

HELLO READER...

We hope this edition finds you well. This school year, *The Cougar* has been working tirelessly to connect you to local issues, popular points of discussion, and important events around school. This year we have improved the journalism program, implementing higher standards and working on making our reporting as accurate and ethical as possible. Though this year we have made a few minor errors, we have strove to correct and own up to them . For this edition of our newsmagazine, we have decided to focus on proximate high school stories such as student's attendance and its relevance to the district's income, the new AP social studies classes, and the absence of Challenge Day this year.

As we say goodbye to this wonderful program, we wanted to give a special thanks to our Managing Editors. Nasiah Tesch, for leading *The Cougar* toward a more innovative and creative direction and implementing every crazy idea we had. Thalia Savage, for supporting every team, updating us on every minor change, and making sure every word played like a Beethoven concerto. And Sisseline Lovejoy for taking initiative, writing the numerous random grants, and helping us advance journalism even farther with her careful nature. To each and every one of you, from the bottom of our hearts, thank you.

When we stepped up to take Editor-In-Chiefdom over the summer, we didn't have high expectations in rebuilding this program, but we are so thankful for our Managing Editors for helping us steer this ship forward. Every day has presented all of us with unique challenges, and you all have stepped up, meeted, and exceeded our expectations in every way. So again, thank you to you all.

Lastly our dear advisor, Ms. Rhode, thank you for embracing this class with TLC and pushing everyone to try their best. We wouldn't want it any other way.

It has been our pleasure serving you this past year. We hope our work has been informative and (at least somewhat) interesting to read. HAGS!

Peace and love,

Sommy Erin

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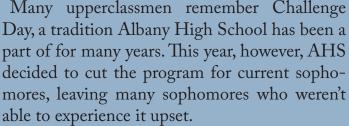




From Connection to Cancelation

ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL SAYS GOODBYE TO LONGTIME CHALLENGE DAY TRADITION

BY SADIE NYSTROM



This program was brought to AHS to help strengthen relationships amongst students.

Every year sophomores have been grouped up with facilitators and were guided through team building and emotional bonding activities. Anna Stewart, junior, said, "I felt like it opened me up to new perspectives, and I feel like people that I saw before, I like saw them."

Specialist in Albany Unified School District, described the goal of Challenge Day as "building community, helping students increase their

personal awareness, as well as awareness of community and the different elements to our school and how to work well together." Social-emotional skills such as these are incredibly important, teaching teens to build a safe school community and help understand their emotions.

Another reason this change has caused frustration from the sophmores is that yearly traditions are important for schoolwide bonding. Being able to talk with other grades about grade specific traditions is a fun opportunity to connect to people who have been through a similar experience, whether it'd be good or bad. Layla Tohidi, sophomore, agrees, saying, "I was looking forward to the experience and I am a little frustrated that we don't get to do it since I heard things from upperclassmen about how it really helps them."

James Pierce, an assistant principal at AHS,

helped coordinate and run Challenge Day for many years. His response to the cancellation is that "Challenge Day became more and more expensive. It started off as a program that was obtainable for our school, but they started asking yearly increases. We felt like that is now taking money out of other programs we could be doing."

Pierce also explained the goal of introducing a new program for the 25-26 school year, one that would be more cost effec-

tive, as well as a plan to give the current sophomores who missed out on Challenge Day an opportunity to participate their junior year.

Students hope that in upcoming years, AHS can continue to help build community for the students by integrating Challenge Day into the rest of the year's curriculum, along with giving students the yearly traditions that help build inter-grade relationships. #

"I felt like it opened me up to new perspectives, and I feel Wil Cason, the Wellness like people that I saw before, I like saw them"

Making Way For

A More Accessible Albany

BY SAMUEL DESTIN, ERIN CHO, AND MARGARET MONTAG LAYOUT BY OWEN GORDON

In Albany, walking and biking are more than just pastimes – they are vital forms of transportation for many residents. So what happens when the roads and sidewalks residents rely on are in disrepair?

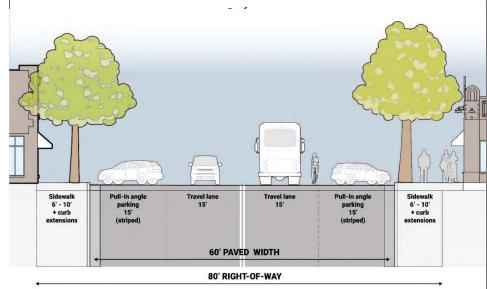
For some people, life-altering injuries.

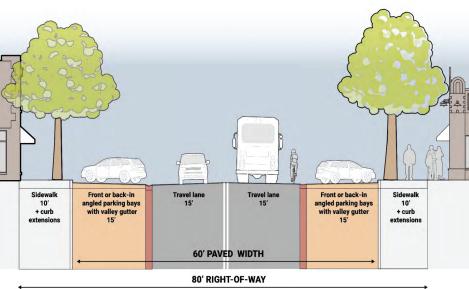
Over the past ten years, the City of Albany has been the subject of two lawsuits alleging the poorly maintained sidewalks caused "gruesome injuries" to the plaintiffs. One suit filed in 2018 details how an elderly woman was thrown out of her wheelchair after her wheel became trapped in a damaged sidewalk.

While these lawsuits are extreme cases, the damaged transportation infrastructure they feature is a large issue for the city. Damaged sidewalks, inaccessible bike routes, and pedestrian-unfriendly intersections present barriers to accessibility around Albany. In a study conducted by the City of Albany Transportation Commission, the majority of Albany streets were rated as having only "medium" to "very low" comfort for cyclists. This means that streets are suitable only for "most adults" to "strong and fearless riders."

