Camille Garipova (12) says, “And I had a portfolio so I guess I’m taking five APs.” “I’m taking five APs,” says Pamela Wang (12), “I only took one sophomore year and one junior year so I thought ‘I have to step up my game.’” “I’m mainly taking these classes for the GPA boost,” comments Isabel Wu (12), “They’re just classes. I mean, I don’t think I would prefer a non-AP course over an AP course, because regardless I need that class.”

kids with terminal cases of senioritis are on the other. “I’ve had senioritis since sophomore year,” Jenna Roberts (12) says, “I didn’t get to pick my classes, and I think they just threw me into wherever they thought I would fit.” “I caught senioritis junior year,” Lucy Indorante (12) states, “I wanted just to do the shows here so that’s what I was going to focus on. I only have five classes and it’s awesome because I get to leave at one.” These seniors are not just taking non-AP classes for fun, but they both have unique reasons behind why they don’t think AP classes are worth it. “I hate the idea of taking AP classes,” Roberts states, “I just want to pass. My parents don’t care what classes I take, just if I pass.”

“80 hours of my week is school and work,” Indorante explains, “I have two jobs which are the equivalent to a full-time job, and on top of that, I have school. My year in terms of schoolwork is chill, but I do not have a lot of time for myself.” “AP classes are all-consuming,” Garipova agrees, “Especially during AP week. Then, when I thought I was finally done, work just kept getting piled on! I thought I would have time to be sentimental at the end of the year but no, I have to turn in this assignment by 11:59 P.M. and present a project the next day.” “I barely had time for any first-semester senior events, I didn’t even go to the spirit week night because I had so many assignments I needed to turn in,” Wang adds, “Sometimes I would have to compromise on things I wanted to do because of an overbearing load of work.”



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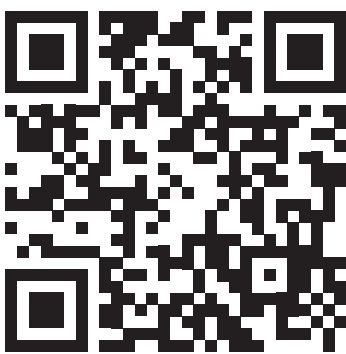
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AHSPA's Class of '24's Curtain Call

A review of High School Musical: On Stage, the final production of the 2023-2024 school year

Alayna Jeong | Staff Writer

Beginning on April 18th, AHSPA presented their final show of the school year, High School Musical: On Stage. This rendition of the beloved childhood movie brought full houses on both opening and closing nights. The stars were AJ Torrado (12) as Troy Bolton, Sana Arora (9) as Gabriella Montez, and Celina Minoji (10) as Sharpay Evans. Accompanying iconic songs, such as “Start of Something New” and “We’re All In This Together,” were choreographed dances and a live band that brought the production to life.

Through a collaborative effort between Ms. Benedetti, stage crew,

parent differences were portrayed by Minoji and Arora, using body language to demonstrate their characters’ demeanors. Jarod Reyes (12), is a long-time AHSPA member, who played Ryan Evans, “This musical definitely went above and beyond everyone’s expectations. Everyone worked really hard, and I’ve gained more confidence since my first show,” Reyes smiled. To his fellow cast members, he says, “AJ is someone I really admire. I’ve known him since Freaky Friday, and he’s come so far. For newer people, there’s Sana, who I’m so impressed by. I’m



To prevent a tearful goodbye, AHSPA took a commemorative photo after their successful third show (PC: Aaron Tsai (12)).

and Ms. Olson’s art students, they constructed the impressive stage set that showcased the dominating sides of East High: the brainiacs and the jocks. The brainiacs’ side had a chalkboard and books to prepare for the upcoming decathlon. Complimenting them was the jock’s side, lined with lockers and basketball gear, including a basketball hoop, so they could get their heads in the game.

The sound crew stepped their game up, using lavalier microphones. Joshua Suvatne (12) explained, “Our microphones are old, but they’re good. It took a lot of troubleshooting but after a couple of hours of re-search, I found the problem.” Being a musician at heart, he utilized his skills to tinker with mics and the ancient, 18-years-old soundboard. Through this, the cast’s voices were accentuated throughout the theater.

