



EAGLE ERA

NOVEMBER 2025 AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL 36300 FREMONT BLVD FREMONT, CA 94536 VOL. 53 ISSUE #2

AHSPA faces setbacks with robbery

Theater staff and students cope with repeated thefts of essential supplies for set-making

Lisa Shokoor
Staff Writer

On September 19, AHS Performing Arts (AHSPA) experienced a break-in when several tools were stolen from the theater. The theft seemed random, with older and less obvious supplies taken while valuable items like the projector were left untouched. The thieves stole a Chromebook, saws, batteries, and more items crucial to set design. Overall, about \$2,000 worth of material was taken from the performing arts department.

The theft has raised concerns about campus security and the safety of student resources, particularly for AHSPA, which relies on these supplies for set construction and stagecraft.

Ms. Benedetti, AHSPA's advisor, described her initial reaction to the robbery. "I noticed that there were gaps in the spaces where I normally had stored stuff, and things didn't look right. There were items that I used pretty frequently: my drills, my batteries, my ratchets, my saws."

She continued, "We do tend to share a lot of stuff, especially if Art is doing something; they might borrow a drill or saw, so I asked the other teacher that was here, and she said when she got here, the door to 702 was open."



The theater department was given new drills after the old ones were stolen (Photo Credit: Lisa Shokoor (11)).

This recent crime put a huge dent in the production of *The Play That Goes Wrong*, AHS's fall play. Ms. Benedetti said, "We got all our wood materials in, and we were just going to start cutting and building, and unfortunately I had 0 tools to work with that day."

She also elaborated on how the theft makes the theater community feel as a whole. "It just makes me really paranoid

to be here. I've stayed here past midnight before, so now I'm always kind of worried—is someone going to come in?"

Shivani Patel (11) is in stage crew for the fall play, and she felt hurt that someone would do such a thing. Patel said, "I feel like it's definitely made everyone a lot more on edge. We really make sure that everything's locked."

Patel continued, "It was kind of an invasion of privacy and a disrespect, not just only to Ms. B, but to the theater community in general. We all use those things, and it's a shared space."

Additionally, the performing arts department serves as a safe community for AHS students. According to Ms. Benedetti, "[AHSPA] provides happiness and good things that students like to enjoy outside of just getting grades. [The theft] makes the space feel a little bit less safe."

This raises an important question: who will be held accountable, and where can the community turn for answers? The *Eagle Era* asked Ms. Sharma for an interview on the repercussions taken after the theft. She said, "For security reasons, I am not able to respond to any of these questions."

Fantasy football takes the field

How fantasy football brings friendly competition and community to AHS

Ananya Pangarkar | Staff Writer

With the NFL season well underway, another kind of competition kicks off: fantasy football. Both avid football fans and casual watchers participate in this yearly tradition of drafting their dream teams, competing with friends, and scoring as many points as possible.

Fantasy football is directly correlated with player statistics and activity in NFL games. "At the beginning of each season, each member of a fantasy football league drafts a set of players, so usually a player from each offensive position as well as one defense, which represents an entire team," explained Caleb Truneh (12). "Based on how many yards this player gets in one game—maybe touchdowns scored or receptions—you get a number of points. Whoever has the most points by the end of the game or the end of the set of games for that week wins."

Determining a starting lineup requires strategic choices to maximize the number of points earned. Neev Tamboli (12) said, "You want to start players who have easier matchups. For example, if my wide receiver is playing against a bad defense against wide receivers, then I want to start him. But if one of my players is injured, then I would not have him in my starting lineup, so I can get more points."

For many students, fantasy football transforms watching the NFL into an interactive experience.



Fantasy football brought members of RFL closer together. "You can share a lot of laughs with your friends over the punishments, and it's always really fun when you win," said Neev Tamboli (12) (Photo Credit: Mr. Shockley).

Neer Patel (11) said, "It's just a fun way to engage in this sport, and it helps us stay more active in it. You can only have so much fun just watching a game all the time. But if there's a little bit of a competitive edge to it, you have something or someone to cheer for in every game."

Fantasy leagues at AHS often participate in punishments for losing players, at the end of the week. The most common form of punishment is for the losing player to make an embarrassing video or skit and post it on the league's social media accounts. Tanish Parasnus (12) explained, "We all have TikTok, so we just look up embarrassing dances or fantasy football punishments, and

we send it to the group chat and have a vote on it."

Some leagues have had their punishment videos go viral, namely AHS's Rizz Fantasy League (RFL). "RFL has been an official league with social media pages, a running group chat, and a brand," said Truneh, a member of the league. Particular videos have gained thousands of views across the league's platforms.

Fantasy punishments encourage members to make an effort in adjusting their lineup each week rather than neglecting it for the entire season. Parasnus said, "It's not about getting the most points, it's about not getting the least amount of points."

Beyond just competition, fantasy football can strengthen friendships in unexpected ways. "You're very vulnerable with your friends when you're making these punishments. When I made my dances a lot of friends were in that same room seeing me in such a vulnerable state. That really built trust," explained Tamboli.

Ultimately, fantasy football provides students with an entertaining way to follow the NFL and gives them something to look forward to. Tamboli said, "Saturday night, you could be going through the worst breakdown of all time, but you know that in the morning on Sunday, you've got fantasy football."

Trump's directive raises concerns about AHS's gender identity lessons

- POLITICS -

Health education curriculum must remove gender identity from course or face funding cuts

Iniya Prabahar
Staff Writer

In a move to reshape health education programs across the United States, the Trump administration has warned that schools and states risk losing federal funding unless references to "gender ideology" are removed from federally supported health curricula.

According to a directive issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), 46 states and territories have been told to excise any content suggesting that gender identity is distinct from biological sex or face consequences like the suspension or termination of grants. Reuters reported that the state of California's grant for the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP)—which provides funding to states to support comprehensive sex education programs focusing on preventing teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections—has already been revoked after the state refused to comply.

Ms. Sanfaçon, a health teacher, described how the curriculum at AHS is structured and the topics it covers. "At American, we follow the content that the state of California puts out," she said. "One of our 6 main units is the California Health Priority and Sexuality Education Unit—that's where we talk about things like gender identity and sexual orientation."

Under California law, public schools are required to teach medically accurate and inclusive health education that covers topics such as gender identity, consent, and sexual orientation. Parents are allowed to opt their children

out of this unit if they choose. Students who take the course receive instruction intended to teach them about human development and social interactions.

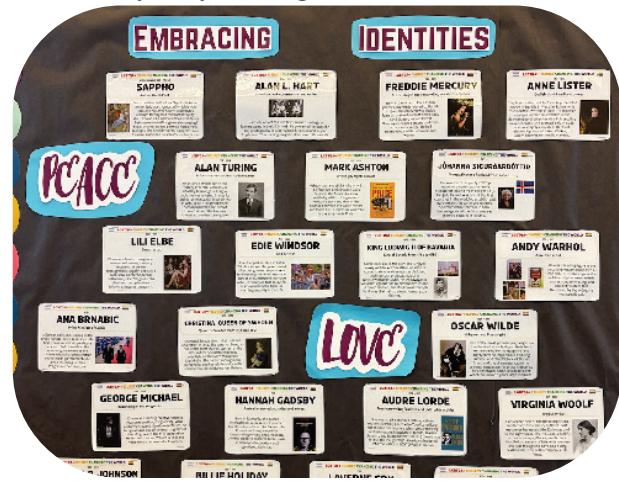
Some students who opted out of the unit noticed a difference in their understanding of these concepts. "As someone who didn't take the course, I know that my friends have a lot more knowledge on [gender identity] than me," said Shree Gunda (10). "It's something that helps people learn to respect each other."