"Active transportation," or walking, biking, and rolling (using scooters, strollers, wheelchairs, and other rolling devices), is the main mode of transportation for most Albany residents, including many Albany High School students. These types of transportation may seem straightforward at first, but problematic infrastructure can massively hinder their use, especially on roads not designed for active transportation.

The pressure of these lawsuits and the evident need for infrastructure development have led to several different initiatives, most significantly the Active Transpor-





Top: Cross-section of proposed corridor designs to make Solano Ave. more bike and pedestrian friendly

Bottom: Cross-section of existing conditions on Solano Ave.

Credit: Courtesy of the City of Albany



2018 demonstration of design recommendations along the Solano Avenue corridor. Credit: Courtesy of the City of Albany

tation Plan (ATP). The ATP is an advisory body that recommends research and policy to make streets more accessible for active transportation. It primarily targets the city's most traffic-heavy streets (Marin, Solano, and San Pablo Avenues), as well as major pedestrian intersections, like those around schools and along Solano.

The ATP was initially proposed in 2012, and since then, it has facilitated several data-gathering projects in the Albany community. This includes research projects on individual streets' safety, overall use of intersections, and sidewalk

conditions, as well as outreach events to highlight residents' main areas of concern.

Public involvement is a key part of the ATP process. We reached out to Ken McCrosky, a member of the Transportation Commission and the advocacy group Albany Strollers and Rollers, for his thoughts on the ATP. He explained that "the ATP process is a time to step back and ask, well, what should connect?

This gives us a chance to create a list of projects for the next 10-15 years, then prioritize them and recommend that to council and

have council give input."

Most recently, the city's staff proposed a plan to the Albany City Council to "upgrade curb ramps between Masonic and Tulare" by late 2029. The city has also approved a more in-depth study of upper Solano to identify problems with sidewalks and possible solutions. 2029 is just 4 years away, and if Albany residents are noticing construction, they can be sure that it is because Albany is moving towards safer roads for everyone.

Rolling with the Punches

I have often heard other disabled people say that they would not take an able body if they were offered one. They consider that the life they have built in their chairs is much more valuable than a pair of working legs. I am not one of those people. I yearn to feel the weight of my body swiftly carried by its own pieces. But I also will not deny the beauty of what we do; we create machines and materials that allow us to fly despite our seemingly broken bodies. You walk through the world and overlook the simplicity of having a body that fits. Have you ever considered if it didn't?

I am five years old. My legs have not yet become so weak that I cannot carry myself through my day. Everyone around me pirouettes and pliés. My world blurs with pink tulle and tiny tights. I stand in my bedroom. First position. This one I can do. Second position. Just take a step. Third position. My twisted bones don't turn the way I'd like.





By the time I was nine, I had met too many doctors, spent too much of my time in hospitals. Sitting in waiting rooms with dozens of children who are stuck in bodies they cannot control, realizing, in many ways, I am just like them. Eight doctors crowding around me, watching me painstakingly walk to the end of a hallway, they twist and turn my body, just to tell me they don't know how to help. The lady bug walls entrap me into a reality that is much too hard to swallow.

The physical fitness test requires every 5th grader to run a mile. Nine laps around Ocean View's playground. Nine laps behind the play structure, nine laps past the big green wall. Nine soggy laps in my second hand sandals. Four laps after everyone had already left. Three laps in the pouring rain. One lap with my very sorry PE teacher. A walk back to my classroom held up by my broken legs. Nine laps.

I am fourteen. I first step into a chair, attempting to believe that this is not giving up. Every curb

and bump creates a challenge, threatening to damage the thousands of dollars of equipment that replace my legs. Cities' inability to create safe and accessible sidewalks adds to the internalized feeling that this world is not made for us. We are not made for this world either.



I am lucky enough to have found wheelchair basketball, allowing me to find an accepting community and sport. As I walk into the gigantic gym. Hundreds of wheelchairs fill courts and sidelines. This space is meant for us. I strap into my chair, listen to the hardwood creek under my slightly larger wheels. I close my eyes and feel myself glide and fly across the floor. This space is meant just for us. We limp and we fall, roll and we run, we laugh and we soar. Here nobody leaves us behind. Here we are welcome to be ourselves, mind and body. I hope you will learn to appreciate how often this space is available to you. A space you feel you and your body simply fit.

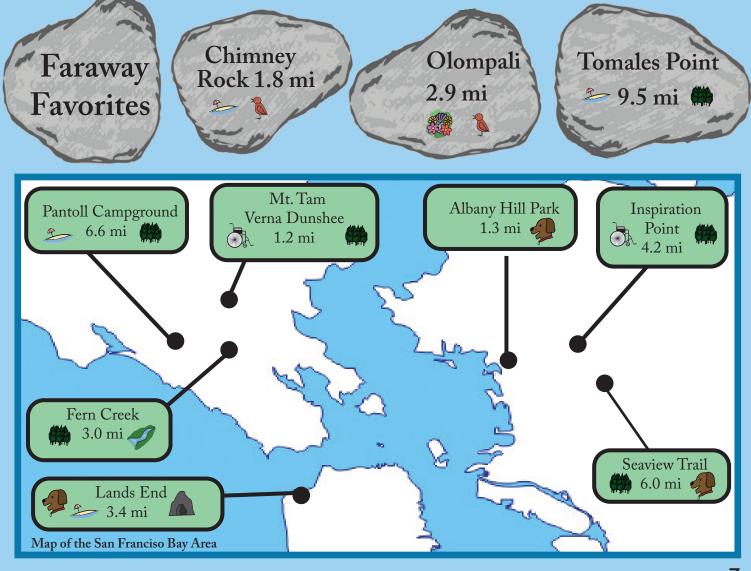
The Cougar Trail Guide

BY MAYA OSVALD

Hello, and welcome to the Albany High School trail guide! This is a small map I put together for you, the area's walkers, hikers, and runners. Perfect for outings with friends and family, these trails are all in the Bay Area and accessible to high school students. It includes a couple of scenic strolls, a few good hiking trails, and a substantial trek or two. Each hike on this map has a name, location, and symbols next to it. Use the key to figure out how long each hike is and a few other things to keep in mind when choosing a trail. I have also included a few favorites that are a bit farther. These trails don't fit on the map but are definitely worth the longer journey if you're a fan!

