

Senior Year: A Financial Burden

To complete senior year, big bucks must be dropped.

Jessica Le
Staff Writer

\$108 for the yearbook. \$20 minimum for senior portraits. \$110 minimum per AP exam—for four exams, that would be around \$440. \$1,000 minimum for college applications. \$700 minimum to fly and visit a college overnight. \$400 minimum for Grad Nite. Around \$30 all the way to \$500 to apply for housing at a college. \$25 for the senior year hoodie and \$25 for the class package. Around \$300 for professional graduation pictures, outfits, and parties.

Senior year is by far the most expensive year of high school. With the amount of events and necessary items to purchase, senior year takes a financial toll on many families.

Shriya Shankar, a senior at American High School, has tapped her debit card far too many times this year. “First, you have your college applications and application fees. It’s like

\$70 to \$75 per college. Plus, for most people who invest in a college counselor, it is another \$400+ at least. There’s all the dances that you go to: homecoming, prom, etc. Your

prom dress is on average \$120 to \$170 added on top of all the accessories, makeup and stuff that you buy. You have your cap and gown, Grad Nite for \$400, and senior cruise for \$105. There are senior portraits, the cost of your college orientation, trips to fly over to your college and visit, over \$200 to even commit to your college. Most of us have cars so there are gas expenses and expenses to go on trips because it’s your last year.” The heavy cost of senior year has made it



Caden Kwon (12) and Christina Zou (11) posing for pictures before prom.
(PC: Jordan Suleman)

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An Unanticipated Incident

A look into the recent stabbings at Davis

Japneet Kaur
Staff Writer

On Thursday, May 4th, a 21-year-old was arrested in Davis, California for two counts of murder and one count of attempted murder. Former UC Davis student Carlos Reales Dominguez has been found responsible for the stabbings of 50-year-old David Breaux, 20-year-old UC Davis student Karim Abou Najm, and 64-year-old Kimberlee Guillory. His actions have left the once-safe community in shock and the families and friends of the victims grieving their loved ones. While the event was

shocking for all who had once considered Davis to be one of the safer college towns, those with family members there were left particularly shaken by the situation. Mehek Bhatnagar (12), whose sister is a junior at UC Davis details her initial reaction. “It was scary because I didn’t know exactly what was happening. There were times when my sister called me at around 1 AM to tell us that the suspect was actively running around Davis with police cars and helicopters chasing him.” All three stabbings occurred within the span of a week. The body of

Breaux was found in a local park with multiple stab wounds, and two days later, Abou-Najm was found dead in a different park close to the university’s campus. He had been biking home after an academic award ceremony and the bike was recovered outside the park. Two days later, Guillory was found fatally wounded at a homeless encampment near the college campus and was taken to the hospital in critical condition. Dominguez was found a couple days later, wearing identical clothing to those in the suspect de- Continued Page 2



Arrested serial stabber, Carlos Dominguez (PC: CBS News)

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hard for many families with high school seniors to enjoy their last year.

“It is not accessible for all seniors,” Shankar adds. “Not everyone can afford this and they’re forced to give up a bunch of stuff. Fee waivers? Sure, but you can’t really give up buying stuff like your cap and gown.”

Shankar is currently sitting amongst a classroom full of seniors—specifically Mr. Pepper’s AP Macroeconomics—where many seniors share a similar frustration with piling costs to afford senior year.

“We have to go to concerts too!” shouts someone from the back of the room.

“The Taylor Swift concert is so expensive!” adds another student on the other side.

Annitha Krishnan, another senior in the same class, has spent far too much this year alone.

“One other thing too, is the college sweater. It’s such a small thing that you don’t really think about. They are so expensive. They’re like \$60 for merch,” Krishnan mentions.

“It’s not a necessity, but most people buy it even if it is really expensive,” Shankar says. “People want to buy it to wear for Commitment Day, another senior event.”

On the topic of senior cruise’s pricing, the entire

class raises their voice in a collective agreement—that pricing was not fair.

Henna Davidson is the only one left in her seat at the mention of senior cruise.

“For that \$104, the food was alright. It was literally school lunch, and for the music, the DJ would not listen. It was so bad. It was not fun. The pricing was not worth it.”

Shankar also attended the senior cruise on April 28, 2023.

It was fun and all but I would have paid a max \$50 for it. It should have been half that price.”

As for the price of prom, the class agrees that the pricing is too high.

“Cal High is going to the same place and they paid \$65 max,” says Krishnan.

Across from Mr. Pepper’s AP Macroeconomics class is Mr. Noori in the 900s wing, who also teaches the same subject. Part of that class is Caden Kwon, a senior who expresses the same financial concerns regarding senior year.

“Our education isn’t the only thing that prefaces what’s to come in college; the amount of application fees, graduation-related payments, senior events, and more reflect the incredible amount we’re going to have to pay for college.”

Kwon, who recently

attended prom on May 13, 2023 at the California Academy of Sciences, enjoyed the Enchanted Forest event for the \$130 he paid without the ASB discount.

“You have to consider that the ticket is pretty much half the cost. I rented a tuxedo that ended up being more than the ticket,” he says. “Plus parking which was \$36 and gas money... but considering it’s a once-in-a-lifetime staple high school experience and the venue was great and the food pulled through, I’d say it’s worth it for what it is as the highlight of senior year.”

Kwon’s good friend Saket Poludasu (12) has a theory for senior year’s many expenses.

“Senior year is more expensive in terms of events because of two reasons. One, there’s much more events geared towards seniors only. Two, because it is our last year here, we feel somewhat obligated to go to all of them and enjoy our last year at school with friends. I myself have gone to every event.”

Part of the group in charge of pricing for senior events is the senior council. Siri Dhayabaran (12), a Fundraising Coordinator, helps the senior elects choose pricing and manage the budget. As a resident student in Mr. Noori’s

AP Macroeconomics class alongside Kwon, Dhayabaran’s knowledge of handling money has been supplemented with the course.

“For example, with Senior Cruise, you have to rent a cruise which is a bit expensive including the food and all that stuff. We take into account how much money we can provide, how much money everything costs, and try to balance it out as much as we can to come up with ticket pricing.”

“Some of the tickets are high. Senior Cruise was a little high and prom was also another big concern for everyone. While they are expensive, we also have to cover the costs of food and the venue and all that. We couldn’t make you attend a nice venue with really bad food. That would have made the tickets cheaper but we want to prioritize students having a good time.”

Dhayabaran acknowledges that high prices do prevent some students from attending the senior events. However, lowering the prices is difficult.

“For that to happen, we would have to take money out of the senior budget, which does carry on. So if one class uses a lot of that money, then the next class will not have that money and then they will have

to pay even higher prices. So if we give that opportunity to one class, then all the other classes before take the hit. We have to factor that in as well. Of course, some of that money is going into these events, but you know, we need a little help.”

