

NEWS BRIEFS

Alcohol Restriction Lowers Teenage Death Rates

In Oct. 2009, San Gabriel High School alumna Vicky Chen was killed by a drunk driver as she and a friend tried to fix a flat tire on the freeway.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, about 350,000 people between the ages 15 to 19 received medical treatment from car accidents. Of those 350,000, 500 were killed in 2008. Approximately 26 percent of the incidents were due to driving under the influence (DUI) with a Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) of at least .08 percent.

Actions, such as enforcing the legal drinking age, set by law enforcement have decreased DUI fatality rates. The underage DUI tragedy rate has decreased by 60 percent since the 1960s, as shown in trends by the National Institution of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

In Alhambra, sobriety check points are done twelve times a year, in addition to weekly radar trailers.

Another initiative, the Zero Tolerance policy delivers consequences for people driving with any BAC of more than zero percent, disapproving of any consumed alcohol amount and vehicle operation.

However, students feel that the laws are certainly helping prevent drunk driving.

"Although [the age 21 law] might not eliminate all risks, it definitely allows minors to mature for a few years before letting them choose whether or not to endanger their lives by drinking and driving," said sophomore Jimena Jaramillo.

Johnny Huynh, Staff Writer

Artists' Anonymous Get Down with the 60's

For the past months, the members of Artists' Anonymous (AA) have been working on an exhibition influenced by 60's styled visual art. Entitled "Kaleidoscope Eyes," the collection consists of student-created artwork inspired by the themes expressed in the late 1960's and early 1970's counterculture movement.

Currently on display at the AHS library, the exhibit features vibrantly colored collages, psychedelic paintings and optical illusion art. The walls are adorned with posters and album covers representing the cultural sensibilities of the era.

"There's a broad range [...] of ideas to feed off of," said AA President Brenda Chi. "We encouraged [the students] to use optical illusions and bright, vivid colors."

In addition to work done by AA members, the Déjà Vu history club has also contributed a collage. The exhibit contains 60's related paraphernalia donated by teachers and staff. Speech and Debate coach Kevin Tong loaned his Motown album covers to the exhibit while mathematics teacher Ron Matossian provided his "dirty biker" helmet.

The showcase will be open to all students at lunch or after school until Mar 26. A public reception is scheduled on Friday, Feb. 12 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Students are encouraged to dress in 1960's clothing and take part in the costume contest. A prize will be awarded to the person with the most authentic attire.

Alan Tam, Co-News Editor

IN OTHER NEWS

- All women charged with DUI 3 times in one week
- Woman claims white powder, actually cocaine, was from a doughnut
- Peruvian doctors amputate wrong leg, then realize mistake
- Chinese city renames mountain after 'Avatar'

Mark Your Calendar ...

- Feb. 8: Lincoln's Birthday Holiday
- Feb. 10: Collaboration
- Feb. 11: Emergency Drill
- Feb. 15: Presidents' Day Holiday
- Feb. 17: Collaboration

New Initiative to Employ Merit Pay

ANTHONY PEREZ

Staff Writer

In an effort to receive additional funding from the state, the Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD) is planning to apply for the Race to the Top (RTTT) initiative issued by California's Office of the State of Education. AUSD's participation in RTTT, enforced by a national agenda, would impose stricter standards in the classroom. Among other agreements, AUSD would comply to the full examination of teacher competency as shown by student performance. In other words, student scores from standardized testing would determine whether a teacher receives a raise in pay or is fired.

It is important to remember that RTTT is not the only piece of legislation impacting education at the moment. On Jan. 7, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed California State Senate bills SBX5 4 (Romero) and SBX5 1 (Steinberg/Brownley) into legislation. In essence, these bills give the parents with students in predetermined low-achieving schools the right to move their children to any higher-achieving school district. These bills also allow the creation of charter schools contingent on a simple majority of parental consent.

The recent increase in popularity for charter schools can be attributed to the misconception that they are private schools. Some parents believe charter schools will be the right decision for AUSD. "Students would have a better opportunity if there was private funding for schools. Charter schools are the perfect combination between private and public education," said Maria Chavez, the parent of an AHS student.

However, charter schools can be similar to private schools in the manner in which they accept students for enrollment to their institutions. For example, a student with a disability may not be accepted to a charter school, because they would lower overall test scores for that school.

School districts across the country now have the opportunity to appeal to their respective state for funding because President Obama has



BRIAN HUA The Moor

TIMES LIKE THESE Students end Buddy Dinner with a conga line during the last song of the night. Boys' Federation held the annual dance at the Pasadena Masonic Center on Jan. 29. The event included an all-you-can-eat buffet.

allocated a one-time \$4.4 billion budget for the RTTT initiative. However, as mentioned earlier, AUSD would only receive money if they comply with the implications attached.