The sound queues were also met expertly. To showcase Sharpay’s confidence, there was a drawn out writing sound effect to emphasize her undoubtedly large writing. Another was for Gabriella, who swiftly solved an equation on the chalkboard. This created a subtle yet effective display of their differing personalities. Ap-

excited to see what she’s going to do from here.” Another senior cast member is Kiarra Bautista, who played Taylor McKessie. “There’s always an “older sibling figure” among the cast, and I wanted to fulfill that. Jarod and I led warm-ups, and I hoped to be welcoming to our underclassmen,” Bautista said, while reflecting on rehearsals. She holds an abundance of respect for returners who have been a part of AHSPA’s productions throughout the years. “I look up to Sana and Celina. The fact that they got leads as underclassmen is so admirable and should be recognized more.” To end closing night, the seniors took their final bows. Bautista expressed, “When I did it, I felt like I wasn’t ready yet. It was a bittersweet feeling, and it didn’t hit until the day after.” Reyes had done his senior bows during Clue earlier that school year and knew he would have one left for the musical. Still, he said, “It really was the final one, and it’s crazy to think that it’s over. But this performance was everything I wanted and more. I couldn’t have asked for a better director, cast-mates, and band.”

A (Prom)ise Made with Creativity and Care

How a classic highschool ritual reflects students’ efforts to appreciating their friends and partners

Mylo Herzog | Staff Writer

Promposals, a modern tradition, have transcended from making a simple poster and a bouquet of flowers, including personal nudges to someone’s favorite things, or creating an intricate scheme for things to fall together perfectly. With flowers in hand and a motorcycle helmet concealing his face, Arnel Torrado (12) decided to put the extra effort into proposing to his friend. “What really stuck out on my poster was the wooden wheel I made. I used an actual wood-cutter to carve out the wheel, and I would secure

seemingly simple question. Whether it be through grand spectacles involving multiple people, or etching sweet references to their interests, “Before I asked this person, I asked her friends beforehand. I knew that she liked F1 and motorsports, and I knew her favorite racer,” said Torrado. “So I wanted to incorporate that in the poster, with the spinning wheel, the motorcycle helmet, and the promposal pun.” “Before we got together, she was taking me to school and ‘While You Were Sleeping’ was



After being blindfolded and guided to the lakeside while being given roses, Kymberlee Jun Dosch (12), joins her partner Ren Marzan (12). (PC: Tyra Domingo (12))

it with cardboard. After that, I just painted it black,” said Torrado. “Honestly it wasn’t the most smooth when turning, but it was cute for what it was.” Each promposal shares a unique, artistic flare to it, but what connects these elaborate gestures is the amount of effort put into them, and this is no different for Ren Marzan (12). “I wanted the promposal to happen on our one month anniversary, so I had to plan it quick. I was pretty nervous trying to get our friends together and get the plan and poster ready.” The anxious sweat alongside anticipation, however, culminated into a heartwarming and joyous memory for both Marzan and Kymberlee Dosch (12). “I thought we were going to go out to eat, but my friends started missing turns and we ended up at Lake Elizabeth. I got blindfolded and was walking out of the car, and when I took it off I saw my friends with flowers, and Ren with the poster. It was really sweet.” The idea of promposals mostly started as a means of asking a

playing. I remember looking up the lyrics and I was just thinking, “Hm, that’s interesting,” said Marzan. And, although a promposal could be simpler, slapping on the words “Prom?” and just buying flowers would not be enough for Marzan. “There’s some people that think ‘Oh, it’s a given you guys are going together,’ but putting in the effort into making it special shows that you care a lot for a person. It’s not just the idea of two people going together, but being with your significant other.” Promposals, despite originating from simple gestures, have become a serenade of care and consideration, parading a spectacle of cheesy, but thoughtful actions that ultimately bring people together. “The fact that Ren went through all this planning and all of our friends were involved too, is so meaningful,” said Dosch. “Even though he was really busy with his other work, this moment really showed how much he cares for me.”

Who's Paying?

Barriers surrounding media subscription services lead to piracy

Jessica Li
Staff Writer

From a February 2024 report, Netflix expects to raise its subscription prices this year, following an increase last October of the Basic plan from \$9.99 to \$11.99 per month. A general trend of inflating streaming site prices also occurs among Prime Video, Apple TV+, Disney+, and Hulu. Costs add up as families pay for one or multiple services monthly, which—alongside geo-blocking, censorship, and other factors—deter students from considering paid sites for media a viable option.