“I think future councils could definitely use a little more of the budget so events like these are more accessible to all students,” Dhayabaran states. “There is quite a large budget for seniors and while it is important to save some for the next class, storing all that money doesn’t help anyone. It’s understandable that people want lower prices since many of our events have additional costs like outfits, transportation, and more, so I think we should make a real effort to spend some more of the budget.”

For many seniors, prom is the last expense until the senior picnic. The rest of the senior events for the remainder of high school are free—senior breakfast, senior banquet, senior sunset—which all come from what’s left in the senior budget. For seniors who have not had a chance to attend previous events, there is fortunately one last chance to make the most of high school.

An Unanticipated Incident (cont.)

scription and carrying a large hunting knife in his backpack. Police have determined no ulterior motive, although it was revealed that just a few days prior to the first stabbing, Dominguez was “separated” from the university for academic reasons.

With the 2022-2023 school year nearing an end and college just around the corner for the class of 2023, the timing of the stabbings could not have come at a worse time for those planning on attending UC Davis. Caden Kwon (12), however, takes the situation a little more lightly. “I found it

somewhat comical that they found a serial killer on campus literally the day after I committed.” Despite this, however, he does reveal that when deciding to commit, the safety of the campus enhanced the other factors he considered while making the decision. “I chose Davis because of the campus culture and collaborative, accepting social environment. Safety wasn’t one of the major factors, but it didn’t hurt its case.”

With safety being a key element of the UC Davis area, the news has changed the way some view the campus. “Since

it’s a college town, students are always walking around late at night, so I always saw Davis as a safe place to be outside at any time of the day. I never would have expected people to be murdered at the parks I had been to before during my visits,” Bhatnagar remarks.

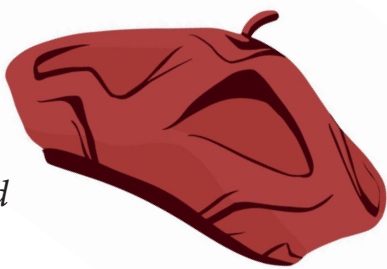
While the stabbings did hurt the overall “safety” factor of the university, some incoming freshmen don’t appear to be as fazed by the news after the suspect’s arrest. “I think it’s inevitable that unfortunate events like such happen,” says Stella Liu (12), another senior commit-

ted to UC Davis. “The occurrence gained more attention because it took place on UC Davis campus, but hate crimes like spontaneous stabbings happen a lot more frequently than people notice all around the globe.”

Kwon takes a wider view on the unfortunate inevitability of such occurrences. “Crime is an invariable constant of any developed area in the world. Given that none of the targets were students and that the police have arrested a likely suspect, I have little reason to be afraid. These things kind of just hap-

pen, to put it plainly.”

Ultimately, Dominguez’s arrest has been somewhat of a sigh of relief for many and a wakeup call to make safer decisions at certain times of the day. Other than that, it doesn’t seem like there is much the people of Davis can do about the situation. “In the end we can only raise awareness, whether it helps monitor young adults mental health in order to prevent future attacks, or to protect the general public by helping us be conscious of potential dangers,” Liu concludes.



THE CREED OF MR. CREGER

An interview with one of the most beloved teachers at American High and his unique approach to teaching.

Vir Sinha
Staff Writer

“I hated high school. I can’t remember a single conversation with a high school teacher that mattered to me. Not one,” says Mr. Creger, who is one of the most beloved teachers here at American. For 35 years, Mr. Creger has taught 10th grade English, leaving an everlasting impact on his students through the years. Mr. Creger will retire at the end of this year, so I talked to him about his time at American, his high hopes for the

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school in his absence, and his plans for retirement.

Mr. Creger came out of high school unsure about what he wanted to do with his life, as many people tend to. He found himself in community college and discovered his passion for writing and English, and was eventually able to transfer to UC Berkeley for an English major. This is where he accidentally fell into his love for teaching.

“I saw a sign on the campus, a ‘Bay Area Writing Project’... I started getting signed up when I realized it was a teaching program.”

Through this program, Mr. Creger spent a semester at Oakland High School teaching sophomores, an experience he thoroughly enjoyed: “I just never had that much fun in my life.”

He was able to connect to kids since he himself knew the struggles of being unsure about the future at that age. “I really didn’t enjoy high school. But I think part of the reason I thrive as a teacher is that I found ways to teach that, I think, work against the kind of cluelessness that I

felt leaving high school. I think, subliminally, I didn’t want my students to feel as totally ignorant about who they were as I did.”

Mr. Creger started teaching at American in 1988, just 16 years after the school was established. Suffice to say, he has been a part of a lot of American history.

“Fremont wasn’t the very high end community it is today. We had kids whose parents didn’t have an education; working class people were never a very large portion of our population, but it was a significant portion. So socioeconomically the school population has changed a lot... and the teachers have become more diverse as well.”

Beyond the school demographics, though, Mr. Creger has been observing tenth graders for three and a half decades; “It’s an interesting contrast. Because on one hand, kids then had more time. But on the other hand, kids today have a higher level of consciousness. You guys have more of a grasp on the larger issues of the world.”

Mr. Creger has also observed a shift in the approach to education here at American, something he has tried to fight against. “So much more curriculum today is about compliance. Complying with, you know, AP, or A through G [requirements], or many other criteria. But 30 years ago,” Mr. Creger reflects, “there weren’t state or national standards; it was time to create something that the students would find fun and engaging, and they would learn something, you know, we just didn’t have too many rules and regulations about that.”

“What we have in this country is a tradition of more critical thinking, more creativity, more innovation, more entrepreneurial thinking; and our current obsession with tests and scores, which I hope is slowly letting go,



Mr. Creger’s love and passion for teaching makes it so he always has a smile on his face! (PC: Vir Sinha)

is not helping us.” One of Mr. Creger’s most beneficial assignments in his curriculum is the Creed Project, a personal project for students to explore their lives and values before sharing with the class. “Students need to system-

“OUR CURRENT OBSESSION WITH TESTS AND SCORES, WHICH I HOPE IS SLOWLY LETTING GO, IS NOT HELPING US.”

atically think about who they are and what they’ve been through, and what kind of life they want to move themselves into. But the curriculum in place really resists this, I feel.”

Over the years, Mr. Creger has made efforts to adapt the curriculum to, what he calls, a Two-Legged Design. “You have an academic leg, to, you know, assess them and see how they’ve grown. That’s all good, right? But you need to have another part

of the curriculum, which is the developmental part, that helps them meet the developmental needs of childhood, for teenagers, primarily, establishing a healthy sense of identity development, and developing autonomy. Becoming self directed.” But, unfortunately, Mr. Creger’s message has not been well received by both the district and fellow teachers.