Ms. Sanfaçon added that the curriculum plays a key role in keeping students informed. "The more well-educated people are, the better off we're all going to be. Taking that information away doesn't protect students; it keeps them uninformed," Ms. Sanfaçon said.

Trump's proposal would force districts to make a difficult choice: comply with federal standards and risk violating state education law, or maintain their inclusive curriculum and lose federal support.

For teachers like Ms. Sanfaçon, that choice is clear. "I personally don't think that I would adjust myself to fit some alternate scenario," said Ms. Sanfaçon. "Most of California is comfortable with the arrangement we have."

She added that lessons on gender and identity are not political but part of understanding human development. "I think that there are age-appropriate boundaries. Middle schools get a certain level of that training and



A poster in the rotunda recognizes and honors historical figures who celebrated their gender and LGBTQ+ identity. "People have been different genders since the beginning of time. It's a spectrum," said Ms. Sanfaçon (Photo Credit: Iniya Prabahar (12)).

elementary schools even less. It's not something that's inappropriate; it's just part of being human."

To her, erasing this part of the curriculum ignores history and human diversity. "It's nauseating to hear from some camps that there are only 2 genders; that's just not true. There's a large variation in between," Ms. Sanfaçon said.

Despite growing uncertainty surrounding Trump's directive, Ms. Sanfaçon is confident in California's education system. "[Trump] has already removed funding from the Department of Education anyway. [Governor Gavin] Newsom won't let this curriculum be removed. Not in California," said Ms. Sanfaçon.

Leaves, lanterns, and legends

An overview of different fall cultural festivals

Suhani Thakkar | Staff Writer



A photo of rangoli decoration with diyas outside a home. "Decorating my home is one of my favorite parts of Diwali; it makes me feel more connected to God in a way," said Aryanshi Gupta (11) (Photo Credit: Suhani Thakkar (11)).

More than the leaves changing colors and the sun setting a couple of hours earlier, for many, fall symbolizes the beginning of a festival season full of ceremonies, family gatherings, and lots of laughter.

One festival that occurs during this season is Diwali, often referred to as "the festival of lights." For Hindus, Diwali holds great significance and marks the arrival of the goddess Laxmi into their homes. To welcome her, people decorate their homes with diyas—small oil lamps made with clay—and rangoli, of designs made from colored sand.

For many such as Aryanshi Gupta (11), the process of decorating the home with these colorful designs is especially meaningful. "Every year, my mom spends ages finding the most beautiful rangoli design online, and then we go outside and spend hours with our hands covered in sand making sure our rangoli looks perfect," she shared.

However, there's more to Diwali than colorful decorations. Gupta explained, "Diwali is important to me because it is a festival that brings my family together with my friends, and I get to enjoy their light in my world."

While Diwali focuses on celebrating the light in people's lives, another festival, Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, celebrates

the light in those who have passed. For Mexicans, this festival is especially meaningful as it is a way to honor their ancestors in a celebratory and exciting way, remembering those who have passed. As Dayana Ortiz (10) explained, "This festival is a part of my culture, and it helps me feel connected to my ancestors, so they know I still think about them." For Ortiz, as for many other Mexican people, an important part of this festival is the tradition of making ofrendas, which are shrines for each loved one who was lost. "Our family members' ofrendas have hats, and we put on their favorite dish or favorite drink. Then we show up and decorate it."

The Korean holiday Chuseok, too, honors ancestors with food. As Gianna Lee (10) explained, "Most people usually visit their

family's shrines and give the favorite foods of those who have died. They also bow really deeply to show respect." During this festival, Koreans dress in cultural clothing, eat special foods, and celebrate with their family. For Lee, her favorite part of the festival is eating all of the traditional dishes. "We eat rice cake soup. It's called Tteokguk in Korean. It's really long, and it gets sliced up and put into the soup. Each bowl of rice cake soup that you eat is supposed to add a year to your life."

While all of these cultural festivals are spread throughout the world, the one known to most Americans is Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a time to be grateful and gather with loved ones to enjoy lots of homemade food. For Sierra Johnson (11), Thanksgiving is especially important for connecting her with those she loves. "It's so fun getting to see my cousins, friends, and family that I don't really see often. Thanksgiving definitely helps us bond."

While all of these festivals are different in so many ways, one thing that remains the same throughout the globe is the value of family. As Johnson explained, "I think the most important part of this festival and really any festival is getting together with those you love and just having fun."

Think pink month

How AHS is honoring breast cancer patients

Keerthi Vasudevan

Staff Writer



Anushri Bhatia (9), Nimisha Chaurasia (9), Kabir Thapar (9), and Roger Fernando (9) posed in front of the SAC wearing pink and red to show support for breast cancer survivors (Photo Credit: Keerthi Vasudevan (9)).

body to dress up.

"I know that we take this cause very seriously," Shanaya Shah (9), the vice president for the freshman class and a member of the Equity Committee, said. "We are trying to raise awareness for it in as many ways as possible." She mentioned how using social media hooks students in and encourages them to dress up.

Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in the world with about 1 in 10 women being diagnosed with it in their lifetime. Though breast cancer affects all genders, only about 1 in 100 cases diagnosed are men. This

leads to breast cancer being thought of as a "women's disease." As such, there is a much higher mortality rate of men with breast cancer for whom early detection and treatment is much less common.

The pink ribbon that we know of today was first introduced by the Susan G. Komen Foundation to represent hope and strength. The idea stuck, and now, pink is the color that many wear in order to show support for those battling breast cancer and show respect for those who have lost their lives to it.

Contrary to popular belief, the color pink was not chosen for breast cancer because it is regarded as a "women's disease." The color pink was meant to symbolize the strong minds of those who survived this illness, as well as hope for the future.

At AHS, the efforts to involve students have been a major success. Many have been spotted wearing pink in the rotunda, and the picture spot that was decorated during Spirit Week encouraged many to wear pink just to take photos with their friends. Leadership's efforts to educate our student body are helping contribute to the global fight against breast cancer and showing that AHS stands with the affected.

Bumper to bumper: the battle of the parking lot

The daily struggle to get out of a parking lot packed with impatient drivers and darting students

Anthony Liu | Staff Writer

Afternoon dismissal turns the parking lot into a slow-moving maze as drivers jockey for the few exit lanes. Amid the chaos, one thought unifies everyone: getting out quickly.

"It's honestly more dangerous than a regular parking lot," said Alvin Tang (12), who walks through the back lot most afternoons. "There are so many student drivers rushing out that I feel like I have to look left, right, up, and down before crossing." Tang said he's seen cars cut across lanes or drive over medians, just to get out faster. "Some people act like they're in a race."

Drivers feel it too. Evan Cao (12), who drives himself to school, said mornings are usually calm, but afternoons are another story. "After school, it's way more chaotic," Cao said. "Everyone's in a rush. It takes me

about 20 minutes to get out on some days when it should take just 10."

Cao said he has watched students speed, blast through stop signs, and cut in front of others just to save a few seconds. "You'll see people do dangerous stuff just to get ahead," he said. "And honestly, some walkers don't help either. They'll run between cars because they think everyone can see them."

Traffic challenges extend beyond students. Teachers and administrators face the same gridlock while trying to keep people safe. Some staff members leave a few minutes early to avoid the rush, while most administrators stay to help direct cars. "They help near the exits," Cao said, "but inside the parking rows, it's just chaos."

Principal Sandhya Sharma said the school is aware of the issue and is doing what it can to keep things safe. "Our staff does a great job, but having additional support would certainly help us monitor all

areas more effectively," Mrs. Sharma said.