Key

- Dog Friendly
- Beach
- Forest
- Birding
- Wildflowers
- Wheelchair Accessible
- River
- Caves





Room 204 Before Students Arrive

Why Going To School Pays Off

"If we get [attendance] to 97 percent, we could have seven new sections added to our schedule, which would help with class sizes and elective offerings."

- Darren McNally, principal of Albany High School

A vast majority of school funding in California is directly tied to the percentage of students who show up to school on any given day - or average daily attendance - which goes towards paying for teacher salaries, electives, club reimbursements, and maintenance. In an interview with The Cougar, McNally stated that "it's about 99.5 percent,... the vast majority of our funding comes from that [average daily attendance]. Pretty much all of our state funding

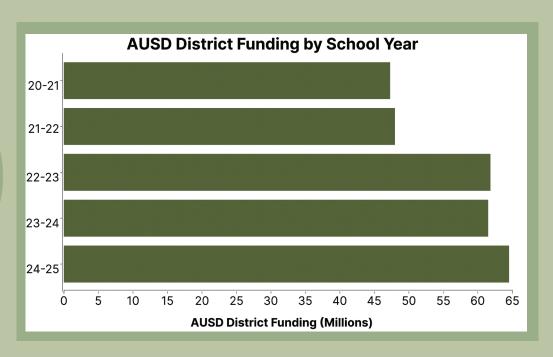
depends on that."

Furthermore, he went on to reveal that "for every one percent that attendance goes down, that's basically the cost of a teacher for a whole school year ... for every student, if they miss a day of school, we lose \$[74]."

As an example, "the day before midwinter break, we had 170 students absent. Most of those were excused absences, but that 170 absences times \$[74] per student, maybe that's \$[12,580] we

lost. One teacher for one period is about \$25,000." The school, just on that day, lost about half of what it costs to hire a teacher for one period. Absences, especially absenteeism (being absent for extended periods of time) is the main reason that the school loses potential funding.

This is how attendance impacts Albany High School specifically. But how does it impact the other schools? What effect does average daily attendance have on the "One thing
people don't understand is that it doesn't
matter if it's an unexcused or excused absence,
we don't get funding
either way."



Albany Unified School District Budget Since 2020-2021 School Year

BY NIRVAAN JASWAL AND GOLDEN RANDOLPH
PHOTOGRAPHY AND DESIGN
BY OWEN GORDON AND AAROHAN SUBEDI

Albany Unified School District as a whole?

According to the 2024-2025 Executive Summary for the AUSD budget available on the district's Budget Watch webpage, "the [average daily attendance] projection for this next fiscal year is an integral part in projecting the District's income. Currently, even a 1% change in attendance rates would be a \$400,000 change in the District's projected revenues." It's very important to the school district to drive up enrollment rates across the board as well, because it also gets its funding from average daily attendance.

The summary also states that "Albany Unified School District has averaged a 97% attendance rate compared to enrollment in the past, however the attendance

rate was 95.8% in 2023-24 school year."

The 97 percent attendance rate figure mentioned by McNally above becomes even more significant, because attendance as of late has been lacking compared to this figure, costing the school about \$184,000 of funding lost this year as compared to the funding based on the average attendance rate in the past.

In contrast to being the most valuable attendance demographic, high school students show up the least. Ayush Deodhar, senior and student member of the Albany Unified School Board, said that "it's high school students out of everyone in the district" that are the most likely to cut. According to McNally, "seniors and juniors [are more likely to cut classes]

than sophomores and freshmen."

What can students do to improve the school's funding? Deodhar noted succinctly that "the obvious answer is that students show up to school more."

McNally added that "one thing people don't understand is that it doesn't matter if it's an unexcused or excused absence, we don't get funding either way. So the difference is made up, it's not helping our funding either way. Attend school, or at least part of a school day, so we can still get that funding ... if you come at 2nd period and advisory, we still get our funding. If people are taking extended absences ... get independent study, because we get funding for that. That's the biggest change that we can make."

Stress in the Last Stretch:

How Do We Deal with the Balancing Act of Extracurriculars and School?

BY NIRVAAN JASWAL, JUDAH KUPERS, AND MICHAEL FINLEY

In the fall, *The Cougar* interviewed seniors to find out how students manage their extracurriculars and do all of the things they do within a limited amount of time.

As we talked to those who have already submitted their applications, one thing stood out; in the hopes of being accepted to universities and colleges, they felt the need to juggle both hard AP-level coursework and many extracurriculars. How did they do it, and what do they have to say to underclassmen who will soon be going through the same thing?

Saraya Hampton, Associated Student Body president and an Albany Dance Company team captain, wanted to go for "a top choice, or a good UC." She was asked about the difficulty in balancing school, extracurriculars, and mental health.

To that, Hampton said "it's kinda hard ... it's all worth it in the end — I find ways to take breaks. Dance is my escape. There's things that I do that are fun, it's not all just for college." When asked what she does when encountering a tight schedule specifically, she responded with "dance, and listen[ing] to music."