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“I failed to interest them in this kind of teaching. I’m a little disappointed that this English department didn’t embrace this kind of teaching.”

Despite his struggles to spur widespread change across the district, he has had an undeniable impact

on his students who had the opportunity to experience his unique curriculum. But why American? “It’s just being able to be a part of so many people’s journeys in life. That’s, that’s really what it is.” Mr. Creger says he has loved learning from all the students he has taught, many of whom he is still in touch with. The communities that he has created in his classroom have shaped not just the lives of his students, but of his own life.

Even after his many years of teaching, Mr. Creger is not done leaving his mark on education. He has started teaching online courses for teachers who want to implement his two-legged curriculum in their own classrooms, and has been working with a company in Oregon to do just that in even elementary and middle school grade levels. Mr. Creger also plans on returning to Fremont to pitch his ideas to the district, hopefully reducing the emphasis of testing in FUSD for a more innovative and engaging style of education. Outside of teaching, though, Mr. Creger is looking forward to spending more time with his daughters, his wife, and his dog. Additionally, Mr. Creger plays with a band, and hopes to get some quality recording time over the summer.

Mr. Creger has spent his career fostering an environment of innovation and creativity in his classroom. He finds ways to connect to his students on a level beyond just as a teacher. He has made his classroom a safe environment for everyone, building an illustrious 35 year career that can be seen in the impact he has had on his students across the years. Although Mr. Creger may be leaving, the love and passion he has poured into his students will forever be ingrained in the halls of American High.

The Chaos Theory [for High Schoolers]

Reflecting on the unpredictability of my high school career

Sahana Narayan
Staff Writer

It has been demonstrated, time and time again, that humans have an instinctive need to apply their own set of rules to the world, search for a sense of order in the natural Chaos of this universe. I am no different. Of course, I would love to say that I am the kind of person that finds joy in the intrinsicness of life, the person who revels in the disorder of things. Unfortunately, I am like every other stupid human out there; I search and search for a way to make sense of things, to make sense of the world around me.

UNFORTUNATELY, I AM LIKE EVERY OTHER STUPID HUMAN OUT THERE; I SEARCH AND SEARCH FOR A WAY TO MAKE SENSE OF THINGS, TO MAKE SENSE OF THE WORLD AROUND ME.

I sometimes think that there is some person out there, some higher being,

just laughing at me—my embarrassing attempts to excessively plan, to infuse some order into my life. Laughing that after I failed my first calculus test, I still thought my enormous study plan could somehow save me from my multiple other failures my junior year. Holding their stomach and cackling at my attempts to plan the perfect friendships with people only for them to fail miserably. Howling at my perfect imaginings of high school and then wiping giddy tears as I faced the reality of it. But even through the echoing laughs of this person, my delusional sense of control persevered. All the way until my senior year. Senior year is Chaos

SENIOR YEAR IS CHAOS ENCAPSULATED.

encapsulated. It's a mess of the best and worst things in life, and it has forced me to put up the biggest fight for order I could possibly muster out of myself.

I'd like to say I started off

in the lead against Chaos in the beginning of my senior year. Meticulous planning of my essays, many hours put into the formatting of my applications, formulating the perfect senior year with my friends. I deluded myself into thinking that the essays and the activity planning gave me control over the outcomes.

Of course, as the age-old story of every senior goes, college decisions never really turn out exactly the way you want it. Whoever tells you that college applications are the hardest part of senior year is probably lying to you. It's the part that comes after that is difficult. Rejection after rejection, waitlist after waitlist. It was humbling, to say the least. But I can say that it wasn't even the rejections that hurt the most; it was the fact that I had miserably failed in my stand against Chaos, that I had foolishly thought I could place faith in my ability to control my outcomes.

There's a lot of self-reflection that happens at the end of senior year, as evidenced by this piece. But for me, it was a whole lot

I HAD FOOLISHLY THOUGHT I COULD PLACE FAITH IN MY ABILITY TO CONTROL MY OUTCOMES.

of sulking at first—licking my wounds after a hard fight lost. But then I started pondering about this idea of Chaos. And though I think it is quite corny to call it an epiphany, I did realize something about the way Chaos works.

The same way that an unpredictable disaster reminds us of the finiteness of our lives, the same way that trauma shines a light on the company we keep, Chaos is like a wild-fire ripping through our lives—scorching everything we thought we knew to pieces—and if you look closely enough, underneath the ashes and the rubble, you might find a hard-earned lesson or two.

See, as I reflect, I think about how the unexpected losses in my life only further proved to me the tremendous love that surrounds me, how failure

after failure showed me

I REALIZE THAT CHAOS HAS BEEN THE MOST IMPORTANT GUIDING HAND IN MY LIFE, OFFERING ME MEANINGFUL LESSONS THAT I CONTINUE TO CARRY WITH ME.

how much resilience I held within me. Though disguised under pain and tears, I realize that Chaos has been the most important guiding hand in my life, offering me meaningful lessons that I continue to carry with me.

Although it is entirely unrealistic to think that this realization will drastically alter the way I or you approach the bad in our lives from now on, I think we could all benefit from appreciating Chaos a bit more; observing the beauty of its brutality, the astuteness of its aftermath; but most significantly, reflecting on the way that it has shaped our lives and inspired the very best qualities in ourselves.

HELLLLPPPPPPPPPPPP

a sneaky insertion of the gist of the lucky girl syndrome article i wanted to write

Reva Gokhale
Staff Writer

i've been pitching an article about lucky girl syndrome to the eagle era editors all year. this is finally my chance because i know you need to hear about it.

you see, high school is going to suck. if it doesn't suck already, it will suck. the suckery is unavoidable. and four years of constant misery have taught me that the more okay you convince yourself you are, the worse your life becomes.

that is why you need to familiarize yourself with my favorite solution: giving way less of a f...eather.

this was difficult for me, especially as an under-

classman, because habit and convention demanded that i tread carefully. at the same time, colleges expected me to suddenly double the size of my brain and cure cancer while also winning the youth olympics. the pressure was vague but tremendous, and the resulting self-doubt left me on shaky footing; that confusion has been the cornerstone of my experience at this school. he told first period what? you're applying for which summer program? you had to add plus C?

i always worried that i was never worried enough, but i look back now and worry that i worried too much then. that's a lot of

worrying. and i maintain that if you cannot learn how to trust your responsibilities to work themselves out, you will drive yourself slowly insane.