"The parking lot was originally designed for a much smaller school population, and Alder Avenue itself is a narrow street. During dismissal, the high volume of cars often causes congestion."

Mrs. Sharma listed the most common safety problems. "Cars exit through the entrance, drivers cut across lanes, and students run across Alder Avenue instead of using crosswalks," she said. She explained that the issue isn't the number of incidents; it's the risk. "Every time someone, whether



a driver or a pedestrian, fails to follow the rules, it puts others at risk," she said.

Tang and Cao both said the situation could improve with some changes. Tang suggested adding more exits, while Cao thought clearer signs and more staff in the lot could help. Mrs. Sharma believes improvement ultimately depends on behavior, not design. "Ultimately, the biggest improvement would come from consistent, safe driving," she said. "When everyone follows the rules and remains patient, traffic flows more smoothly."

For now, the after-school rush is just part of the routine. As Tang put it, "You hope everyone makes it out without a dent."

The daily parking lot gridlock which somehow became a routine part of AHS (Photo Credit: Anthony Liu (12)).

National Suicide Prevention 24/7 Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line
Text HOME to
741741

Domestic Violence Hotline:
1-800-799-7233

Counselors

available brunch, lunch, and after school

A-Cheng and English Learners: Mimi Cañas

Cher-Hs: Teri Sorensen

Hu-Lo: Mei Chen

Lu-Ph: Denisse Felix

Pi-Sr: William Stallworth

St-Z: Bonnie Ronkainen

Protecting immigrant students at AHS

- POLITICS -

Students share their experiences adjusting to a new country and seeking safety at school

Keithav Sivashanker | Staff Writer

For many students, starting high school can be overwhelming, but for immigrant students, the challenge often goes far beyond classes and homework. For them, it's about trying to belong in a new culture. At AHS, students and staff work together to make sure that immigrant students feel supported, safe, and heard.

Mr. Stallworth, a counselor, said that immigrant students often face unique challenges as they transition into a new environment. "School counselors often get concerns for students, especially immigrant students, when it comes to readjusting from their home country," he said. "They're learning a whole new culture, a whole new set of rules and processes. Sometimes that increases their anxiety."

One major challenge he highlighted is the language barrier. "Someone from Japan, someone from Montenegro, someone from India, and someone from Russia...it's very difficult to translate [English] into your home language or your mother language," he said. "It can make them feel isolated unless they find someone from a similar background." Still, he believes Fremont's growing diversity is helping. "Ms.

Maryya Zaki, who is a Wellness Center coach, shares the same cultural background as many students here, and that has been very helpful for this school because we're trying to find ways to really support different students." As a Wellness Center coach, she can relate to many students on a personal level, which makes her important to the overall success of this school.

Immigrant student Rishventh Ramoshan (11), who moved from Sri Lanka a few years ago, said that his experience has been mostly positive. "Honestly, I felt pretty welcomed when I came here," he said. "The Bay Area is a melting pot. There are people from everywhere."

Although he feels safe at school, national debates about immigration still concern him. "I'm not a U.S. citizen, and I



A mural in the 300 wing featuring different cultures of immigrant students (Photo Credit: Keithav Sivashanker (11)).

do get a little scared sometimes," he said. "With everything going on, immigration laws, ICE, and politics, it's hard not to worry."

The *Eagle Era* obtained a communication from the district to principals which said, "AB 49 prohibits admission of officers conducting immigration enforcement to non-public areas without a judicial warrant, judicial subpoena, or court order." The law also "requires school personnel to request a valid ID" and forbids the sharing of any student information. FUSD mentioned, "The superintendent or designee shall not disclose student records... without parental consent, a court order, or judicial subpoena." If officers proceed without permission, staff should "not try to physically prevent them." Instead, they should document the action and call the Superintendent's Office or Fremont Police. If any student doesn't come to school due to fear of ICE, those absences are marked as unexcused.

Both staff and students agree that inclusion starts with empathy. As Mr. Stallworth put it, "There's always another adult whom we can help connect you with to be able to seek out support."

Juniors are P-sat for the PSAT

An overview of the PSAT and its impact on students

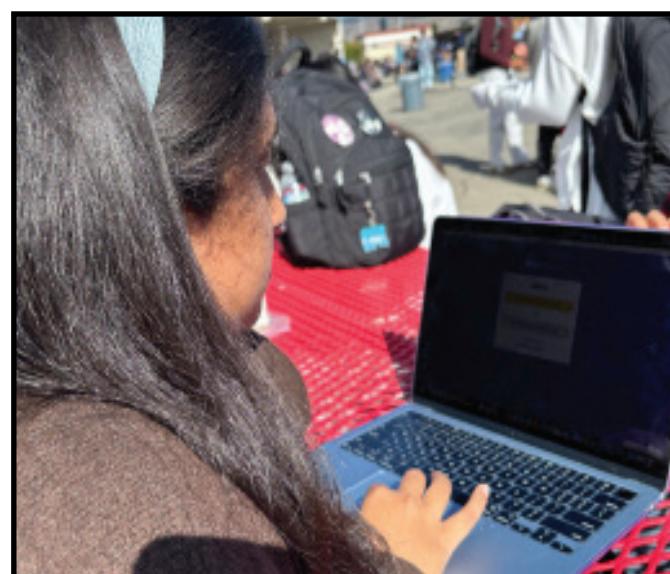
Kaitlyn Liu | Staff Writer

The sound of frantic juniors chattering with friends about nerves and assigned testing locations filled the hallways at 8:15 AM on Monday, October 6—a seemingly normal day for all other grades. That day was none other than the annual, daunting 2-hour and 14-minute PSAT.

The PSAT, or the preliminary SAT, is a standardized test that serves as preparation for the actual SAT. It allows students from all high schools the chance to qualify for merit-based scholarships. Students in California are required to be in the top percentile of all test takers in the state to qualify as semi-finalists for the prestigious National Merit Scholarship. Last year, 25 students at AHS were recognized as National Merit Scholars, granting them an edge while applying to highly selective colleges and scholarships, among other advantages.

This year is no different. Some students, faced with pressure from older siblings' successes, went into the exam striving to be a part of the top percentile to appease their parents. After hearing about the exam 3 weeks prior from parents and the school newsletter, Isha Adiga (11), whose sister had qualified for the scholarship years prior, stated, "I remember being stressed about it in the beginning since my parents put so much emphasis on it, but I put it off for a little bit. I did both practice tests on Bluebook, the student question bank on College Board, and Khan Academy."

Arpita Joshi (11), who was faced with



Isha Adiga (11) studied for her upcoming exams (Photo Credit: Kaitlyn Liu (11)).

the increasing demands from her AP classes, stated, "When going into the exam, I thought I was going to fail because I did not prepare beforehand. At that point, all I wanted was for the test to be over because I had an AP Bio test the next day."

Without parental pressures or specific expectations to reach, Aarav Mehta (11) said, "Going into the exam, I had a calm and composed mind, accepting whatever my score would be, as my parents and I didn't really care about the score or the test overall."

As the test occurred over the course of 3 classes, meaning 3 passing periods, students clamored in the busy hallways and bells rang through classrooms.

Adiga stated, "The dismissal bell was super loud and kind of disrupting during my testing time. The phone also rang a few times, which distracted me, but other than that, the testing zone was quiet."

Due to her extensive preparation with practice tests, Adiga reflected, "The PSAT was similar to the practice test and was pretty realistic. I was also gaslit into thinking the PSAT would be way easier by my sister, but it ended up being slightly harder than she said."