Rudy Hayden responded that his top choices were "UCSB

(University of California Santa Barbara) or U-Dub (University of Washington)." When asked about what extracurriculars he did, he said "Engineering Club treasurer, Chess Club co-president, I'm class vice president, I volunteer for the Berkeley Food Network and I work at Mathnasium."



Bruno Der doing classwork on his computer.

In the fall application season, this level of multitasking can often get overwhelming because of the time it takes to apply to schools. That's why Judah Branoff, vice president of Engineering Club and co-president of Jewish Student Union, said that he "used to play ultimate frisbee as a sport... And I'll say because of college apps, I [couldn't] play [in the fall]."

Balancing academics, extracurriculars, applications, and life in general can be very difficult. The seniors interviewed here have some advice for underclassmen who will be graduating and applying to college in the future.

Quinten Lloyd, a member of the AHS basketball team who is on track for university, said, "stay on top of your homework, talk with your teachers and ask for help, and find a way to balance everything."

Asking Bruno Der, another member of the school basket-ball team, suggested "don't mess around, and delete distractions like social media."

Hayden, who ended up committing to Cal Poly SLO (San Luis Obispo) had multiple strategies of getting through the application process while doing all his extracurriculars: "I needed to focus on what needed to be done [at the time] which was college apps so I dedicated time to get those done. I had a college counselor too that helped me through the whole process and made it a lot easier"

Finally, Hampton, who decided to go to UC Berkeley, stated, "Do what you want to do, don't do everything [just] for college, because in the end it's really just a lottery. You could do all of this for nothing."

A New Look:

Albany Offers a Different Perspective with AP African American Studies

BY GOLDEN RANDOLPH AND JUDAH KUPERS

High school dynamics adapt and change with each passing year. In the 2025-2026 school year, Albany High School is introducing a new Advanced Placement history course, AP African American Studies. Soon to be taught by US History teacher Yvette Pulido, it offers a new opportunity to gain AP credits and meet the US History graduation requirement, while also studying a diverse and intricate subject. Currently in an Ethnic Studies PhD program at UC Berkeley, Pulido has become an expert in different cultures and their histories in the United States. During her studies, she realized that many social studies classes, like the ones she had taken in high school, lacked cultural studies. She said that while getting her PhD, she "learned a lot that I hadn't learned in my school in AP US history or government."



Historical civil rights protests in the United States

Even today, most American history classes and standards are still taught traditionally, focusing on the dominant, white narrative. The thought that students wouldn't learn about different cultures until college sparked her desire to start teaching African American Studies. Students can use this class for their US History graduation credit. The class itself is divided into multiple sections. It starts with the African Diaspora and African Kingdoms before moving on to colonialism, slavery, and reconstruction. A third



Yvette Pulido will teach AP African American Studies next year

section focuses on empowerment, art, and literature. The class also talks about Indigenous America, the Great Depression, and much more.

When asked about how this class will differ from a regular history class, Pulido commented, "I like that it doesn't have to be a history class. It can actually be taught by an English teacher or an art teacher. There's a section of it that looks at artwork, at artifacts, and it's all about how the artifacts relate to history and the culture of the good people."

Finally, when asked if she recommends the class to juniors, she said, "I would if they feel like they haven't been exposed to this history and they want to learn more about American history that is from a different perspective." However, it is not the only class she praises; she commented on US History, saying, "It's one of my favorite classes to teach, it is a junior-level class, and how we teach it here at Albany is not how I was taught US History. It's a people's history in the United States. It's from the 'bottom-up' perspective ... I recommend both of them. They're both great classes."

Work Smarter, Not Harder: Job Options For Teens

BY LUCY FORTIER, JUDAH KUPERS, AND JULIA WEIBLE

Wondering what your classmates are doing this summer? We checked in with working students at AHS to see what part-time jobs they love.

Katie Hou (9)

"I've been working there since 8th grade. I think it's good experience to practice public speaking and talking to people. I would reccomend it to high schoolers."

Mathnasium



The Mathnaisum building Photo by Gretchen Viestra

Summer Shen (10)

"I think it's really fun and you get to help the kids so it's really rewarding. My favorite part is seeing the kids improve and it click when they finally understand a concept."

Daniel Hou (12)

"[I work] Probably about 3 days a week. I think if you live close its a good job because you don't have to drive or anything."

As-You-Wish



As-You-Wish located on Solano Picture by Gretchen Viestra

Jonah Mapes (12)

"I work probably about three times a week, for four hours. I've been working for probably around like 9 months. It's kinda boring but not bad, good pay. [My favorite part is] probably talking to people."

Safeway



The Safeway parking lot in Albany Picture by Judah Kupers

Anderson Reis (12)

"I definitely recommend it. It's pretty fun. [There's] a lot of good people there that are willing to help, it's good experience."

Augie Cilley (11)

"I plan on working there the whole summer. My favorite part of the job is when there's free food. It's a really fun job, and you make a lot of money. I reccomend it."

Aquatic Center



Lifeguard at the Albany Aquatic Center Picture by Paul Neacsu and Namrud Fessehaye

Cassidy Sullivan (10)

"I really like the people who I work with and also it's good money. I feel like it is a good job for people who are just starting out because you don't need that much experience."

Chloe Le Thery (9)

"I work at Monkey
Business camp, and I
reccomend everyone to be
CIT or junior counselor.
My favorite part of the
job is helping the kids
through their challanges
and encouraging them to
play."

Kids Camps



Campers playing games Picture by Hazel Knox

Hazel Knox (12)

"I work at Camp Ketov, a Jewish day camp in Berkeley. I went there growing up so it's super fun to be a couselor there. My favorite part is the spirit. The camp has a lot of energy. I would only recommend working at Ketov if you went there growing up, but I would definitely reccomend working at a summer camp."