this is where lucky girl syndrome comes into play. once i began to trust that everything would work out, i began to see that faith manifest itself consistently. when i became an upperclassman, forced positivity saved my butt; amidst college applications and more APs than should be legal, wallowing in the stress would have only made things worse. i didn't land the internship i wanted, but i ended up at an even better one. i let myself binge-

watch business proposal because i knew my essay would get done somehow.

high school really isn't all that. you're going to be just fine, i promise, and everything will work out the way it is supposed to.

and i know it seems easy for me to say this right as i'm about to leave—i've spent the last four years earning my right to lecture you. i used to be so careful, never speaking without rehearsing the words, planning every second of every day. the cost of my 4.0 was my identity. today, i don't have straight As, but i do have more friends than senior wallets. i have the time to do nothing because i gave up on try-

ing to do everything. isn't that something?

high school sucks because it forces us to walk the line between working hard and taking it easy. put in the effort and let go of the outcomes. recognize how lucky we all are to have the opportunity to be here, whether or not our weightroom is 3 inches wide and some of our teachers are worse procrastinators than us. high school is going to suck, and you're going to get through it. and in what will feel like both seconds and millennia from now you'll be laughing on picnic blankets at senior sunset reminiscing about how you got this far.

Senior Commentary

Senior Commentary: #TheLastSummer is Here

See you in four years!

Jessica Le
Staff Writer

On September 9, 2019, I sat down the night before my first day of high school and wrote a letter to myself four years later. As a freshman, I felt excited and hopeful for what high school would bring to my life. I had expectations for what goals I wanted to accomplish and what lessons I wanted to learn—things to overcome, grow from, and push through.

Dear Jessica,

Tomorrow is my very first day of school... high school! I can't believe that it's finally here. When I was younger, I always thought that high school was so far away, and that I'd never have to think about it until later. But it is indeed tomorrow.

I'm feeling a whole range of emotions: anxiety, excitement, and panic are just a few. I'm going to create a list of things I hope to accomplish during high school so I can read them on my last day of senior year:

- Get a 3.8 GPA or higher
- Get 150 volunteer hours
- Get a part-time job
- Stay friends with my closest friends
- Join at least three clubs
- Make at least 10 small projects
- Find new passions
- Never stay up till 2 AM doing homework
- Make many new friends!
- Accomplish and take new opportunities

Also, I want to try out for the Spirit/Activities Director position for the Freshmen Council. I have an interview next Wednesday for the position. I hope I get it!

See you in four years,
Jessica Le

May 22, 2023

Dear Jessica,

You are a senior now and today marks the first day of the last week of high school!

This week, it is our chance as seniors to experience all of our very last last's.

In the chaos that is the Bay Area academic environment, getting a 3.8 GPA or higher is pretty much the standard, so I did obtain that. I never thought I would join the Red Cross club at school, but four years later, I am the President and I have volunteered over 200 hours. I've worked at the same part-time job for more than a year and I am still with that job now.

Throughout high school, I lost many friends and especially the ones I was the most close with for years. I never thought my friendships for over twelve years would end, but they did and I've learned to accept that and let go—we were only meant to be friends for those years. Although it is saddening, I cherish those years and I now hold them in a special place of my past.

I joined three clubs and became one of the Spirit/Activities Director for student council every year of my high school life. I've made many small projects—definitely over ten—of anything from film to creative writing to volunteering. I developed a passion for psychology that blossomed into my eventual university major as a Linguistics and Psychology scholar with hopes of working in the psychology field. In high school, I never once stayed up till 2 AM doing homework even during AP exams season, but I also made many new friends and connected with some of the most amazing mentors ever.

In high school, I've explored new opportunities and accomplished many things I am proud of. I consistently felt like I never did enough compared to many of my peers in Bay Area academia and yet, it all turned out okay. I committed to the dream school I've wished for since I was eight years old (Go Bruins!), discovered my weaknesses and learned from them,

and experienced everything I could at American.

In the beginning of the year, all I wanted was to leave high school in the past and escape my hometown. Despite all the times I felt stressed out and wanted to leave and never come back, I am now at a place in my life where I am content with where I am at. Now, I feel like I am ready. Although I wanted to get out fast and prove to everyone that I am doing well when I really was not—and I'm sure many of us feel the same—things have changed.

My confidence has grown. I do not view anyone negatively anymore out of my own insecurities. I do not redirect the jealous hatred I have in my hometown to myself. Instead, I feel at peace and ready to move on. I will certainly miss the way things are and the stability of the Bay Area, but of course, it's good to have new experiences. I am at a point in my life where I am okay with how things are and with who I am. I am surrounded by the people I love, I am happy with what

I have done in high school, and I have learned so many lessons in my hometown that I will hold onto as I enter college. Truly, I can only be satisfied and content as I leave high school.

My focus after high school is to keep growing as a person and leaving my impacts behind. I want to do a lot and I have many plans, but I understand that I must also be adaptable to unpredictable changes. Mostly, I want to start living for myself and not other people—to stop being a people pleaser, to not live under someone else's expectations.

I want to keep making mistakes and learning from them. As for goals I have after high school and through my undergrad school: Apply and get accepted into a graduate school program. Get something published (book, headlining article, research, anything!) Buy my own car and get my own apartment. Maintain my connections with the people around me. Be able to email my high school teachers one day with an unknown goal

My graduation picture for 2023!



I have accomplished

During freshman orientation with the Link Crew, half of the class of 2023 sat in the gym as we listened to a senior talk about high school. That moment has stuck in my mind until this day—specifically when the senior said that the four years spent in high school would go by faster than expected. That the most important thing was to make the most out of them and explore the opportunities given to us.

Looking back, I don't have any regrets. Everything I did has contributed to some part of my life right now and I think we can all agree that we would not be where we are today if we had not made the mistakes we made in high school.

Most of us have stayed together in the same proximity since elementary school and now, a lot of us are going in different directions. It's certainly a scary thought—growing up—but it's a new experience for all of us where we can start fresh, and look back at those memories once in a while. Growing up comes with so much more to look forward to.

Every year of my life at American, I have been a part of the scriptwriting team for spirit week. To end off my thoughts from my experience at American High School, I want to leave you with this quote from our Senior Spirit Week Teen Beach performance—something we all heard but cannot fully interpret until this week:

“We all look so happy now. Time to go have our very own #THELASTS2MM3R.”

All we can do is keep walking forward!