Although these new reforms sound beneficial, the California Teacher's Association, among other unions, is in complete opposition to the legislation. Alhambra Teachers' Association (ATA) Vice President and math teacher Dr. Rosalyn Collier is one of many teachers at AHS infuriated with the recent outcome of the Senate bills attached to RTTT.

"A better [alternative to charter schools] is to take that money from the federal government and pour it into our public schools. Give us the money so we can provide better AP classes, give us the money so we can provide more than one art teacher, give us the money so we can provide for our students so that [they can attend a school with good programs], not [one] where we segregate them off," said Collier.

Because AUSD is currently facing a \$28 million budget cut, any additional funding for our schools is needed. However, many students

side with teachers and feel that complying with RTTT might be a risk they do not want to take.

"Teachers' [pay] really shouldn't be based on the performance of the student, because even if a teacher is putting their best effort to teach a class, there will always be students who, unfortunately, don't do well just because they don't want to be in school," said senior Gustavo Vasquez.

In addition to the changes attached to RTTT, teachers will have to adapt their teaching styles in all subjects to comply with national standards, which would result in more testing for students.

Contract Causes Schedule Adjustment

YIFANG NIE
Co-News Editor

59 minutes in second period, one 40-minute lunch, and a 2:45 p.m. dismissal. All of these are changes instigated by the administration at the beginning of the '09-'10 year. However, these changes have now been reversed, and students will now have to adjust to the previous school year's bell schedule.

Effective since Feb. 2, the new schedule allows for a 2:41 p.m. dismissal, four minutes shorter than what the old schedule allowed.

However, because each student must have 64,867 instructional minutes per school year, as stated in the teacher contract, the minutes that were cut from the end of the day had to be added elsewhere.

Consequently, two minutes have been taken out of second period, making it 57 minutes long, and two out of lunch, resulting in a 38-minute break.

According to Principal Brad Walsh, it was easiest to take minutes from those two peri-

ods. "Second period was [made] a little longer to let teachers read the bulletin, [so] the easiest [way] was to shorten it," said Walsh.

The change occurred because the original schedule conflicted with terms stated in the teachers' contract, which said that teachers must be on

"It's not a very big change, so it's easy for students to adapt to it."

- Linh Hoac

campus for seven hours.

With the new schedule, teachers are now given time to take care of tasks that need to be done before class, as they must be at school by 7:41 am.

"[The new schedule] makes sure teachers have that time [to do what is needed] to prep for the day," said Walsh.

For some teachers, the new

schedule is a plus.

"I like it. It's not a very big change, so it's easy for students to adapt to it. It's really not a change for students to get to school early, but rather, for teachers to have time to [prepare]," said Psychology teacher Linh Hoac.

Students, on the other hand, experienced a range of feelings, from indifference to confusion, regarding the change.

For instance, junior Richard Poun is largely unaffected by the change.

"[During wrestling season], I have practice, so I leave school at 6 p.m. I [also] don't have a fifth, so it doesn't really bother me much," said Poun.

Senior Aileen Chen felt that the change was unnecessary and harmed teachers.

"It's pointless. They just don't want to pay the teachers whatever minutes they're taking off. They shouldn't have changed [the schedule] in the first place," said Chen.

It is unknown whether the schedule will remain the same next year.

Bomb Threat at AHS a Bigger Scare than Finals

STEPHANIE LEE
Co-Editor in Chief

On Jan. 27 at approximately 8:00 a.m., AHS students were interrupted from their finals by the ringing of a lockdown bell. The lockdown was in response to a 911 call only minutes before, reporting threats of an explosive device on campus. After searching school grounds with the help of AHS and district personnel, the Alhambra Police Department (APD) found nothing to support the initial claims and ruled the incident a false alarm.

"If the caller was a student, to disrupt the educational process at such a level [means] expulsion from the entire district," said Prin-

icipal Brad Walsh. "It was obvious the caller was a juvenile."

However, the culprit faces serious legal charges as well. Calling in a fake bomb threat is a felony, and all felonies, said Sergeant Brandon Black of the APD could lead to serving time in state prisons. Further, if the caller was a minor, he or she could still be prosecuted as an adult.

"[A situation] like this is taken seriously because it's an act of terrorism," said Black. "When the person is caught, the department and courts won't take it lightly."

The school used the web-based Connect Ed system to contact parents. The first message was recorded by Walsh and sent to all numbers

recorded in its database. Soon after, recordings in multiple languages were created. According to Black, around 50 parents showed up at AHS and were addressed in the parking lot of nearby Rick's.