Mehta, who took a practice test the night before and had taken the October SAT, said, "The tests were fairly similar to the SAT and practice tests as I saw some repeat questions in the practice tests on the PSAT, just with different words or numbers."

Brianna Lee (12), one of last year's National Merit Semifinalists, stated, "Honestly, I didn't have any expectations going into it because last year it was required for everyone, so I didn't feel confident or not confident."

The acquisition of the National Merit Award is something many juniors strive for in their first semester, and many AHS students unite in their struggles to study. Lee added, "If I even qualify, which I think comes out sometime in March or May, I'll get a \$2500 scholarship if I apply. I could use that for textbooks or any other materials that I would need next year because I'm going to college."

Class of 2026's comeback

The Class of '26 finally takes the win amidst diminishing spirit

Iniya Prabahar, Anthony Liu, and Jonathan Wang | Staff Writers

A day before the rally, practices were turned into a storm of noise and confusion. The tinikling dancers stood in uneven rows, faces tight with frustration. PVC pipes clashed against each other as dancers tried to make five-foot poles work in place of bamboo sticks.

Choreographer Francis Garcia (12) paced along the sidelines, hands on his head, trying to figure out how to make the dance work without the traditional Filipino sticks.

The poles were too long to move, too heavy to lift, and every time someone tried to tap them together, the hollow thunk echoed terribly.

As the song switched, pairs scrambled to switch positions. PVC pipes scraped against the concrete, and Garcia winced, knowing the pipes needed to be returned promptly.

A pole slipped, spinning across the floor. Another slammed down on the wrong beat, and a dancer's ankle got caught mid-step. She stumbled forward, barely catching herself as her partner lunged forward to catch the pipe before it tripped someone else.

The pipes clattered, the dancers stumbled; yet, Garcia kept encouraging them, hoping that somehow, by the next day, everything would come together.

Spirit Week has long been a cornerstone of AHS tradition—a time when students set aside their academic pressures to celebrate school spirit and community. After three years of last-place finishes and fading enthusiasm, the Class of 2026 entered this year with something to prove. They faced low morale and a shrinking pool of participants—both to dance and to watch—as Spirit Week crowds have dwindled since the pandemic.

But for the Class of 2026, this year was different. Determined to end their high school journey on a high note, they rallied together to reclaim their spirit and rewrite their legacy.

"All you'd hear was 'four for four, four for four' from all of the other classes," said class senator Naina Jain (12). "We had to bring up everyone's spirit. I wanted people to be excited again, like old Spirit Weeks before COVID."

An unmoved crowd

While seniors rallied around redemption, not everyone across campus felt the same spark. Although Spirit Week is known for drawing large participation from

students lining the bleachers and stands, many choose to sit out or go to the Old Cafeteria.

"During the rallies, there are always around 100 or so people sitting in the cafeteria or outside the gym. The plotlines and dances are not really polished, so I would rather not go," said Timothy Lin (12), who often skips rallies.

Rallies consist of student-prepared dances, many of which celebrate different cultures. Still, some students feel left out when only a handful of those traditions are set on stage. "There were a lot of Tahitian and Indian dances this year. I feel like there should be more dances from different cultures," said Jonah Sunny (10).

Lin echoed similar frustrations when he said, "I felt like I was watching the same thing, same dance, same choreography over and over again [each year]. For some, it

Spirit Week taking the backseat. "I find making rally days closed Flex is a little frustrating, as I would rather use that time to meet with teachers or club officers," said Lin.

Yet, a general trend of increasing spirit within the senior class—as students wish to seize their last chance to get involved and leave a mark before graduation—contributed to their enthusiasm to win. "Since freshman year, the attitude has completely changed. Spirit Week used to be the same small group of people every year, but now it's so much more diverse. Everyone wanted to join in," said Orna Paul (12), a dancer who has taken part in Spirit Week all four years of high school.

Shreya Pawar (12), a student who never participated in Spirit Week until this year, said, "Going into senior year, I told myself that I was going to do every single event



After weeks of chaotic preparation, Wilson Lo (12) and Francis Garcia (12) worked out the last-minute technical issues with the audio files before the Class of 2026's final Spirit Week rally began (Photo Credit: Jonathan Wang (12)).

Seniors cheered for their class during their final Spirit Week rally. "Seeing everyone come together for that last rally—that was honestly a moment of pride. Everyone just pulled through. We were all on the same side, fighting for the same thing, supporting each other," said Paul (Photo Credit: Kai Sugano (12)).

can be a valuable experience, but I find it unnecessary."

This sense of disengagement isn't unique to Lin. Across campus, participation in rallies has slowly declined—a change that hasn't gone unnoticed from staff. "It seems like it's gone down since before distance learning. Our rallies used to be packed. Everyone took part; it was a tradition. I think that got lost when school shut down," said Mr. Anderson, a Leadership teacher and Activities Coordinator at AHS for the past eight years. Distance learning left students feeling disconnected from school spirit, making it harder for them to feel motivated to be engaged.

Even after returning to in-person learning, the sense of detachment from Spirit Week did not completely disappear. Surrounded by the Bay Area's academic pressures, many students prioritize doing homework for their classes, with



possible because it's the last time we ever get to experience this."

Making the magic happen

"Planning actually starts back in the last school year," Mr. Anderson said. "It depends on when the football games are since the themes and rallies usually tie into those."

For Mr. Anderson, planning Spirit Week is like running a small city. Each competition, game, and rally has to move in sync. "It's a lot of moving parts," he said.

Participation isn't the only challenge; once the rally begins, hundreds of students are packed into the gym, and everything has to work seamlessly. During this year's rally, audio presented its own challenges. Wilson Lo (12), an ASB member responsible for audio, said, "WiFi is unreliable, and I loaded the audio off WiFi, so it cut out a little." When asked about solutions, Lo explained, "The easy

solution is to download audios, which we are going to do from now on, especially the [scripted] audios."

Each class also faced their own struggles with preparation for Spirit Week's most anticipated part of Spirit Week: the dances. Choreographers faced multiple challenges, from making dances accessible to all to securing the right materials.

Fortunately, support from the community helped fill in the gaps. "One dancer's mom donated more bamboo sticks [for the tinikling dance] on the day of our rally. That's why there were more during the performance, so it worked out in the end," Garcia added.

Choreography itself required constant collaboration to make sure dances were easy to follow. Step choreographer Devyn Ford (12) explained, "It took a minute to really understand how to make something that's easy for everyone to learn and also fun. I asked for a lot of help. People gave suggestions, and we worked together to make it better."

The work extended beyond the dances in the rally as well. Set design demanded planning, coordination, and most of all, time.

"This year, [the elects] planned an official all-nighter to work on the set, and it was amazing. A lot of people showed up, even faces I never expected," said Jain.

Even with that commitment, preparing for set design brought its challenges. "Setup day [of the set design] was chaos. We needed a U-Haul to move the car [made for the set], but everything got delayed. All the other classes were already setting up while we were still waiting to get ours to campus," said Jain.

Despite the delays, the seniors pulled it together. "It was stressful—but we got it done," said Jain.

From plastic pipes to first place

Despite minor hiccups, Spirit Week remains one of the most anticipated traditions. For all of its chaos and competition, it's still one of the few times students come together to celebrate our school spirit.

For the Class of '26, though, that unity carried extra weight. When the news came in that the Class of '26 got first place, there was disbelief, then euphoria. "We really pulled it together in the end. We've always looked up to the seniors before us, and this was our chance to finally get to that level. And we did," Paul said.

Looking back, Pawar said that the win felt like more than just a title. "What stood out most wasn't just the dances. It was the energy, the people, and the feeling of doing this together for the last time. All of the time we put in was worth it in the end. Everyone came together and really put the spirit in Spirit Week," she said.