See you in four years,
Jessica Le



Northern California:

UC Berkeley
Preisha Agarwal
Kashvi Bhatia
Ayushman
Chakraborty
Saarth Gaonkar
Reva Gokhale
Pranav Gona
Angie Huang
Kodi Khau
Alekhya Sreerama
Neil Tsai
Garima Upadhyay
Samuel Yip
Xiaoxi Zhang

UC Davis
Rajat Gupta
Anvita Halur
Surya Ilango
Sabiha Jamil
Ching Lin Kao
Japneet Kaur
Stella Liu
Amogh Maheshwari
Sahana Narayan
Athena Nguyen
Akshay Raj
Ishani Shah
Ria Sharma
Keren Skariah
Angel Susantin
Haylie Tan

UC Merced
Nicole Lukito
Shriya Shankar

UC Santa Cruz
Areeba Asaduzzaman
Hansa Atreya
Quan Doan
Amani Khanna
Linn Kyaw
Nina Liu
Aishu N
Shrinithi Sathiyaseelan
Rohan Shukla
Katelyn Sun
Selina Tang
Nicole Ventura
Tanvi Vidyal

Stanford University
Chloe Castellana
Krish Parikh

Santa Clara University
Aaryaa Desai
Sargun Singh

San Jose State University
Sruti Addala
Mazen Bayoumi

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Jihad Elattar
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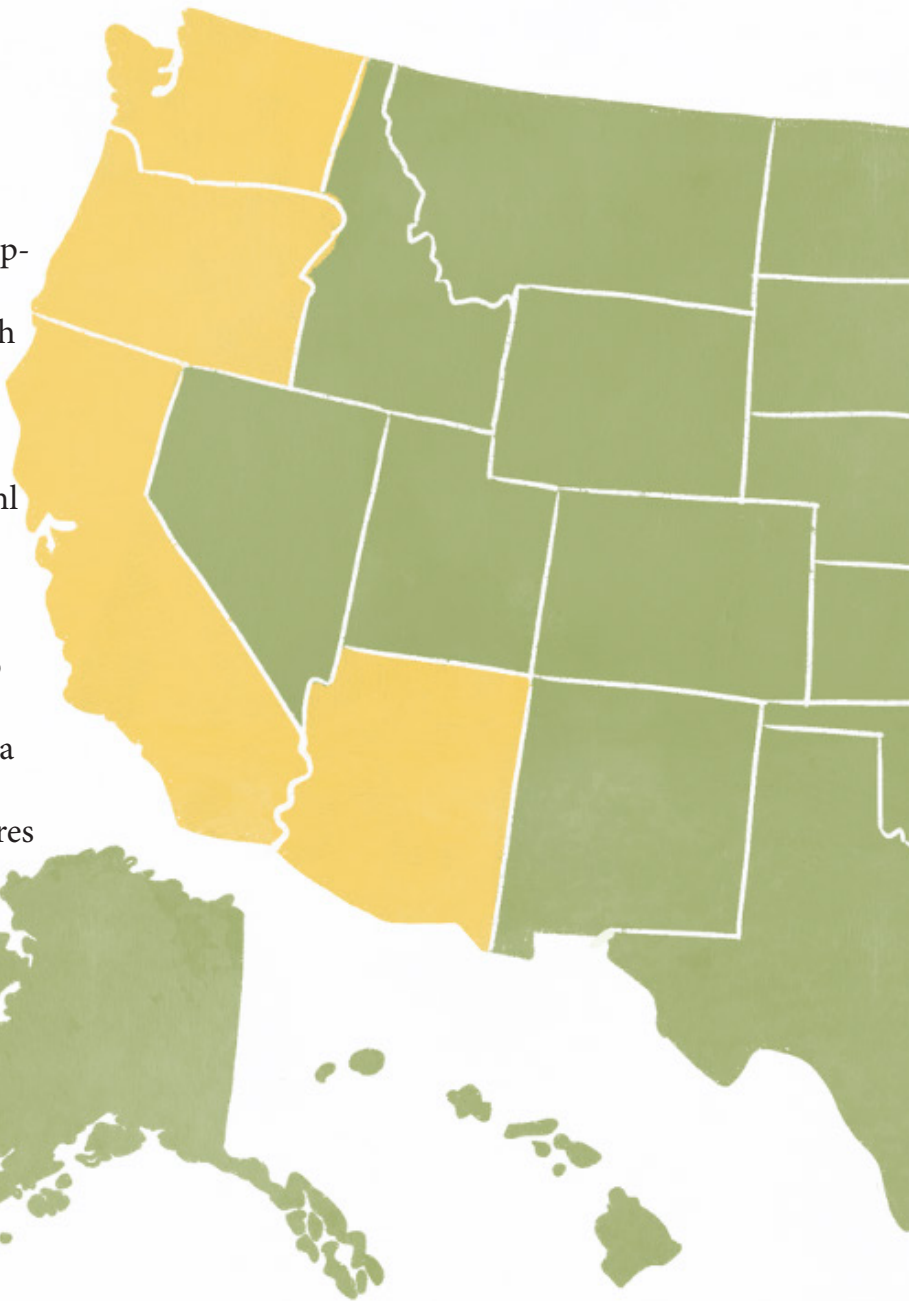
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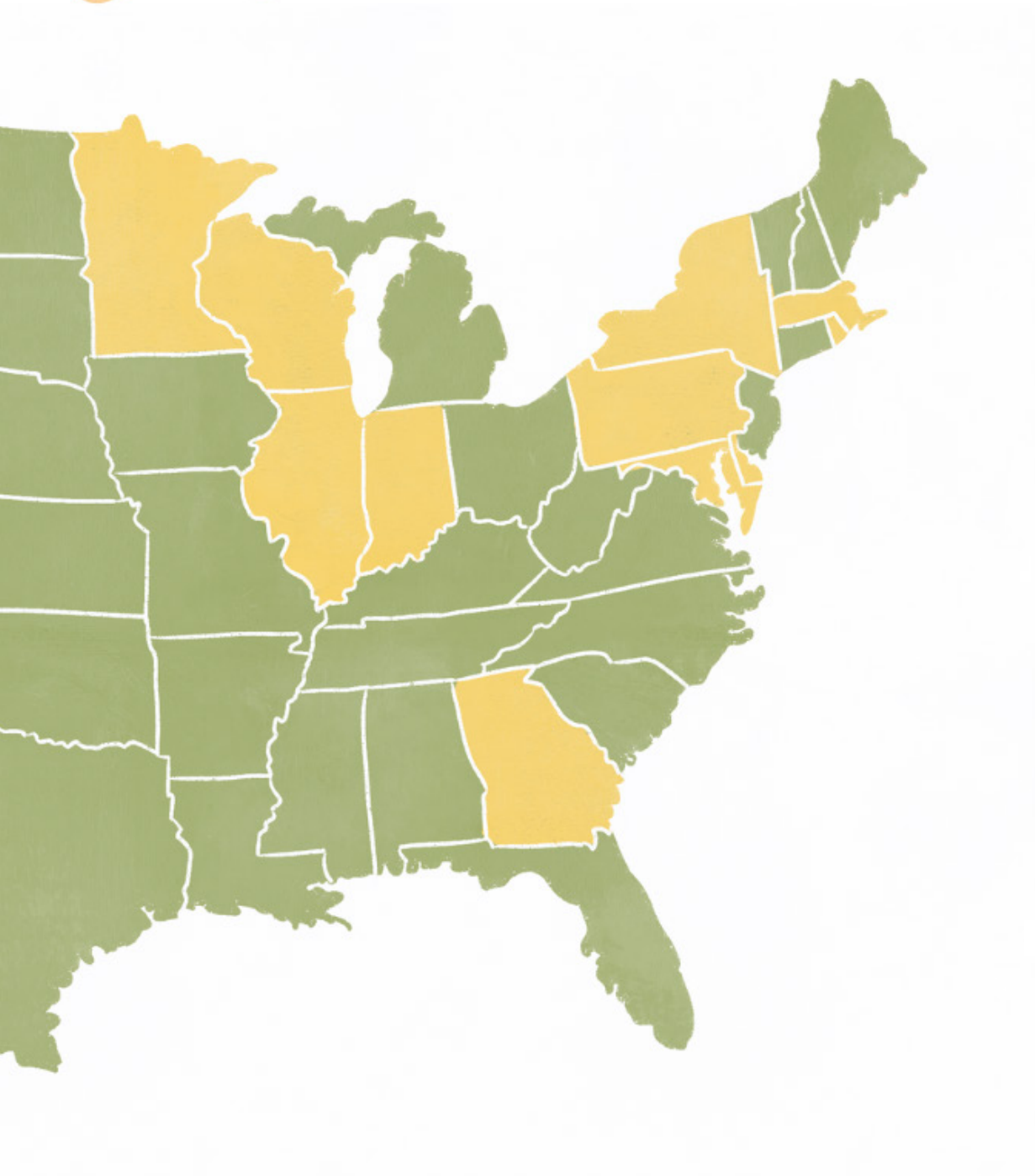
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Data collected through Eagle Era 's Class
of 2023 Future Plans Survey.