Naia Hudson (11)

"I'm a lifeguard and a swim instructor, and I started working my freshman summer. My co-workers are great and the job is pretty chill. It's a good college job and shows leadership."

Lucas Escoto-Lucero (9)

"I've been a helper at Monkey Business camp since I was 11, and I'll be working there this summer. I like getting money, and also being outside is fun. It's a good enviroment."

Chloe Kupers (11)

"I work through UC Berkeley at Cal Blue Camp. It's hard work but I really like how tired I am at the end of the day. [It] makes you feel like you have accomplished something. I am saving up for college but I did this job for a year without making money, and I would honestly do it again."

THE LAST HARRAH: THE CLASS

BY LAURA GARCIA AND IZZY YOUNG

"In college I'm gonna play from time to time and maybe try out for a club team." - Noah Kim, Tennis

"I've been playing tennis since i was 5 with my grandpa and started seriously in 8th. I like that it's good exercise and it's fun." - Sam Rothstein, Tennis

"I've been playing since I was little and so this is like my final stage."

- Jasmin Araica, Softball

"I'm playing in college at Sac." - Tenzin Losel, Volleyball

"My favorite part of playing my sport is meeting new people and going to tournaments." - Kushal Shresta, Volleyball

"Stay dedicated and the right time will come."

- Jude Hatamiya, Baseball

"It goes by fast so enjoy your time, make sure to have fun and work hard in school while you're at it." - Sam Beynon, Baseball

"The best part was probably just going at my own pace."

- Anderson Reis, Golf



"My favorite memory was probably the relay invitational every year because it's a very positive and fun meet and I like that it's more teamwork focused." - Jordin Sishima, Track & Field

OF 2025'S SPRING ATHLETIC MEMORIES

"My favorite part was talking to people on the course, especially during our matches and stuff."

- Tiernan Smith, Golf

"I started running track because I did soccer and I was only good at the running parts so I moved to track." - Samuel Givner, Track & Field

"My favorite part of the sport is playing by myself, so I can be independent."
- Oliver Mann, Golf

"[I started] because my brother was playing baseball, I wanted to follow in his footsteps." - Maxwell Eddy, Baseball

"My favorite memory is probably leading the team cheer and becoming a state champion two times at CIS." - Sean Vorhis, Swim

"I started because I didn't have enough coordination for other sports so I started running and I fell in love with it." - Mattea Frank, Track & Field

"I think my favorite part was trying out new things, learning how to better improve myself." - Shinghan Liu, Tennis

"My favorite memory from high school softball is the 2024 league finals. I have to say it was one of our best games over my four years here." - Samirah Bowie, Softball

PHOTOS BY: SAM GIVNER, BRIAN DINH, JEFF CASTLE, KATHRYN STAMBAUGH

Senior Map

Class of 2025: IN-STATE

Berkeley City College

Allen, Jayden Garcia, Samuel Nakabayashi, lan Wong, Mark

CalPoly, Pomona

Medina Garcia, Rocio Smith, Tiernan

CalPoly, San Luis Obispo

Cortes, Celisa Hayden, Rudy Nordenholz, Audrey Phan, Audrey Pollard, Niko Ramirez, Maya

California State University, Monterey Bay

Dashdavaa, Khangal Knowles, Teagan

California State University, Sacramento

Badde, Felix Baeza Jimenez, Melissa Young, Kaitlyn

Contra Costa Community College

Miranda Navarro, Padme

Diablo Valley College

Adler, Jaden

Harvey Mudd College

Tan, Zach

Laney City College

Bell, Apollo

Loyola Marymount University

Yasnovsky, Nathan

Occidental College

Lieberman, Sander

Pitzer College

Givner, Sam

Pomona College

Linzer, Cleo

Saint Mary's College of California

Vorhis, Sean

San Diego State University

Beynon, Sam Eddy, Maxwell Ferencz, Toni

San Francisco State University

Mirabdokht, Erfan

San Jose State University

Kalsang, Tenzin

Scripps College

Daniel, Harper Mickelson, Talia

University of California, Berkeley

Gold, Skylar Lam, Mabyn Leopoldo, Bruno

University of California, Davis

Ambrosio, Phoebe Chik, Samantha Destin, Samuel Feldman, Annabella Lee, Noah Mallika Chou Oshry, Ari Shin, Ian Yang, Samantha Zou, Sabrina

University of California, Irvine

Lynch, Catherine Mapes, Jonah Wu, Gavin

University of California, Los Angeles

Kajiwara, Jefferson Kim, Noah Mummert, Basye Quan, Jake Roy, Soumi

University of California, Merced

Chang Wo, Ming Xue, Evan

University of California, Riverside

Chan, Lawrence Lin, Emily Zuniga, Alayna

University of California, San Diego

Goldbach, Mani Nomura, Hugo Sipes, Kiana Sitaula, Suvanjan

University of California, Santa Barbara

Boucherk, Dyhia Lee, Dylan Reek, Ava Rothstein, Samuel

University of California, Santa Cruz

Alanis Caroline Beeler, Emma Guy, Gabriel LaRosa, Tekoa Mathews, Ian Tumurbaatar Reagan Uyeda-Hale, Romare Verma, Arjun Weible, Zachary

University Of Redlands

Hajnal, Hannah

University of San Francisco

Tesfaye, Salem Toled, Felipe

University of Southern California

Clark, Cassidy Wong, Kayla

Phow did you make your decision?

"I got off the waitlist after commitment day and since it has been my dream school for a long time I knew I had to go."