"I was very nervous because I wasn't sure what was happening. I tried calling my son but I couldn't reach him so I tried getting a hold of him through his brother and sister," said parent Domitila Guerrero.

Meanwhile, students were held in their classrooms for around 20 minutes into the next period. However, the C-building was evacuated for reasons that Black could not disclose pending an ongoing investigation.

"Those students [who were evacuated] had

to find another time to finish taking their final; the caller used poor judgment at best," said Deputy Superintendent Harold Standefer.

Some students moved to the gym didn't see it as too dangerous.

"I felt it wasn't a big deal; it seemed like too much of a coincidence that it happened during finals. The possible dangers didn't really hit anyone," said sophomore Magan Chiang, whose first final was in the C-building.

Both the school and APD agreed that protocols for dealing with these occurrences worked well and that the safety is always the priority.

Stupid Decisions: Reckless and Now Lifeless

AGAIN AND AGAIN

Let's Pretend to Progress

EMILY KONG
Co-Opinions Editor

Everyday we make decisions that affect the rest of our lives. Not only do those choices stay with us, but they also deeply impact the people around us. Most of the time we're well aware of what to do and what to avoid. Obviously, we want to make good choices because they tend to result in good outcomes. But what happens when we don't?

Recently, South Pasadena High School's (SPHS) ASB President, Aydin Salek, attended a weekend party and it was there that he made the wrong decision.

After drinking too much, Salek passed out in the car. Realizing that he was not simply sleeping, his friends tried to revive him, but he was unresponsive to their efforts. There was also nothing the hospital could do later that night and the ASB President was pronounced dead early the next morning. Little did Salek know he would be paying with his life in deciding to attend a party and drink alcohol.

Salek was a popular student leader at SPHS. His many activities included being a member of the Model Nations, the American Cancer Society club and the swim team. With so many good things happening for him, it is even more tragic that someone with so much potential could make such a foolish mistake and lose everything so suddenly. Not only has Salek hurt himself, but he has also affected his family and friends, who he has also let down and disappointed.

For Salek, the person he hurt the



most was himself, but oftentimes, when drinking irresponsibly there is also the chance that we can hurt an innocent victim. Instead, a San Gabriel High School alumnus, Vicki Chen, was recently back in town from culinary school in New York. She had pulled over to the side of the highway because her car had broken

down one night as she was returning home. A drunk driver, racing down the asphalt at full speed, lost control and hit Chen as she stood in front of the car, resulting in her tragic death and inflicting serious injuries on the friend who was with her that night. While innocently waiting for automobile assistance, Chen and her friend became tragic victims of a stupid mistake, something that that

drunken man must bear with for the rest of his life.

Though it was multiple drinks for Salek, many don't realize the severity of underaged drinkers having even one drink. Nowadays, the recklessness with which alcohol is consumed suggests that we no longer care about the impact it can have on our present and, possibly, even our future.

Even though alcohol has always been a part of our society, we still have not answered the question as to why this substance is necessary. We would not have to wonder why people drink if everyone did so responsibly, but that, however, is simply impossible.

Underage drinking is something that has become rampant. Unfortunately, it seems that we have forgotten the many consequences that have resulted from the drunken teens of the past. All the time and money spent on educating us about what happens when we take drugs has simply gone to waste.

With 5,000 people dying each year from underage drinking, it seems as if we should think twice about whether or not we make the irrational decision to drink, regardless of the reasons.

Both Salek and Chen are only two of many tragic outcomes that have resulted from drinking. It's simple. Drinking can hurt you and drinking can hurt others. As much as we'd like, there is no gray area to consider.

If you never had alcohol, it might be a good idea to keep it that way, at least until you're absolutely ready to bear responsibility for the things that might happen. If you're drinking now at such a young age, maybe it's time you realize that there are other things you can do besides getting a bunch of friends together to drink until you've lost sight of all that's important in your life. Anything is better than something that can take your life or someone else's life away in a matter of seconds.

Despite the hubbub over our nation's first African-American president, Mr. Obama has made some dubious choices, his newest eyebrow-raising decision arriving as Race to the Top. Hoping to improve our lowest achieving schools and close the growing achievement gap, the new initiative is a lovely, picturesque goal about as realistic as Santa Claus dropping down the chimney to leave presents under the tree.

With the plan to make students' records and information readily accessible, the psychological effects of the information may become an unaccounted result. Teachers may skew their students' performance in order to make themselves appear exemplary, thus handing children the short-end of the stick as they're pushed up from one grade level to the next.