Campaigning to bring the homecoming spirit back

The student body should have more say in how homecoming court works

Every fall, homecoming season rolls around and brings everyone together, but that unity often fades as quickly as it arrives. Seniors are nominated to become Homecoming King and Queen and only present a speech and a great performance of their talents right before the student body votes for who they think deserves the crown. The voting process, which is meant to be fair, feels more like a popularity contest than a celebration of school spirit.

Allowing seniors to campaign could revive the spirit for this old tradition. Campaigning would help students see the faces and personalities of each of the nominees.

Dylan Lee (12) was on this year's homecoming podium. He said, "Campaigning allows students to be more engaged in the homecoming week."

More underclassmen and students would have the opportunity to know about the people they would potentially vote for."

Lee also suggested expanding participation in the homecoming court nomination process. "I think we should have more people in the first round of voting; that way, more people have an opportunity to get on the podium."

At Millennium HS in Tracy, California, campaigning for homecoming brings people together, especially underclassmen. Hannah Solomon is a senior there, and she shared that campaigning brings the energy for the whole week, unlike the one-day event at AHS. Solomon said, "My school gives all their students a chance to participate and equal opportunity to win their votes by campaigning. Our school puts a list of all students, and that is the first round of voting."

Tiffany Notice | Staff Writer

Giving candidates the chance to campaign could fix the lack of connection by inviting underclassmen and other less involved students to join in on the week's occasions. The current system set up at AHS makes the students simply observers, watching from the sidelines instead of being part of a larger school spirit.

Krysten Castuera (12) also believes that campaigning would make the process fairer and more exciting for the student body as a whole. "I feel it would show more of their personality and would be more interesting," she said. "When you are voting, you're just looking at a name, not seeing what they can do and what they contribute."

Homecoming should be more than just a one-day contest.

Bringing campaigning to AHS would bring back school spirit and leave a lasting impression through friendly competition.



Elsa Fan (12) and Benjamin Chen (12) were crowned at the homecoming football game (Photo Credit: Tiffany Notice (12)).

Our school's real ecological challenge: surviving the air conditioning

- HUMOR -

The struggle between the hot and the cold

class while you sweat through taking notes, or in math, while your fingers are about to freeze off.

Jordan Sweaty (10) summed it all up. "By lunchtime, I've melted into my chair. Please send help." He added, "I don't need P.E. anymore. I think I sweat enough just by being in that class." Jordan has even given up on bringing school supplies to his classes. "I stopped carrying a pencil. I just write with the sweat dripping off my hand."

Meanwhile, some of the teachers seem to be actively working against student survival. Mrs. Linda Chillingsworth, an AP Environmental Science teacher (and a human embodiment of a walk-in freezer), insists on keeping her classroom at subzero temperatures. "I like my classroom like I like my iced coffee—freezing and dramatic. If you can still feel your fingers, the AC isn't low enough for me."

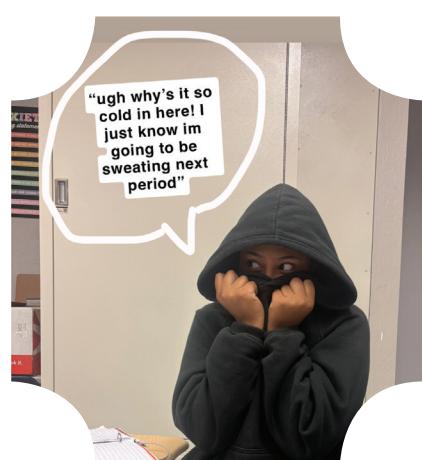
The custodial staff, on the other hand, seems just as confused as the rest of us. "Some rooms are like Antarctica; others are quite literally the sun. I don't know;

I just fix the lightbulbs," said Mr. Carl Thermo, a janitor. He has seen it all. In fact, he once even stumbled upon a wildlife encounter. "I saw a lizard sunbathing by the history teacher's door."

Becky Frostbite (9) takes a more tactical approach when it comes to the cold. "I wear gloves in math class—not for fashion—but for the survival of my fingers. I can see my cold breath while taking a quiz."

Over in the gym, the situation isn't even much better—as a matter of fact, it is quite the opposite. Coach Blaze, the P.E. teacher, said, "The gyms are so hot that we don't even need to do any warm-ups because we're already baked. It's not sweat anymore; it's just tears of survival."

Whether you're frostbitten in Algebra or dehydrated in History, there's one thing we can almost all agree on: temperature control does not exist here. And until it does, keep writing with sweat, wearing gloves indoors, and praying that the lizard by the door is enjoying itself.



Alitzah Martinez (11) bore the blizzard temperatures in class, knowing she would regret her complaints while in her next class (Photo Credit: Lily Arbios (11)).

Lily Arbios | Staff Writer

If there's one thing AHS is good at, it's definitely creating an extreme environment. Forget Antarctica or the Sahara Desert; we've got both under one roof. Spend a day here, and you'll be sure to learn some skills that are not taught in P.E. They're definitely practiced more in English

A page is the best distraction from a page

Why turning a physical page outperforms tapping an electronic page in memory and meaning

Jovina Zion Pradeep | Staff Writer

In an age where nearly everything can be condensed into a glowing rectangle, there's something quietly rebellious about opening a real book. These days, flipping through pages feels vintage, like mailing a handwritten letter in a world of emojis.

While digital reading has its strengths like accessibility and portability, it often feels like fast food for the mind—it's accessible, but not deeply satisfying.

Yes, e-books are convenient. They fit in your phone and can store every novel you promised yourself you'd read over summer break (and didn't).

But convenience doesn't always mean connection, as Shreya Baronia (12) pointed out. "As you read through a physical copy, the pages obviously get worn down. Sometimes people fold the pages, bookmark them, write in the books, or share them. Looking at how the physical copy has fared through all of these different events holds sentimental value."

Beyond nostalgia, physical books, notebooks, and textbooks are scientifically, practically, and emotionally more potent in helping us remember and engage with what we read and study. According to popular psychology magazine Psychology Today, comprehension is 6 to 8 times higher when reading from a physical page compared to a screen.

Even The Guardian and the BBC agree: students who read print texts outperform those who read digitally on comprehension tests, and 92% of students reportedly prefer print books over e-books. Turning pages creates a visual map in the brain which helps with memory recall during tests or essays. Physical readers also recalled plots more clearly and felt more emotionally immersed.

Literature is meant to be experienced, not just read. When you hold a book, you're not just absorbing information; you're navigating it.

"With physical copies, by flipping through the book to find whatever information I'm looking for, I automatically read through other parts of the book, which gives me context for that specific information that I'm looking for," said Baronia.

Physical books also resist the one thing every student

battles: distraction. A printed page doesn't ping, buzz, or suggest that you check your email. It doesn't glow blue light into your face at midnight or demand a password when your Wi-Fi lags.

Soumil Garg (12) can relate. "When I read physical books, it is just me and the pages. No pop-ups, no messages, no noise. Holding the book physically helps me stay calm and focused."

Nothing wakes you up faster than physically turning a page and realizing there are still 30 left to review. Even when a blackout strikes, physical books remain reliable. You don't have to wait for a 3% battery to climb to 100% just to learn what happens after a cliffhanger.

And there's something incredibly affirming about holding the result of your work in your hands, knowing that it exists outside a browser tab. Writers often dream of their names in print because it's proof that their ideas have weight.