- Ava Reek



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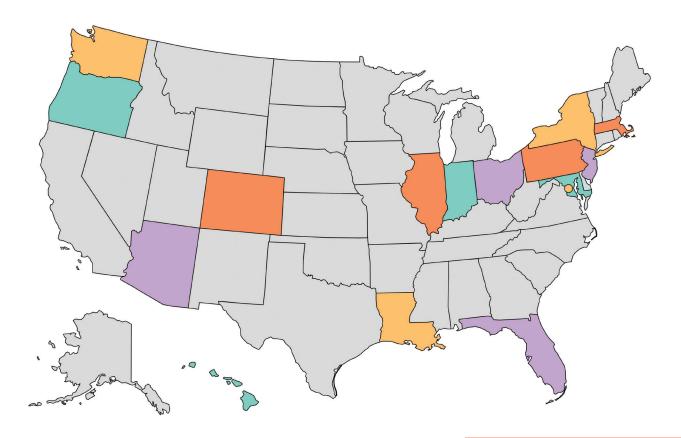
What makes you hopeful about your future?

"Being able to experience a new city and meet new people."

- Ian Shin



CLASS OF 2025: OUT-OF-STATE & UNDECLARED



Arizona

University of Arizona Knox, Hazel

Colorado

University of Colorado, Boulder

Jusseaume, Gemma

District of Columbia

Georgetown University

Park, Jeremy

Florida

University of Florida

Green, Dylan

Hawaii

University of Hawai'i, Monoa

Deng, Patrick Rasmussen, Cassidy Shishima, Jordin

Illinois

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Yang, Michael

Indiana

Purdue University

Sherpa, Crystal

Louisiana

Tulane University

Ding, Maggie

Maryland

Morgan State University

Williams, Olivia

Massachusetts

Tufts University

Carter, Sophia Lee Bennett

Hampshire College

Keller, Veren

Massachusetts con't

Northeastern University

Branoff, Judah

Wellesley College

Cho, Erin

New Jersey

Princeton University

Wu, Alfred Radwin, Ori

New York

Fordham University

Dea, Raiden

New York University

Hu, Cooper Maulana, Kira Gough, Kate

Rochester Institute of Technology

Schwartz, Milana

University of Rochester

Seo, Aaron Wan, Ruiqi

Ohio

Oberlin College and Conservatory

Gould, Amalia Noble, Zach

Oregon

University of Oregon

Caparaz, Rebecca Gomez-Pendleton, Layla Smith, Melia

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania State University

Liao, Justin

Temple University

Agha, Zedaan

Washington

Whitman College

Breedlove, Johnny

University of Puget Sound

Lock, Jordan Watt, Liam

CLASS OF 2025: INTERNATIONAL & GAP YEAR



I fell in love with the tight-knit energy of the [Oberlin] community, and look forward to working with the amazing music faculty they have.

- Amalia Gould

Deodhar, Ayush

South Korea

Remnant University

Park, Hayoung (Helen)

Scotland

University of Edinburgh

Ascher Webber, Andrea

Gap Year & Other

Dey, Willow Rasband, Ari Ramos, Owen

Artist Spotlight

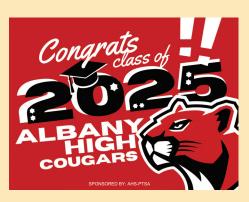
BY DARLA LAWSON AND RINCHEN WASHUL

With the class of 2025 graduating, we want to celebrate a few of the many amazing artists at Albany who have left a lasting impact with their creativity and talent. From painting to theater to digital art, these artists have shown their skills and ambition in a way that makes them stand out.

Gloria Liu

Can you tell us about graphic design?

"Well I've been doing graphic design for a while now and I run the Albany High Instagram account so I'm pretty proficient in doing graphics. So although this is like my first school class for graphic design, it's like not [my first time doing graphic design]. I'm pretty familiar with the whole system already, I find a lot of inspiration from pinterest and just things I see around and yeah it's something I'm passionate about and want to do in the future too."

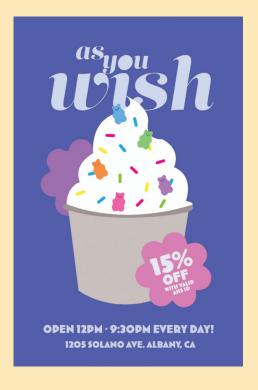


What would you say to people who want to pursue graphic design?

"Just don't contain yourself to one thing like I think that my best designs have come from pushing myself to try something new and even if it doesn't look good, just keep working on it and just don't be afraid to try new things."



Photos from Gloria Liu



Jeff Castle, the graphic design teacher states, "Gloria Liu is insane this year. She's making insanely beautiful stuff. She designed the graduation signs for the PTSA last year for the seniors and she's doing it again this year for the seniors. In addition to all the stuff she's doing for her class, she's up to all these extra things which are really cool."

Michael Yang

What type of art is your passion?

"I like music. I do a lot of singing and choir and stuff, and I also play piano."

How long have you been doing music?

"I've done choir since sixth grade and it was actually a course that my mom signed me up for even though I didn't want to do it, but it turned out to be really fun and it's a great community. I also have been playing piano since about five years old and that just like something else that I do. Both are fun."

What/Who inspires you?

"I'd say partly the music and getting to learn fun music and songs that I'm interested in, and then partly from seeing my friends also with me learning [the] music."

What would you say to people who want to do what you do?

"Probably just go for it and if there's any project or idea that you want to do just go for it and do it if you wanna try making music or just even just singing in karaoke."