Although they are intended to be used by teachers and principals to adjust instruction in accordance to the students, the data may also serve as a way to measure how much a student needs to improve in order for the teacher to gain a good reputation.

Race to the Top seeks to provide an incentive for schools to better education and reward those who have shown improvements. Yet, the competitive nature of the grant may be more trouble than it's worth—schools will be constantly pressured to enact reform after reform in order to receive these grants.

One government official strongly advocating the legislation is none other than the United State's Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. Coincidentally, Duncan also served as the superintendent of the Chicago Public School (CPS) system.

If the reference doesn't immediately cause you to doubt the legitimacy and projected success of Race to the Top, ponder this fact: Prior to Duncan's appointment, rampant cheating was discovered throughout the CPS district as schools with low reading scores on standardized tests would be placed on probation or shut down.

However, students were not the perpetrators; faced with monetary incentives, teachers were the culprits of changing answers on tests.

Many agree that America's education system needs reform, yet we can only hope that its fate diverges from the faulty footsteps left by the No Child Left Behind Act. What we don't need is another system that fantastically fails to achieve its purpose: giving students a better education.

Sally Tran,
Staff Writer



Yes, He Can ... But Maybe Not Today

YVONNE LEE
Co-Editor-In-Chief

In the months preceding Barack Obama's November 2008 presidential election, the words "change" and "hope" became synonymous with the charismatic Senator. He told the nation "Yes, we can," instilling in Americans a newfound interest in politics. "Obama-fever" swept the nation and enraptured the American people. Thanks to a record number of voters, first time voters and minority voters in particular, Obama was elected the 44th President of the United States.

A year later, we are still in an economic downward spiral. Nothing seems to be improving: the housing market is still in the dumps and we have the highest unemployment rate in 26 years. Obama's approval rating continues to fall from February to December, it fell 15 percent, from 64 percent to 49 percent.

Obama has taken stands against job discrimination, hate crimes, growing economic class divisions, the war in Iraq and excessive deficit spending—amongst many other issues. He has championed many policies, most notably health care reform and the

economic stimulus bill. The latter included the popular "Cash for Clunkers" program, which helped expand the national economy at a 2.8 percent annual rate. However, this small glimpse of light at the end of the dark tunnel of recession is apparently not enough reassurance for Americans.

As a society, we are obsessed with instant gratification. Our approach to weight loss

is a prime example. Instead of properly dieting and exercising, Americans would rather go on outrageous crash diets consisting of only grapefruits or consuming experimental pills that assure immediate results.

The results expected of President Obama were unrealistic. We expected him to fix the housing crisis, end the Iraqi War, reform health care, capture Osama Bin Laden, find alternative fuel and resolve the problem of global warming. In six months. Maybe he'll

manage to fit in flying or walking on water in between all the world-saving too. Before his election, he was portrayed by the media and perceived by the public as more of a superhero than a presidential candidate. His celebrity endorsements, an Emmy award winning song made to a soundtrack of his speeches and iconic patriotic portraits played a vital role in the success of his campaign rather than acting as a complement to it.

The issue of his race also impacted his election. Many Americans rejoiced at his exotic ancestry, seeing it as proof of America overcoming the barrier of racism. While it is absolutely amazing to see our nation elect its first president of African-American descent, race should never be one of the deciding factors in determining a person's capability. Obama voters should view it as, "I agree with Obama's policies

and viewpoints and it is great that I can elect a President of such a diverse ethnic background," rather than "I'm going to vote for Obama because it's about time we had a black President."

When Obama won the Nobel Peace Prize earlier this year, many viewed him as unmerited. They didn't realize that Obama was being honored for his efforts to have peaceful relations with other nations. Many felt he didn't deserve it, being only nine months into his first term of presidency. The same can be said of his dropping approval rating, even though he has another three years to enact his policies and make the changes he initially promised a reality.

However, this is not to say that he won't make mistakes and fail, especially with some of the policies he has proposed, including the controversial Race to the Top education reform initiative. He is human after all. But, what Americans need to give him is the time and the chance.

Change does not come over night, especially the significant ones promised by Obama, but maybe with more time and faith from the American people, just maybe, yes, he can.

Before his election, [Obama] was portrayed by the media and perceived by the public as more of a superhero than a presidential candidate.

10 THINGS WE PROMISE NOT TO DO IN 2010

Never again...

1. ...interrupt Taylor Swift during her MTV acceptance speech.
2. ...take our Alhambra Police department for granted--especially during a bomb scare.
3. ...let a suspicious man board a plane on Christmas Day.
4. ...have song lyrics with the words, "roma-roma-mama gaga-ooch-la-la."
5. ...crash a White House Party uninvited and embarrass White House security.
6. ...have vampires on TV and in theaters all in one year (or the undead in general).
7. ...cheat on our wives multiple times...and even if we do, we promise to hide it better.
8. ...claim that our son has floated away in a homemade balloon in an attempt to garner attention and "find" him at home hours later.
9. ...promise to list ten things when we can only come up with nine.