Senior Commentary



Growth

Finding comfort outside of my comfort zone

Japneet Kaur
Staff Writer

I've always been one for sticking to what's familiar. I like to keep things routine, absolutely despise change, and stick to things I know. So when I came to high school and all my friends started branching out and finding different passions, I found it difficult to do the same. I didn't really know what I wanted to try and I wasn't really one for trying new things.

I spent my freshman year without really any extracurriculars and when the world turned upside down and everyone was stuck inside, I realized just how badly I needed something to do. I needed a community to be a part of and I needed to find people to share common interests with. When you're going back and forth to school, it feels like you're doing so much just by going to six different classes and hanging out with your friends. I never realized how little I was doing until I had absolutely nothing to do at all.

In sophomore year, I branched out a little more, joining different clubs and organizations to keep myself occupied. They weren't

exactly enjoyable, but they gave me something to fill my time. When I returned back to school in my junior year, however, it was incredibly hard for me to adjust. I had gotten so used to being on my own and completely forgotten how to talk to people or be a part of a community.

Being put in Journalism was probably the last thing I expected, but I've never been happier that I didn't get my first choice elective. Prior to the class, I couldn't even speak to people outside of my friend circle. Being a staff

writer taught me more than I could even begin to explain. It wasn't necessarily an extracurricular, but it felt like so much more than just a class in my schedule. I made incredible friendships, both within and outside of the class, and grew bonds with some of the most amazing people.

Going from someone who avoided going out of their comfort zone at all costs to being forced to go out of my comfort zone nearly everyday showed me how rewarding it feels to do something you never thought you would do.

This newfound realization inspired me to try something I had always wanted to try, but never went for—theater. Now granted I still wasn't about to actually go onstage in front of a giant crowd of people (that's a little too out of my comfort zone), but I did want to be a part of it. I always wanted to see what goes into putting on a show and if I'm being completely honest, I really just wanted to see what it looked like backstage.

Joining theater was one of the best decisions I ever made. I met some of the most

incredible people and built relationships with people that I never would have even met had I not joined. The minute I walked in, it felt like a new world and in just two weeks, everyone felt like family. I will never forget the amazing memories that we made this year—both inside and outside of the actual shows—and I am forever grateful that I decided to try it out.

When everyone tells you that high school is the place to try new things, it's hard to believe them until you do. But trust me, once you find a community where you truly feel like you belong, it is the most rewarding feeling in the world. These communities introduced me to some of my best friends, taught me skills I never would have learned anywhere else, and gave me amazing memories to look back on when I think of high school.

If you're like me, and you like to stick to comfort, just remember this—change is inevitable. Things will always turn out just a little differently than you planned and life will throw its occasional curveballs here and there. If you choose to accept that, however, it can really be a beautiful thing.

Backstage with some of my other stage crew members.



Senior Commentary: Thank You, Theater 70

A love letter to AHSPA

Sinchan Mishra
Staff Writer

I'm currently in the midst of packing a decade's worth of my life away into cardboard boxes in preparation for moving to a new house. I've filled several trash bags with hordes of old assignments, essays, souvenirs, knickknacks, and more than a few mementos that I once truly believed that I'd hold onto forever.

But, as the nostalgic person that I am, I've been collecting and storing away some small items that I hope to put in my senior time capsule, which will hopefully be opened in ten years at our class reunion. (Honestly, I'm not even fully sure that I'll be in attendance, but I've always been a sucker for time capsules.) Yesterday, when I finally decided to look through the shoebox that has served as the repository for this random assortment of items, I was surprised to find that they weren't actually so random at all.

Without giving too much away about these highly personal



Our final bow on opening night as the cast of Anastasia, this year's spring musical.

contents, I'll say that a vast majority of them (eight out of eleven) were memorabilia from the three theater productions I've been a part of in high school.

Three isn't a lot, especially given the extensive amount of experience many AHSPA alumni before me had. But three productions, all that took place over the past year and a half, have been enough to completely transform me, to foster friendships that have

changed my life, to give me that elusive sense of purpose that a lot of people spend their whole lives searching for.

These past two years have come with their fair share of struggles and low points. I've lost no small number of friends, I've spent countless sleepless nights spiraling about my future, I've come to terms with the disheartening fact that I'm leaving my childhood home behind forever—all of which

are experiences many people go through at some point in high school. But I feel especially lucky to say that throughout it all, Theater 70 has always served as a sanctuary for me from the storm. There is nowhere I feel more at home than under the blinding stage lights. There is no group of people that brings me more comfort than the cast and crew that make our productions the miracles that they are. And nothing has electrified me

as much as bowing at the end of every successful show has.