Classmate, Jefferson Kajiwara says, "Michael is a really supportive friend and he is always so kind and he's very good at listening. He is really good at piano and he goes every February and wins competitions. He plays for all the variety show acts and plays for choir and it's really amazing and he does a really good job. Whenever anyone asks him for help he's always really open to helping out especially in music both vocal and for piano."



Photos from Michael Yang



Felix Badde



What type of art is your passion?

"Music but I would say more specifically jazz."

How long have you been playing music?

I have been doing music for about seven almost eight years."

What/Who inspires you?

"I listen to a lot of the greats, I listen to a lot of famous jazz musicians and I take a lot of my inspiration and influence from them most of the time."

What kind of performances have you done lately?

"I ran a jazz night almost two weeks ago, we have three jazz combos at our school and it felt unfair that they didn't get any time to present or be in the spotlight during the jazz concerts so I decided to create a jazz show just for combos so people can just come out and see how much work we put into it. It's fully student run, Mr. Bryant has no part in it. Me and some IHS folks got together and made posters, brochures and we put together, I would say, a pretty successful show."



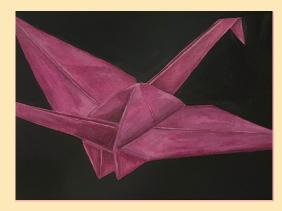
Photos from Felix Badde



Craig Bryant, the jazz band instructor says, "I think that Felix is one of the hardest working and nicest students I ever taught in my career and I am very proud of all he's accomplished. He's been a very good leader and champion of a lot of students, his peers and also especially younger students coming to the program. I'm also really excited for his future."



Kate Gough



What type of art do you do?

"I do a lot of acrylic painting and just sketching for fun"

How long have you been painting?

"I've always kind of been pretty creative. That's kind of been my outlet for a long time, since I was younger. But I've never really had formal instruction until ninth grade when I took 2D art."

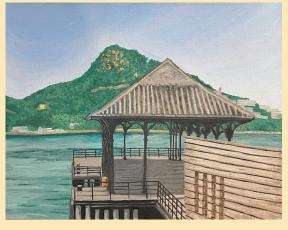
What or who inspires you?

"I like looking out in nature a lot, I sometimes paint from photographs I've taken"

What would you say to people who wanted to do what you do?

Trust the process. I know when I start a lot of my paintings, they start out pretty rough, but then they end up looking pretty decent.

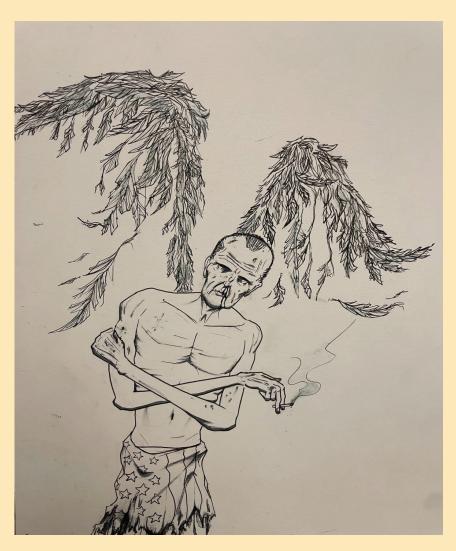




Photos from Kate Gough

Classmate, Kayla
Wong says, "Kate is
super sweet. She is
very hardworking,
she always has her
work done, she always
makes people feel included and she's very
fun to talk to overall
she's very funny."

Nick Sayphrarath



What type of art is your passion?

"I like to sketch and draw things a lot, and a lot of my art consists of things with limited values and not a lot

How long have you been doing art?

"I've been doing art pretty much my whole life. I have always drawn when I was a little kid, and then when I got older, I got into sculpting with clay and then I did other bigger kinds of paper mâche, and cardboard art, and then I went back to drawing and that's what I do a lot now."

What or who inspires you?

"A lot of surrealist artists, horror fiction. A lot of zombie fiction is really fun to look at, especially for anatomy practice."

What would you say to people who want to do what you do?

"Don't try to copy other people, make it your own. I think art that you can emotionally relate to is the most authentic."

Matthew Russell, an Albany High teacher states, "Nick is such a creative, intelligent and curious person. I think he is really interested in learning about the world around him, he has a great sense of humour and he has a really incredible ability to draw, he can draw amazing things on demand like you can ask him to draw something specific and he will do it immediately and it will turn out amazing. He has made my classroom more colorful and more artistic all year long and he has just been a great student to have."



Photos from Nick Sayphrarath

Basye Mummert

What type of art is your passion?

"My biggest art passion would be theater."

What/Who inspires you?

"When I was little, my biggest influence was Sutton Foster because the first musical that I got really into was actually *Shrek*; the Musical. Everyone had a Hamilton phase, I had a shrek phase and then Wicked."



How long have you been doing theater?

"I have been doing musical theater since I was around five years old."



Photos from Bayse Mummert

What would you say to people who want to do what you do?

"You're going to face a lot of rejection and you are going to build up a tolerance for it. It's really good to go into it with a mindset of being supportive of other people. Because you're going to make a lot of really close friends and you're going to have a lot of very important and close relationships from the community. The community of theater is part of why I love it so much. And if you can focus your mindset on being supportive of those people rather than being jealous and competitive ... that [mindset] will make your experience all the better."



Classmate, Liam Watt says, "I'm in choir with Basye and she's super involved. She is my director for the student production for theater that we are doing right now and she is very organized, she knows a ton of theater and I feel like she's doing a really great job with that. She's also a really kind person and I admire her a lot for that. She was in *Shrek*; the Musical and she did a really good job with that. She also got nominated for the Broadway SF theater awards which is really awesome."