Getting behind the wheel

AHS students talk about getting their driver's licenses

Ananya Pangarkar | Staff Writer



A driver's license unlocks new possibilities for teenagers to improve their day-to-day lives. "Sometimes I'll drive around listening to pirate music and act like I'm on an adventure," said Dotson (Photo Credit: Ananya Pangarkar (11)).

Driving has changed the routines of many AHS students. Being licensed gives students the ability to handle their own commutes, run errands, or hang out with friends on their own time. Finn Dotson (12) said, "It's been a lot easier because a lot of the time when my friends want to go out, my dad is taking a nap. So, now I can just go, and I don't have to wake him up. Or, if I have to get to school early for council or something, then I can just drive myself."

Despite the newfound independence and freedom, many parents still choose to limit their children's ability to drive. "I have to ask for permission to use the car, and I'm the last priority to get it. I can only drive myself and my parents," Urgaonkar explained. "I think the limitations are a little extreme, but I also understand where they're coming from."

Whether students like it or not, getting a driver's license is undoubtedly a defining moment in high school life. It's a rite of passage that entails both new responsibilities and new freedoms. As more students at AHS take the wheel, it's clear that driving is not just about getting from one point to another—it's about moving forward toward independence, adulthood, and the open road.

Delving into hidden stories: let's do some history

A deep dive into the history club at AHS

Angella Li | Staff Writer

AP tests, boring lectures, memorization—these are all things many people hate when it comes to history. Given its negative reputation, that begs the question: why would anyone want to join History Club in the first place?

The central focus of History Club is to spread awareness of the underrepresented areas in the past. "History Club is a place where I want to explore the history of minorities more than just what's usually taught," said Srestha Bajjuri (10), the president of History Club. "School history is very limited, and you don't really get a proper scope of things that you are passionate about."

Certain aspects of history class also frequently apply today. "I never liked the phrase 'history repeats itself,' but I think history does rhyme. It's important to understand the past, because in our current day, there's always a difference in terms of what situation we're in, but there's a lot of similarities and patterns," said Mr. Kaeding, the club's advisor and AP United

States and AP World History teacher.

Since all of the executives from last year graduated, History Club is currently under completely new leadership. As a result, its focus has shifted to incorporate a competition called National History Day. Sardha Viswanath (10), the club secretary, said, "NHD [has] this project where every year they have a different theme. You need to look for things in history that happen in your local community, and you bring that to light with your project."

Officers of the club will help club members who are interested in competing create a strong submission and keep members updated on the intricacies of the requirements. "There are 6 categories, which are exhibits, documentaries, podcasts, papers, websites, and skits. These competitions start at county, then state, then national level," Bajjuri said. "A goal that those participating in NHD usually have is being well versed in their particular topic. This is important for the interview portion in which everyone is assigned a dedicated time where judges come and ask questions about your project and basically grade it."

History Club has drawn the attention of many students who are interested in the intricacies of the past. Ayush Pathuri (10) said, "It's quite an inclusive place. You talk about several different topics for different backgrounds, and it brings everyone together in general."

A recent topic the club covered was LGBTQ+ history, allowing for a safe environment for those interested in queer history.

This being their first year running a club, the officers of History Club have been adapting and learning from their newfound positions. Bajjuri said, "We're all just figuring out what we're doing because none of us have really managed a club. We're just getting used to that, and hopefully more people do show up."

Since History Club finds itself short on members, its officers hope that more people may find themselves drawn to its goal of exploring niche parts of history in the future. Bajjuri said, "I would definitely love to see if it grows and more people are interested."

Setting the tune: homecoming halftime

AHS cheerleaders and Marching Band bring energy, creativity, and school spirit to this year's halftime show

Sachi Ladole | Staff Writer

routine, the marching band took the field to perform this year's show, Resurrection. The performance featured the band and colorguard's precise formations, vibrant visuals, and wooden torches that matched the fiery theme.

Audience members were impressed by the halftime spectacle. Nitya Gujrati (9) shared her thoughts, seeing them perform for the first time. "It was something that I have never seen before and just



AHS Marching Band put on a colorful performance, entertaining the crowd with synchronized flags, and strong musical talent during this year's halftime show (Photo Credit: Avery Pemberton (AHS Class of 2025)).

totally different."

Drum Major and Homecoming Court King Benjamin Chen (12) shared his pride in leading the group and being part of both band and court. "I got to conduct the show in a suit, so that's pretty good," he said. But on a more serious note, he added, "I'm glad people trust me—not just as a drum major but to vote me onto the court. It's nice to know that people in the band and at school support me."

Percussion section leader Avish Zindal (12) mentioned how this year's performance held special meaning as his last year with the AHS marching band. "Definitely, this year is going to be my best performance out there during halftime," he said.

By the end of the night, both the cheerleaders and the marching band had contributed to making Homecoming Halftime one of the most spirited moments of the season. Mrs. Adiraju, a math teacher who was at the game, expressed it perfectly: "I think this is something I've never seen in my life. The way they walk—I can see that discipline and dedication. They are something amazing."

The crowd filled the stands on Friday, October 17 as students, parents, teachers, and alumni came together for this year's Homecoming football game. Cheers erupted as the second quarter came to a close, but for cheerleaders and band members, the night was just beginning. Homecoming Halftime wasn't just another performance—it encapsulated school spirit in every practiced note, toss, and step.

"The seniors make the halftime routine," said cheerleader Lucas Peng (12). With only 2 seniors on the team this year, they took the lead in choreographing and teaching the routine. "We started in August and started teaching it in September," he said. "We got it down in 3 practices. It was great."

Peng also talked about one of the team's favorite parts of performing at Homecoming—the energy from the stands. "The student section is super fun. I love it when it's completely filled," he said. "The fun energy gets everyone's mood up. We're just here to hype people up and bring spirit."

After the cheerleaders wrapped up their

Swift sparks debate

A review of Taylor Swift's new album *The Life of a Showgirl*

Suhani Thakkar
Staff Writer

After months of waiting, on October 3 when the clock struck midnight, Swifties everywhere reached for their phones and listened to the album they had been eagerly anticipating. But was it worth the wait? Taylor Swift's new album, *The Life of a Showgirl*, was released on October 3, 2025, but despite her increasingly popular influence, this album created a divide among Swifties, sparking a debate over the quality of her work and the evolution of her music.

One of the main controversies around the new album was Swift's songwriting. As Avanti Ghate (11) said, "The lyrics were jarring. I thought I would get used to it because I usually do, but I didn't really." By using language such as "my d*ck's bigger" and "girlobossed too close to the sun," Swift makes it seem as though she is trying to stay relatable to newer generations, but these lyrics have almost the exact opposite effect. They scream TikTok and make it hard to take Swift seriously, greatly deviating from the well-written songs of her past.

One of the main factors that contributed to Swift's rise to fame was that she always felt relatable to young women, singing about the romantic and emotional struggles that they could see themselves in. However, with this new album, she shifts her perspective, declaring that "I like my friends cancelled" and disparaging adults who "call their [dogs] kids." These lyrics go beyond talking about her personal life and dream; they directly attack some of her fans, shifting her vibe from that of a relatable pop star to more of a rich bully. Avanti expanded on this, saying, "Her album reeked of inauthenticity and punching other people down for no reason."

On the other hand, some fans looked beyond some of the lyrics and thought her new album was fun to listen to. As Abigail Ye (11) said, "It's really different because there's only 12 tracks, so each track is unique, making the album more interesting."

While this album may be shorter, it has no unifying theme. As Ghate pointed out, "It doesn't have a continuous and compelling narrative. Albums are supposed to be a story, but this is just a bunch of different stories that never connect with each other at all." This album pushes Swift into a new and uncharted direction. As Ghate explained, "I'm literally praying for a better album [next time]."