“I’ve seen people use Netflix like drinking coffee,” said Katherine Yu (12). “I don’t have the disposable income to spend on streaming subscriptions. I’d feel guilty using my mom’s money for a selfish desire like wanting to watch a show that I could technically watch for free.”

Piracy in the face of inaccessible media becomes a common if controversial practice. Nevertheless, the reasoning persists that true fans who deliberately pirate will often purchase official merchandise or support creators financially in the long run.

Yu said, “It feels a little hypocritical when I would rather spend money on merch than a streaming service, but that’s just my logic.”

Piracy may also be the only option to access overseas creative work without official English distribution. Pamela Wang (12), who frequently consumes unlicensed Chinese web novels and Japanese manga, finds herself relying on unpaid translators who post chapters online for free.

“They’re very dedicated to be spending [their own] time translating full novels for the general public, which I can respect,” said Wang. “Unofficial translations are a good way of overseas media being

spread around, and it opens new opportunities for that media to become popular, gain traction, and open doors for [it] to benefit financially.”

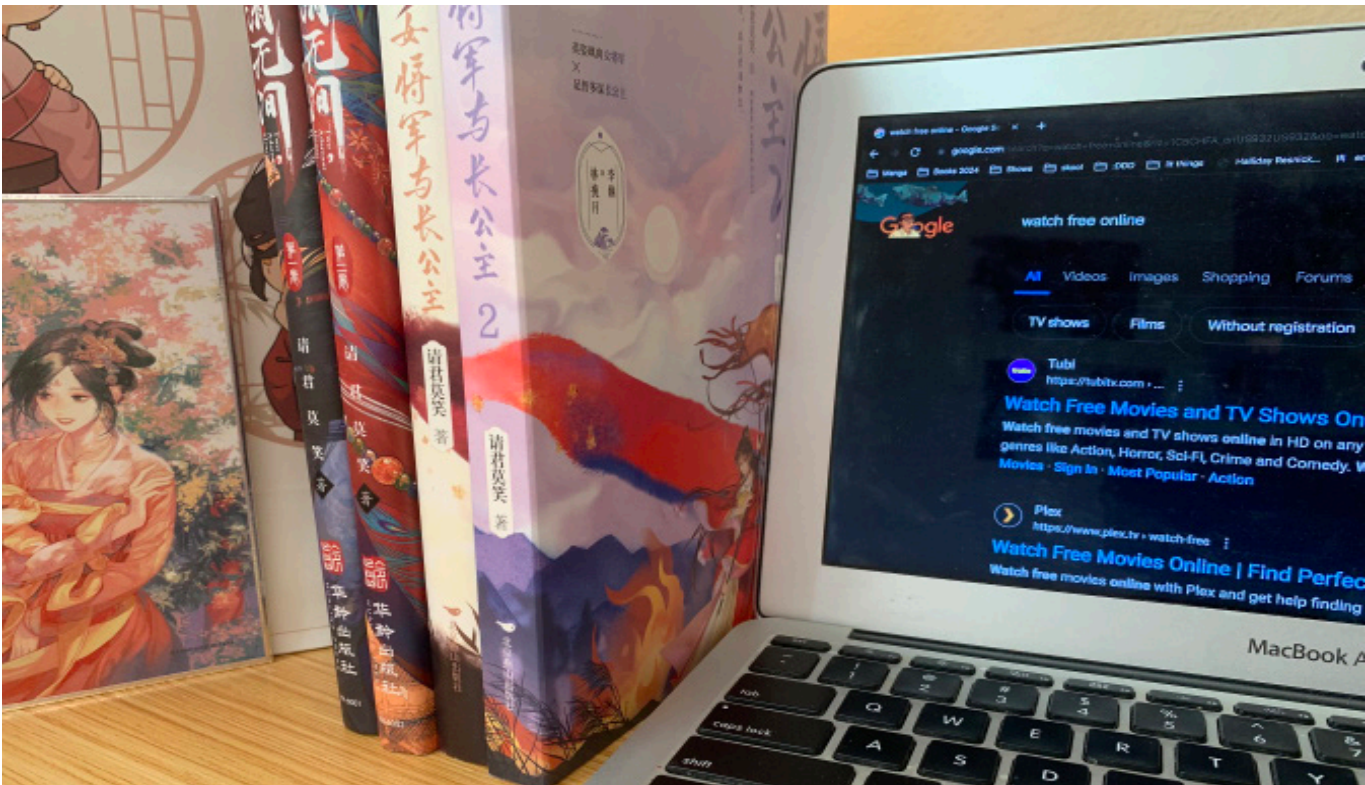
Others prefer similar alternatives to the exclusivity of subscription services. Nisanth Nimashakavi (12) pays for Amazon Prime and Netflix, yet he still supports piracy and opposes the oligarchal possession of intellectual property.