I'm thrilled to finally make it out of the rat race that is high school, but as my days left at this school reach the single digits, the reality of what I'm leaving behind is starting to sink in. I'm devastated to be saying goodbye to a place that's responsible for so much of who I am and what I value. To be closing the door on a chapter of my life that has ushered in so much growth, so effectively convinced me of my own potential.

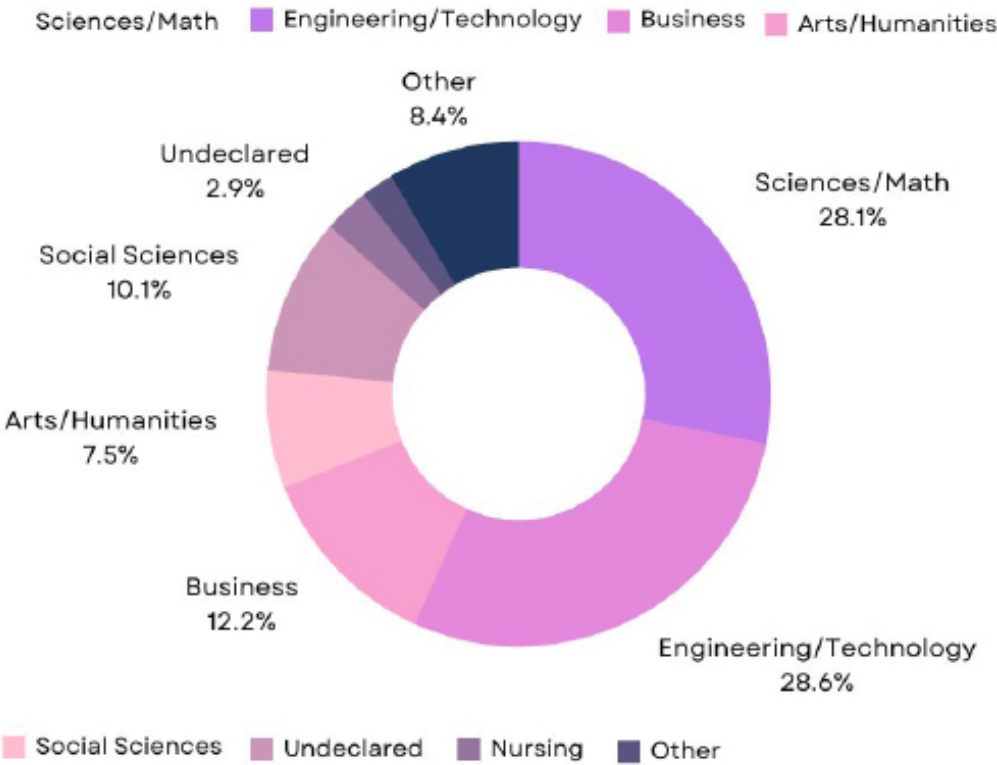
It's always been hard to let go of each show once it's over, but this goodbye feels much more final. I'm not sure if I'll ever get to set foot on another stage again. And although this uncertainty terrifies me, more than anything, I'm just full of gratitude that I got to be part of something so rare and wonderful at all.

These meandering anecdotes and clumsily composed declarations of adoration have all been my attempt at conveying a very simple message: thank you, Theater 70. For the memories, the inspiration, and the growth.

“I CHOSE POLITICAL SCIENCE BECAUSE I LIKE READING THE NEWS AND ANALYZING POLITICS. IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD CONVERGENCE OF THE EXACT THINGS I LOVE ABOUT ENGLISH AND HISTORY.”
- CADEN KWON

“[ENGINEERING] REMINDS ME OF PUZZLES, AND I LIKE THE PUZZLE PART OF IT, ESPECIALLY FOR COMPUTER ENGINEERING OR COMPUTER SCIENCE. I THINK ENGINEERING ALLOWS ME TO BE CREATIVE AND WORK ON THINGS THAT MAKE ME FEEL LIKE I’M CONTRIBUTING TO THE BETTER GOOD OF THE WORLD.”
- RISHITA DHALBISOI

“NOW I’M GOING TO BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR MY OWN ACTIONS. AND THAT SCARES ME A LITTLE BIT. BUT THAT’S JUST PART OF THE EXPERIENCE, KIND OF JUST GETTING AWAY FROM HOME AND LEARNING NEW THINGS ABOUT YOURSELF.”
- ANGEL SUSANTIN



Splash Into Summer

Find the summer words hidden in this word search!
Words can be horizontal or vertical.

A	F	S	P	Y	Y	V	I	R	C	H	Q	S	B
L	L	U	I	Z	V	V	A	J	A	R	S	D	A
F	I	N	C	R	A	A	D	K	N	Q	A	B	R
S	P	S	N	B	C	I	P	S	O	T	N	O	B
P	F	H	I	J	A	R	O	U	E	L	D	D	E
R	L	I	C	Q	T	P	P	B	I	E	C	A	C
I	O	N	A	X	I	L	S	E	N	M	A	P	U
N	P	E	M	P	O	A	I	A	G	O	S	H	E
K	S	O	P	O	N	N	C	C	E	N	T	Y	A
L	N	U	I	O	F	E	L	H	A	A	L	K	L
E	N	Y	N	L	J	F	E	A	S	D	E	K	D
R	N	J	G	V	F	E	S	Z	U	E	S	Q	T
S	C	B	Z	W	A	T	E	R	P	A	R	K	S
B	M	Y	Y	A	Z	M	O	I	Q	D	O	L	V

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Camping Canoeing Barbecue Lemonade Vacation Sandcastles Beach



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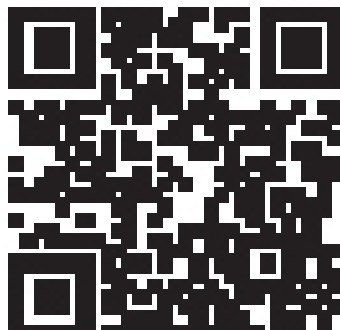
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THE NATURALIST CENTER UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT AT AHS 2023 PROM

The new (and slightly not) exhibit at the California Academy of Sciences

Sierra Dellenbaugh
Staff Writer

The California Academy of Sciences has been collecting organic specimens for decades, and this collection lives in the Naturalist Center at the top of the museum. But last month, a new exhibit opened that appears to be very similar to the Naturalist Center, with similar information and specimens. Why are two exhibits with the same focus open at the same time?