The cover for the new Taylor Swift album, *The Life of a Showgirl* (Photo Credit: Central Times).

If it ain't broke, don't fix it

AI actors change the future of Hollywood

Kaitlyn Liu
Staff Writer

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has continued to make shocking new breakthroughs. In late September of 2025, Tilly Norwood, a Dutch AI actress, was released—a project championed by Eline Van der Velden. The creation resulted in waves of backlash and criticism from A-list celebrities such as Emily Blunt, Natasha Lyonne, and Whoopi Goldberg.

In the last few years, AI has been growing exponentially, from AI chatbots such as ChatGPT or GeminiAI to technologies like autonomous vehicles. Tilly Norwood was created by the talent studio Xicoia, a division of a UK production company called Particle6. The creation of an AI actress is the newest development, and it has the potential to alter Hollywood in the future.

Chinmay Patchigolla (11), AHS's Film Club Crew Lead, stated, "I think that creative expression should not be interfered with by AI. It's at the stage where it can replace anything, and creative freedom is the one unique thing we can express ourselves with."

As an actress in Dashwood Films, a teen-led production company, Kiara Cadelina-Moral (11) stated, "I rarely ever consider AI a threat to art culture. Therefore, I do not feel personally affected with the creation of Tilly Norwood. I could see the industry creating more AI actresses that generate more wealth; however, I still think actress roles are primarily filled with people."

According to Patchigolla, "With some AI video editors, it's so easy. Normally, you have to download a bunch of clips for YouTube videos, combine them in a video and manually add some effects, add subtitles, export it, then upload. With the video editor, it does the



The announcement of Tilly Norwood evoked feelings of criticism and disapproval from Hollywood stars (Photo Credit: Variety).

entire thing for you in a minute."

Patchigolla added, "You can ask [AI] to generate some really stunning graphics which some graphic designers do, and it can do that in around a minute for free. With a graphic designer, you have to actually pay them, so I think it's going to affect the job market especially."

Patchigolla is able to clearly identify when AI tools are being used in pieces and writing in general. He said, "ChatGPT specifically uses academic language, like formal language, instead of speaking slang. Another major indicator of AI is if they have some really, really complex words that no one has ever heard of."

Khaashwini Saravanan (11), who enjoys drawing and doing art in her free time, stated, "AI is a really big threat because it takes a person time to develop skills and get accustomed to a job, but AI can do it really, really quickly. But I also think that a lot of jobs have an innately human aspect that you can't really take away."

Cadelina, who has strong emotions about AI's impact on culture and film, said, "I think AI actresses strip away the values and principles that society has; AI cannot reach their audience to the same extent as human actresses in film. Also, AI in films only degrades the imperfections and flaws that appeal to the audience's emotions."

Spooky season at full swing with the Fremont Ghost House

The Candlelighters Ghost House opened its doors to frights and fun

Aarnav Raamkumar
Staff Writer

As Halloween nears, the Candlelighters Ghost House, located in Fremont Hub, becomes a place of screams, candied apples, and entertainment. But the real scare starts weeks earlier, from the building of the house up to the busy nights near the end of the season.

Even in the earliest stages of planning, designing the Ghost House is a group effort. Alicia Barros Marin Young, a Candlelighter, or organizer of the Ghost House, said, "Every year we start around September, and every Saturday we start building the house for 6 to 7 weekends." She talked about all the different responsibilities Candlelighters have, spanning a wide range of tasks. "We've got to rent the place and buy all the trinkets that people win. We've got to sign up all the students. We've got to organize all the time-tables and buy the costumes and makeup—all of that. A lot goes into keeping this place running."

She also talked about the theme of the event and how it gets picked each year. This year's theme was based on movies di-

rected by Tim Burton, a director known for his gothic horror and fantasy films, including *Beetlejuice* and *Corpse Bride*, which are implemented into the Ghost House. "Now we have different movies; we have Edward Scissorhands, and Jack Skellington, and different ones like those that jumpscare visitors."

Many factors contribute to keeping the Ghost House running, including the student volunteers that help in the house. Avi Gonzalez (10), a volunteer inside the house, spoke about her experiences scaring people, saying, "There was this middle aged couple, and the woman just went, 'Woah!' and the man was like 'AHH!' and he kept getting closer. 'That was really scary,' he said."

Another volunteer at the haunted house, Corina Church (10), also talked about her experience with the people who visit the Ghost House. She said, "I have been thrown into a wall once by a person by accident. He just kind of threw his arm out. It was an adult, and he felt very,

very bad afterwards. But other than that, you mostly just have people screaming very loud, being very caught off-guard."

From the other perspective, people visiting the Ghost House also note how it has been a memorable experience. Aashna Bhagia (9) said, "There was one part where it was just a clear room, and you'd walk past it and think there's nothing in there, but then they would run up to the glass, and they'd scare you."

Although many things have changed about the Ghost House since its opening back in 1969, it has always remained a family-friendly place for a wide range of ages. Church spoke about her positive experiences with the Ghost House's community, saying, "It's very community-oriented, and the people that interact with the volunteers are very clear with the idea that they want it to make an experience that people enjoy, especially the little kids—that they want to come back for years in the future."

Eagles soar: strong season for girls' volleyball

A season of hard work, improvement, and memorable wins for AHS girls' volleyball
Sachi Ladole | Staff Writer

The AHS girls' volleyball program headed into the postseason on a high note, with both varsity and junior varsity teams showing growth, grit, and determination.

The varsity team currently holds a 17-9 overall record and 9-6 in league, placing them third in the Mission Valley League and securing a spot in the playoffs. Under Coach G. Sculley, the team finished league play with momentum, securing 3-0 wins over Moreau Catholic and Kennedy.

One rivalry matchup stood as the emotional centerpiece: Washington. "My last four years here, Washington has always been a big game for us," reflected Coach Sculley. "It's been close every single time." AHS split the series with Washington this season—taking a hard-fought 3-2 victory on September 30 but falling 0-3 in the October 23 rematch.

"One of our biggest games was our game against Washington," said Sahana Pandian (12). "They're a pretty good team, and we lost to them twice last year, so it was nice to get a win against them this year."

Players said the match on September 30 captured the team's identity. "You could feel the energy in the air," said Joanna Min (10). "Everyone was so hype, and we were able to push through in the last sets. That game represents our team the best—we

have the will to fight."

As the season reaches its final stretch, Captain Sydney Pagsoligan (12) reflected on her final year with the team, saying, "I'm going to miss it a lot. This program and being part of my high school life." She also shared her thoughts as a captain this year, saying, "I learned to be a lot more patient and understanding of my teammates as people before players. Everybody learns in different ways and timelines—and as a leader, you have to understand that."

Coach Sculley credited the team's success to leadership and confidence. "It's gone a lot better than last season," he said. "Over the summer, my seniors stepped up and are leading now. The best part is working on stuff in practice and then seeing them succeed in the game."

On the JV side, the Eagles also delivered a strong season, earning wins over Kennedy (2-0), Moreau Catholic (2-1), and Washington (2-1); their only league game loss was to James Logan (0-2).

"They've improved in all aspects," said JV Head Coach N. Bigornia. "They exceeded my expectations. Sometimes they make me want to throw my book away, and other times I'm just in tears because of how proud I am of them."