“In the future, I hope to see that subscription sites

are mainly removed. Media creators should crowdfund their projects and let their media be free and open to the market. There shouldn’t be a paywall on content,” said Nimashakavi.

Paid services now fail to restrict the access of media and people can balance the illegal lengths they are personally willing to go while fulfilling any obligations they have toward creators. The internet seas may be lawless but not without individual codes of conduct.

A laptop with a simple piracy Google search stands beside overseas novels currently only translated and available through piracy (PC: Jessica Li (12))



Letter From The Editor – Surya Chelliah

Paper news is a dying medium. It’s something we’ve known as an audience and press for a long time as news has transitioned into the digital age to hold our eyes and attention for even a second. Yet, my time at the Eagle Era as both a writer and editor for the Politics & Arts/Entertainment sections has been an experience that displayed new life rather than one outlining the slow death of our school’s media.

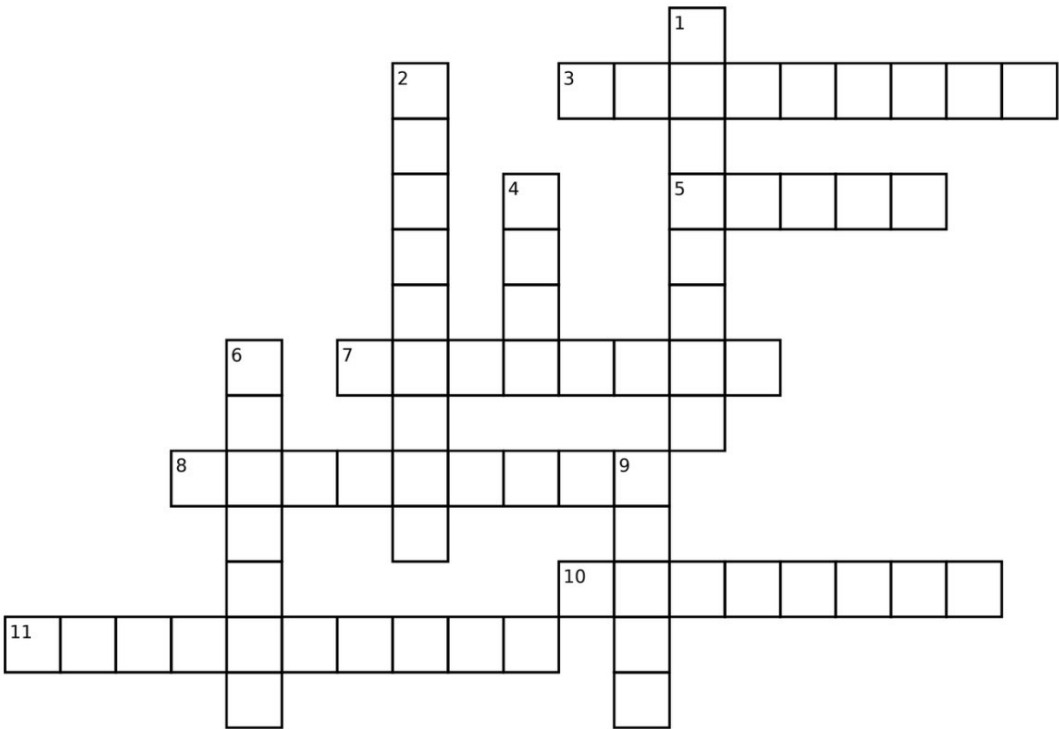
When I joined the paper last year, I had little interest in actually trying to capture the student body’s attention. What was the point when there were professional outlets that made the news so consumable and operated on such a high level? We publish once every month, hardly enough to make the “news” in our news relevant. But watching students occasionally race to get a new issue after exposés on our school—our home—proved that despite the obsolescence of paper media, trusted information from peers was still in demand. Working with this year’s editor team to structure the paper to be more future-proof with an emphasis on student-centric news has been uncompromisingly

time-consuming but ultimately rewarding, seeing the interest of the student body in not only readership but applications to join the paper as writers and editors for the coming year.