Special thanks to:

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ASB President

Marcia Wilson, PTA President

Jessie Wong, mother of
junior Oscar Wong

Sports

Why do you think being in a club or sport is beneficial to students?

It gives them a chance to succeed in a non-academic area. It also instills self-confidence and they learn to be a team player. Sometimes students get side tracked by spending too much time in non-academic areas and their grades can suffer. Time management is key. -Perez

High school is a time to learn, not just academically, but also socially, emotionally and morally. I believe that clubs and sports provide opportunities for students to learn, grow and to hopefully become better people. -Yoshimizu

It's important that at this time in their lives, they're beginning to realize what interests them and what they like. Joining a club or sport at school really helps in developing their own identity. -Wong

Does race really matter?

How should the school handle the achievement gap between races?

I think that the problem needs to be addressed before high school. I see the gap starting in grade school. -Yoshimizu

There needs to be better role models for the Hispanic kids. Students need to be held accountable for their school's performance and laziness need not be tolerated. I do not think that students and parents have been held accountable and the school cannot decrease this gap alone. There are too many factors that the school has no control over. -Perez

Parents and administrators need to realize that this issue is not exclusive just to Alhambra High. Instead of reacting and blaming, we all need to do more research and come to understand why these gaps occur. This way, we will be able to handle the situation prepared and informed. -Wilson

Perhaps the most important opinion on education belongs to the parents—they are not afraid to speak their mind because they want what's best for their children. They will do whatever it takes to ensure that they receive the quality education they deserve. Here, several parents weigh in on issues ranging from the basics of academics and standardized tests to the more controversial matters of achievement gaps and racial equality. All of these topics affect the school and each parent can contribute ideas and express concerns that could potentially improve the quality of their child's academic life.

Alhambra Unified School District's scores are slightly behind compared to other school districts and the standards of the No Child Left Behind policy. What are your thoughts on this?

There could be many internal reasons why students are not performing as well as they should. However, our Adequate Yearly Progress scores have improved quite significantly in the past few years and we're definitely on the right track. As for No Child Left Behind, I believe its intentions are good, but there are inherent flaws—getting every single child up to a proficient level is just an impossible goal. -Wilson

This school year, administrators are really cracking down on school rules involving electronics and the dress code. Do you think this is effective?

If the rules are set, I will make sure my child follows those rules. However I feel that sometimes, the rules are a bit too strict and I don't really agree with all of them. I know it's important to set boundaries on inappropriate clothing, but what's the big deal about hats? Clothing does not dictate the amount of education a student is receiving. As for cell phones, sometimes parents need to communicate with their children. A few years ago with the bomb threat, I'm sure many parents were really scared and just wanted to make sure their kids were okay. Personally, I think students should be able to have their phones as long as they're not being used inappropriately. -Wilson

DISCIPLINE

What do you think affects student behavior?

The students' behavior comes from many sources; their families, friends, teachers, and coaches. The students need to care about themselves and their school and to take pride in doing and behaving well. It definitely helps to be surrounded by others with good discipline and behavior. -Yoshimizu

It is a combination of factors such as kids knowing and understanding the rules of behavior and the consequences. They need good ethic and moral practices that have been instilled in them from the home—the school can only do so much. -Perez

Parents Sound Off

Improvement

What do you think of the role of student leadership in our school?

Student government is a good way for teenagers to get a taste of what the real world is going to be like. At this age, they're mature enough to make decisions and decide what's best for them. -Wong

It's good for students to want to make a difference. It's always good to be involved and work toward making things better. Leadership skills are important in high school and all through life. -Yoshimizu

Are standardized tests an effective way to determine a student's intelligence?

There could be many reasons why a student doesn't perform well on these tests; maybe they're bad test takers or maybe they're struggling with other problems that may affect their scores. Standardized tests are good for giving a sense of how well students may do, but they're only grades from a subjective point of view. -Wilson

Leadership and Testing



Jessie Wong and son Oscar Wong

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Letters can be delivered to Room C-225, or the The MOOR's suggestion box in the Activities Office at least one week in advance. For legal reasons, The MOOR cannot publish letters written anonymously, but can withhold the name of the writer at his/her request. The MOOR also reserves the right to refuse publication when the opinions expressed or issues discussed have been previously addressed or are of no relevance to the campus community and/or surrounding areas.

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