Summer's Sweetest Scoop

Trying and rating ice cream shops on Solano

ISCREAM

9/10



The ice cream was the definition of delicious. Everything was perfect, the taste and texture were very on point. They even gave us waffle cone pieces to go with it! However, a bit of a pull back from giving it a 10 comes from the walk there. It's a longer walk compared to the other ice cream stores on Solano. But, it is definitely worth it.

MR. DEWIE'S

6/10



At first, I thought that Mr. Dewies was a dairy free ice cream shop, not a cashew ice cream shop. Although it isn't necessarily to my liking, and the vanilla flavors are off due to its lack of sugar, I can admit that the texture and the presentation are spot on.

9.5/10



The smell of home-made waffle cones as we walked in was enough on its own for a 9/10. The ice cream was creamy and delicious. It had a rich dark chocolate flavor, which, combined with the refreshing texture, created a perfect balance. Though this was a little bit of a walk, it was definitely worth it.

10

DAIRY FREE!

8/10

We walked in unsure what to expect, but were greeted with warm smells and friendly smiles. The texture was silky, as if it was made with dairy, but lacked some decadence. The flavor was thick and chocolatey, perfect for a summer afternoon. This is a great option for people with dietary restrictions.

ASYOUWISH 7.5 / 10 FROZENYOGURT



The texture of the frozen yogurt was creamy and soft, but the flavor of it was slightly off. It lacked a bit of that classic vanilla flavor. It went well with the toppings that we each selected, adding to its overall taste.

10

SOLANO ICE CREAM AND YOGURT

8/10



The vanilla ice cream had a rich, smooth texture, complimenting the overall taste in a good manner. Regarding the taste, however, it seemed to taste more artificial than natural, akin to something you would get at a grocery store.

SUGAR FREE OPTIONS!

7.5/10



This ice cream was delicious, but could have been more decadent. We wished there would have been more chocolate flavor and creamy texture. Again, the toppings added flavor and texture, making our experience more enjoyable.

5/10



This chocolate froyo was refreshing, it was more watery, almost like sorbet. Though the flavor was good, it lacked a rich chocolatey flavor. We did appreciate the large number of topping options, and the

self-serve format, allowing us to choose how much we each wanted.

TO TANY OR NOT TO TANY

BY NOA CALLEN AND JULIA WEIBLE

GUIDE:

Pre tanning:

Exfoliate skin
Grab a cold drink and snacks
Apply sunscreen/tanning oil (SPF 30)
Bring activity to do while tanning

While tanning:

Tan front 15 minutes
Tan back 15 minutes
Swim break
Reapply sunscreen/tanning oil
Tan front 10 minutes
Tan back 10 minutes
Swim break
Reapply sunscreen/tanning oil

Repeat!

During the summer, when the UV is high enough, grassy parks are crowded with people that are trying to absorb the optimum amount of sun. Tanning remains popular, but in reality, regular tanning can be damaging over time and lead to cancer.

We interviewed Albany High students whether the risk is worth it. Namgyal Kalden, junior, said, "I don't think it's unhealthy, I mean there's kind of mixed opinions about that, it could be really sunny out and you maybe want to tan but like if you do it repeatedly that might affect your skin."

While it can be risky, some sunscreen and limited exposure to the sun can be beneficial. Gemma Jusseaume, senior, said, "If you wear sunscreen, I feel like it's fine. And being in the sun helps your mental health and your wellbeing."

The National Library of Medicine says, "Several health benefit claims such as improved appearance, enhanced mood, and increased vitamin D levels have been attributed to tanning. Furthermore, the Indoor Tanning Association claims that, "catching some rays may lengthen your life."

Tanning is a risk and it's a choice whether or not you want to take it. There are fun ways to do it while being cautious of the health effects.

OVERCOOKED?

Liam Sheen, 10



Ori Radwin, 12



Chloe Han, 10



Sophia Ugalde, 9



Top 10 Fave Tanning Songs:

- 1. Scar Tissue Red Hot Chilli Peppers
- 2. The Spins Mac Miller
- 3. Walking On A Dream Empire Of The Sun
- 4. Summertime The Sundays
- 5. Jamming Bob Marley
- 6. Banana Pancakes Jack Johnson
- 7. Slide Frank Ocean & Migos
- 8. It Feels Like Summer Childish Gambino
- 9. Brazil Declan McKenna
- 10. Doses And Mimosas Cherub



Gemma Jusseaume, 12



Don't know what to read? Check this out!

Which Would You Rather?

BY SADIE NYSTROM AND MARGARET MONTAG be chill or be productive? be productive be chill school, work, or neither? relax or workout? work neither school workout relax Work Smarton a team or high school er Not Harder by yourself? or college? (pg. 12)by yourself sleep in or stay on a team up late? The Cougar Trail The Last Guide (pg. 7) Harrah college stay up (pg. 14)sleep in late do you like the heat? high school Senior Map (pg. 16)Stress in the Last yes no A New Look Stretch (pg. 10) (pg. 11) Why Going to School To Tan? Or Not Pays Off (pg. 8) to Tan? (pg. 28) Summer's Sweetest Scoops (pg. 26)



IDEAS HAPPEN!

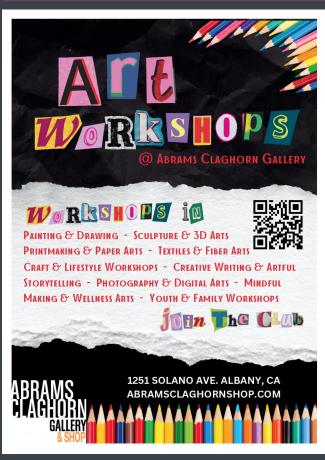
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