According to the California Academy of Sciences, “From the microscopic to the massive, the Academy’s newest exhibition provides an unprecedented peek at some of the standout specimens from our scientific collections—including some on view for the very first time.” “Hidden Wonders” features highlights from the Academy’s col-

lection, along with information as to how these specimens are collected and maintained, almost like a preface for the much larger collection on the third floor. Because of the sheer size of the Naturalist Center and the never-ending things to look at, it can be quite overwhelming for some people. “Hidden Wonders” offers a bite-

size approach to the Academy’s collection, and a nice summary of the variety of specimens on display. From exquisite mineral formations, to ammonite fossils the size of a tire, to a roly poly too big to fit in a pickle jar, they have a specimen for each interest area, and if someone wishes to delve deeper, the Naturalist Center will be there for just that.

One of the biggest collections in the Naturalist Center is the entomology collection; drawers and drawers of hundreds of species of pinned butterflies, beetles and more. One display in “Hidden Wonders” shows the step-by-step process of pressing, drying, and pinning the butterflies so they are preserved for decades to come. The exhibit also goes

into how collecting specimens will help the planet’s wildlife in the future: “By understanding the past, we can protect our future. Our scientific collections are a vital record of our planet’s natural history, allowing scientists and researchers to track the spread of disease over time, predict the impact of climate change on species and ecosystems, help prevent future extinctions, and more” (CA Academy of Sciences).

Visiting the Academy of Sciences is more than just looking at goofy fish. In the long run, you’re also helping to support their mission so they can continue to create new exhibits like “Hidden Wonders,” which will in turn help to educate more people, and help them help our planet. Summer is coming up, and not everything can be seen in a day. It is more than a prom venue after all, and there is so much more in store.

These moths were used as an example for how the process of pinning large winged insects takes place, step by step. They are first pressed between two sheets of parchment paper, and then pinned in a variety of spots to keep them from shifting, and to keep their wings open.
(PC: Sierra Dellenbaugh)



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DITCHING, THE NEW AMERICAN EPIDEMIC

Flocks of felons leaving school after AP Exams has created a crisis within American High

Vaishnavi Kurupath
Staff Writer

The AP Exam Testing Weeks have wrapped up this early May, and there is cause for great celebration amongst American High's students. But, what they do not know is that amongst these victories, an underground network of criminals hides. After taking their AP Exams, these delinquents decided to leave school after their exams, instead of following guidance counselors back to their third or fourth period. So, what motivates this rampant problem of students just leaving campus? And, how can this issue be put to an end?

Preisha Agarwal (12) details the joy that students feel during AP Week. "That made me feel really exhilarated. I feel like a surge of energy flowing through me that I never ever feel during any other week during the school year. In fact, for me, AP exam week trumps spirit week, Spring Fest, and everything. We cannot even talk about the level of energy, excitement and thrill that I have during AP exams that makes me want to stay at school as long as possible."

Mitali Sarnobat (12) agrees. "I really, really thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I think I'll be back next year [after graduating]. I'm gonna try to [take a] language test or two. Probably AP Chinese."

The absolutely horrid predicament of students ditching after AP classes seems to commonly affect the senior class specifically. It could be because seniors are more likely to have a means of transportation, or they may have less motivation to return to school when they are close to graduating. "I think seniors ditch more because there's

so much that we have going on at school that [do not relate to the exams]," says Agarwal. "A lot of AP tests are not required, but many students take them anyway."

A large wave of seniors affected indicate that ditching has become a serious issue. In fact, a shocking statistic of zero students have been personally harmed or injured in the process. Clearly, this system is in need of intervention.

"I think it does a disservice to the entire academic institution that we're all lucky to be in. Even the world in general. American kids ditching at American High School definitely impacts [the] social inequality in America," says Sarnobat. "You have students who are brazen enough to just walk off campus after an AP exam when we all know what they really want to do is go back to class. They really should just sit in class and enjoy their ultra-interesting academics."

James Lu (12) chimes in on the danger of such a [harmful] practice. "Those horrible people don't come to school. Every minute we're not [here] and every minute that we aren't on campus, we're only hurt-

ing ourselves. These students that leave class after these AP exams, they're reducing their own chances at getting into great colleges and getting a better life." Lu knows a lot about missing a chance at a better life, as he now plans to attend the notoriously under-funded and mediocre Harvard University.

He continues sharing his feelings on these felons who leave after these auspicious tests. "I feel like they must feel repulsive towards themselves," says Lu. "I would feel that way."

Many upstanding seniors feel the same way. "I think the people who would ditch after taking the AP tests are in need of serious help," says Tanisha Jha (12). "And I don't think they understand the consequences of their own action and how dangerous it is."

You might wonder where these hard criminals do after they flee the testing rooms. "I would never think of ditching. If I were to, I would [maybe] go to Niles Cafe [and] enjoy some food," says Agarwal. "Or, I would possibly go to T4 or the sushi place across the street, maybe even Madhura's

[Indian Restaurant] with my backpack on, so that I have a higher chance of being brought back to the beloved place that is American High School."

Luckily, administration was stationed in front of the complex across American High to bar any students attempting to visit Siddhartha's Indian Grocery Store, a trendy new brunch place that social media cannot stop talking about. Thus, the problem has been alleviated to some degree.

Despite the school's efforts, the problem persisted throughout AP Testing week, despite the school's resilience. Other than the obvious reason that those who ditch school will be sent to Purgatory, there are other explanations as to why the school is adamant on students returning to school. "Public schools require funding, and for that we need to show high attendance. Some private schools let you go after an AP test," says Sarnobat. "Public schools make you come back because they need your attendance."

Jha has another theory. "I think the school just wants us to practice going hungry or being over exhausted in

case of an emergency," she says. "They want us to practice for when we're adults, and we do not have a choice."

So, it is absolutely imperative that students return to school after their exams. "Every time I finish an AP exam, I just walk right back while following the guidance counselor's and straight into my fourth or third period class," says Lu. "I even make sure to stop by the assistant principal's office just to make sure that my attendance is okay and acceptable before I leave campus."

Perhaps, for these delinquents, a designated break time could be created to give them the space to relax after AP exams. Or, a free period that students could utilize to destress after taking such a lengthy exam. The school may benefit from employing these ideas, rather than spending so much time and resources on trying to make students return to their third and fourth periods when they have expressed they do not have the energy to participate.

However, the school should not worry, as most seniors are absolutely excited for these exams, even grateful for them. "I'm just so happy to be spending \$65 per test spending three hours in a nice air conditioned room where I want to just show off my education and how much I've learned over two semesters in as much of a frigid environment as possible with as many loud banging doors as possible," says Lu.

So, for future years, a better solution must be created to confront this problem. Ditching school is never the answer, as it poses serious harm to Americans everywhere. After all, "all ditchers are sinners, undeserving of penance or an excused tardy" (Matthew 4:16).

One of the many ruffians is caught returning to school after picking up his Uber Eats takeout through the baseball field. Due to the cruelty of this act, viewer discretion is advised.



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