The community and experience I had and formed at the Eagle Era have been like nothing before for me. With my junior and first year at the paper being my first full year of “real” high school amidst the pandemic and the stifling of my sophomore year to one semester due to illness, it’s hard to not synonymize my high school experience and resort to nostalgics when thinking of my time here, but looking ahead to our next team of editors and writers, I’m certain that what’s to come holds more potential and promise than what’s already happened. As the paper moves toward its 52nd volume, Amrita, Daniel, Emaan, Muhammed, Nanki, Rohan, and Royden. (that’s in alphabetical order—if I have a favorite it’s Muhammed) have shown remarkable passion and tenacity for giving the paper more accessibility while maintaining the integrity and personality that brought students’ eyes to our publication in the first place.

May Crossword

Siena Encarnacion | Staff Writer



- Down:

 - 1. The best ice cream shop in Fremont on a sweltering summer day.
 - 2. What do you call a bear caught in a heat wave?
 - 4. Catch some ____.
 - 6. April showers bring May ____!
 - 9. What does a tree do when it's hot? (hint: It throws ____)
- Across:

 - 3. What in ____?
 - 5. ____ side up!
 - 7. She sells seashells down by the ____!
 - 8. Tiny insects that thrive in humid weather and utilize human blood for reproduction.
 - 10. These summer blooming flowers symbolize new beginnings, hope, and joy.
 - 11. What do you call a flower that runs on electricity?

Celebrate Summer in the Happiest City in America

Local Fremont activities and fun ideas to do this Summer

Malaya Cruz
Staff Writer

Are you bored of going to Ain't Common everyday? Tired of the ho-hum atmosphere at Los Cerritos Park? Don't fret, there are far more fun things to do in Fremont to cease your boredom!

If you're a lover of the outdoors, try taking a visit to Coyote Hills. Taking a step outside to admire the natural world around is always a nice change of scenery, and the golden, grassy Fremont hills are hard to miss! You can admire the wildlife while enjoying a picnic under the warm sun or feel the cool ocean breeze stream by your face while biking along the coastline. Once you make it to the top, you'll even be able to enjoy a breathtaking view of the San Francisco Bay.

"I really like hiking in coyote hills, specifically at 6pm because it's sunset time. It's so beautiful. I once ate a sugar cane on top of the hill, and it was truly a rejuvenating experience," said Amulya Manoj (12).

Or try picking up a new hobby!

"When I'm bored in Fremont and it's hot outside, I usually like to stay indoors and pick up indoor activities, like sewing. I really [also] like

roller skating," said Manoj. "A lot of summer days, I roller skate around sunset."

Teaching yourself a new skill is a great way to challenge yourself and exercise your brain outside of the school environment.

"Because I have more time in the summer, I like to crochet all the things I've been wanting to do. I like crocheting because it's a good pastime and I find it relaxing. I also love learning new patterns and expanding my knowledge," said Vanya Singh (12).

Another great Fremont gem located downtown is the Niles district. Wander into countless antique stores filled with treasures beyond imagination or learn of the district's history with silent Hollywood (renowned actor Charlie Chaplin had once resided and filmed there!).

"It's a very cute place, very aesthetic and they have nice restaurants and shops. They have ice cream shops, good brunch places. I like going there when the weather is nice," said Singh.

For a delectable, drive down Niles to head over to the nearby Skilletz Cafe. They'll be

able to seat you outside, so you can soak up the sun while enjoying a vast range of delicious brunch items.

"Skilletz in Niles is good for brunch and breakfast. I get an omelet scramble with mushrooms and cheese," said Singh.

If you're a workaholic who just can't escape the grind, try applying for a local Fremont summer job! You can gain hands-on work experience and save up money that will provide you with financial stability in the future. Having a summer job is a great way to prepare you for life after high school.

"Right now I work at Sky zone. It's a good way to earn money [as] a summer job. I've made good friends there, I like my coworkers, and I learned how to communicate with kids," said Singh.

And remember, don't forget to stay off your phone, instead go out and hang out with friends, or even make new ones. After all, time is short, and we have endless summer activities to enjoy in the happiest city in America.

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