Eagles displayed strength in overtime thriller

The AHS football team showed determination despite falling 42-40 to the San Lorenzo Grizzlies in an overtime game

Lisa Shokoor | Staff Writer

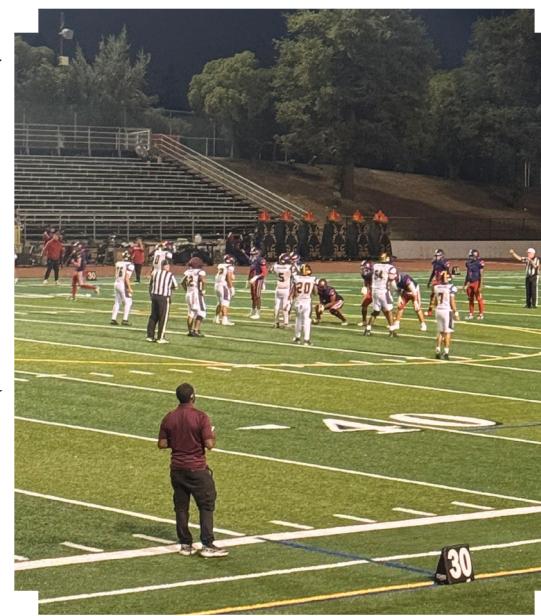
On October 17, 2025, the AHS football team faced off against the San Lorenzo Grizzlies in a homecoming game that had the entire crowd on its feet. The night was filled with energy, school spirit, and determination as the Eagles battled through four intense quarters and a nerve-wracking overtime.

The game started in a stalemate with a 0-0 first quarter. However, right as the second quarter started, the Grizzlies pounced and made a touchdown along with a 2-point conversion. But the Eagles replied with a ferocious 50-yard rushing hand-off, with their drive ending with a touchdown. The quarter had back-to-back drives from both teams that resulted in touchdowns but they failed to score 2-point conversions. The quarter ended 18-18.

As the third quarter rolled in,

the momentum of the second quarter remained with the Eagles making a touchdown and a 2-point conversion in the opening drive—putting the Eagles in the lead. But Grizzlies soon made a touchdown right after, with a failed two-point conversion. The quarter ended 26-26.

In the fourth quarter, the Grizzlies intercepted the ball from the Eagles, following up with a touchdown with a successful 2-point attempt. The Eagles, realizing that they needed a touchdown to stay in the game, successfully made it to first and goal with 31 seconds left. The drive ended with a touchdown and successful 2-point conversion ending regulation with 34-34.



The Eagles lined up to start their second drive of the first quarter (Photo Credit: Lisa Shokoor (11)).

Welcoming AHS's new athletic trainer

Kristin Calhoun helps AHS sports teams stay in the game
Tiffany Notice | Staff Writer

Students are finding support on and off the field with the new athletic trainer, Kristin Calhoun. For many athletes, having an on-campus trainer helps with injury recovery and their approach to sports.

Calhoun shared how she approaches recovery for athletes. "I enjoy movement. I think movement helps. As much as everybody wants to rest after an injury, research has shown that movement helps recovery," she said.

She understands that students may be hesitant to see her, believing she will prevent them from playing, but her objective is to protect their long-term health.

"I am an ally for them—an advocate for their health. They think I am the person who is going to pull them from playing, but I'm trying to make sure they can play their sport even longer in the long run," she said.

Aidyn Dalling (12) does a sport each season. "I started off my sports in prime condition with no injuries, but doing sports year round eventually started to wear my body down," he said.

With the athletic trainer just a walk away in the weight room, Dalling explained, "It is really great to be able to have somebody on campus that I can just go to whenever I need help with recovery."

For Dalling, recovery is more than just physical. "The best thing for my recovery is having a positive mindset, being genuinely serious, and not skipping out on physio[therapy]."

Like Dalling, Dante Arbee (12) has been playing sports all 4 years of high school. Arbee is a football player and has had to battle with multiple injuries throughout his athletic career. "I had a close relationship with the last trainer, so I was hesitant about a new trainer. But I found out she just wants to make the athletes better than they were," Arbee said.

"The new methods, like how she tapes and the type of stretches she gives out, have helped me recover, get back on the field, and feel better during the recovery process," he said.

Varsity volleyball player Ava Pagobo (11) has also dealt with sports-related injuries. "I recently sprained my thumb, and the trainer has been very helpful in my recovery," she said.

Throughout her season, she went to the trainer to get help for her aches and pains to perform her best. Pagobo said, "When the trainer is near, I feel supported. She's right there to help me get back on the court faster."

With Calhoun's support, athletes at AHS are learning that recovery is part of becoming stronger. With easy access to care, athletes can stay healthy and be ready to perform at their best.



The athletic trainer helped at neon-out football game (Photo Credit: Tiffany Notice (12)).

but I think we can come out with 2 more wins this season."

The team displayed improved communication and energy on the field compared to previous seasons and games. Junior Varsity player Subhan Fedaie (9) cheered from the sidelines, supporting his team after the JV game was canceled. He said, "From the years that I have watched American play, they've been getting really good, and they're doing a lot better tonight than they were in previous years. I think there was more confidence given to the players by the coaches."

The Eagles may have fallen short in overtime, but even in defeat, the Eagles showed heart and discipline, giving hope that there may be brighter games ahead for the AHS football team.

Arbee believes that the team is doing better this year compared to other years, saying, "[We're] definitely [better than] last year and the year before,

Miles of momentum

AHS's Cross Country team pushes past limits, one stride at a time

Josiah Loftin | Staff Writer

The cross country season has been a steady climb—one race, one practice, and one finish line at a time. For runners and coaches, the journey from the first meet to the last has been marked by growth, resilience, and teamwork.

"The race that stands out to me was MVAL number 3 at Newark because I was injured and couldn't run; the course was foreign to me. I got fifth place and beat my personal record with 13:50 for 2 miles," said Elyse Lovellette (9). That moment set the tone for how the rest of the season would unfold, testing both endurance and mindset.

For many athletes, the mental side of racing is just as demanding as the physical. "For me, it's a little nerve-wracking until we're on the bus—then it gets a little better," said Maxwell Wang (10).

Each race pushed every runner to the edge because of its unique course. "The toughest course I've faced this season was Farmers Invitational. It had hills, and it

had rained the previous night, leaving the ground muddy. I pushed through it by thinking about my next step, where to go, and thinking of who I can stick with—not worrying about what's going to happen," said Titas Tung (9).

Team chemistry also played a major role in performance. "My relationship with my teammates has influenced my performance this season because they are so welcoming, kind, and supportive. They always watch out for me, cheer me on while I feel

like giving up during the meets, and add rainbows to my days when they're feeling stormy," said Lovellette. From warmups to cool-downs, encouragement from one another became fuel for the miles ahead.

Goals set early in the season slowly began to turn into achievements. "For the rest of the season I want to improve physically, so I can continue to get faster and try my hardest," said Tung. Each runner measured success differently, some by times, other by consistency or confidence.



The AHS Cross Country team beamed as they finished another great race
(Photo Credit: Coach Julian).

Beyond results and medals, the athletes say the sport has changed how they think. "Never give up, no matter how bad the situation is. You can just push through it, and if it doesn't go away, just focus on your goal, and try your hardest," said Tung, who learned persistence, focus, and patience from cross country.

Leadership within the group helped hold it all together. "As a senior, I've taken on more of a mentor role. They listen to me and are curious about my past experiences, which pushes me to lead by example," said Romir Gandhi (12). Those efforts helped keep morale high even when races got tough.

As the season nears its close, focus turns toward the future. "I hope that for the rest of the season I can channel my love for running into my races and try harder. I hope that next year I will not get injured again and just stay healthy, most importantly," said Brianna Su (11).

Every race, every hill, and every stride built something stronger, momentum that carries beyond the finish line.

WORD SEARCH

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