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The Morning America Changed

Schools dedicate 9/11's 25th anniversary across the nation

By Camila Calderon

Everyone remembers where they were, what they were doing, and how they felt when they looked towards the TV to see that a plane had crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center (WTC) and the sky had been contaminated by black smoke. Twenty-five years after the 9/11 attacks, the nation still gathers to bow their heads, dedicate a moment of silence for those who have passed, and tell stories of the tragedy that impacted generations. As thousands stood in silence and read names at the memorial plaza in New York, the influence of that day reached far beyond the city. It reached all the way to small towns like ours, where coaches, principals, and teachers still carry the memories that changed America forever.

For many Americans, the memory of 9/11 isn't abstract. It's the image of smoke rising from the North Tower or the smallest detail like the sound of a news reporter's voice cracking on live television. It's the fear of not knowing what was going to happen next, and the questions beginning to rise in their heads as it hit the South Tower too: "Are we next?"

Yet, out of that fear created a generation of Americans that grew up to be more cautious, more aware, and more protective of one another. Patriotism was transformed into a completely new meaning. It became about resilience in the face of adversity and standing beside fellow Americans to protect and guide one another. It taught us to put all of our differences aside and unite by telling stories, comforting one another, and taking that tragedy and turning that into something beautiful for future generations to see.

While there are many places across the nation where 9/11 feels extremely heavy, West Point is one of them. Many schools love to dedicate the day to 9/11 by giving a moment of silence or teaching a lesson about people affected by the event or the timeline of how

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it all unfolded. At our school, principal Andy Lewis started off our morning by giving a speech about 9/11 and dedicated twenty-five seconds of silence to honor those who suffered, for those who fell at the face of evil, and for the families who were left scarred.

Another person deeply connected and even affected by that morning was coach Terry Doggett. Doggett had his classes watch a 9/11 documentary, and he felt an immediate emotional tie to the video. One thing both Lewis and Doggett expressed was that if we were to learn one thing from 9/11, it should be that we should be grateful for the life we have today where we do not have to live in fear and can find strength in many things. They also express how we should continue to remember this day, the people who lost their lives, and dedicate a moment of our own lives to forget our differences and unite with one another on the day we truly became America.

America constantly navigates dark times, and we are all still healing from departing from the loved ones we lost from 9/11, even in current times. We feel it when our children are sent to the military, when we walk into our workplaces, or even when we watch the morning news. However, it is important for society to remember these dark times as not a time of grief, fear, and anguish, but as a symbol of unity, bravery, and gratitude. Remember those who are not with us today and continue to live your life to the fullest for them, and take a moment to have gratitude that we are not living in constant fear. Give time to thank officers, firefighters, and emergency responders for protecting our country and society every day. Never forget the day we put everything else to the side and became, simply, Americans.

Pacing Into First!

A look at the Boys Cross Country team win at home

By Sebastian Perez

The cross country team has had much success recently as their season began to progress. On September 10th, the cross country team hosted their first home meet of the season. Although it wasn't a big meet, it was exciting to witness our runners compete at home. The teams that attended the home invite included: Bancroft Rosalie, David City, GACC, Lyons-Decatur North East, North Bend Central, Scribner-Snyder, and Tekamah Herman. The location of the meet was at Neliegh Park. The race started behind the fairgrounds. The runners ran around the lake and made their way by the dike, and eventually back around the Neliegh Park lake. The runners ran just short of 3.2 miles before they arrived at the finish line. From the starting gun, the boys wasted no time asserting themselves and getting into good spots for the rest of the race. The top placing boys were Zaq Leslie, Ethan Corrales, Hector Cabrales, Nolan Hasenkamp, and Max Meiergard.

The weather and atmosphere set the stage for an unforgettable day for the whole team as the boys placed first. The performance was proof of the hard work that the team puts in at practice so that they can compete at a high level. It was clear that the runners were all focused on running, and nothing could throw them off after the preparation they went through before running. When asked how he prepared before the race, Joshua Gonzalez said, "I prepare physically by getting the right amount of stretches we do every day at practice and also the same type of running warm-up we always do, which is 15 minutes long. I mentally prepared myself by telling

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myself that I could do well at this race, and I knew I could do well because it was a small meet; since it's a fast and pretty flat course, you want to pace yourself, get out in front early, and try to set a PR. I was not only locked in mentally, since I was also locked in physically. I really felt great that day, especially after all the running we had done prior. I try to push myself at practice so I can perform well at meets."
Anytime the runners compete, it shows that they are a strong team that sticks together and pushes one another to run their hardest. Joshua Gonzalez explains his strategy and talks about the advice and knowledge Coach Burtis shares with them. "My strategy was to go out really fast at the start and then keep up with Nolan by mile two and try to keep up with Ethan later in the race, but definitely not try too hard to get in front of everybody ahead of me since I really had to pace myself so I could have enough energy for the whole race. I try to keep my eyes up and just run with full confidence because Coach Burtis always tells us that if you get too nervous for a race, it can lead to a bad race, so I definitely run with confidence and run strong with good form and posture. It was overall important for me to not be afraid of doing bad and just perform to the best of my ability."

We congratulate the boys on placing first and continue to support our cross country runners as the season continues to progress!

First Quizbowl Tournament

A look into a 'first' as a high school senior

By Ally Wolken

Practices are every Thursday morning, from 7:30 to the bell. The first Thursday of the school year, I sheepishly walked into the room with my friends Samantha and Blake. As a senior, there's very few things that I'm new to. It's rare for me to walk into a room and have it feel so new; yet, this was an entirely new experience for me. I didn't even know the rules. Even though we're technically competing against each other in practice, we all feel like a group of friends in that room, collectively grumbling over poor questions and cheering each other on when a question's answer is a bit more obscure.

There's very few things that I regret doing, and one of those is not joining quizbowl

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until my senior year. Among the many clubs and activities at West Point-Beemer, I never honestly considered quizbowl. After last year, with my (now graduated) senior friend Martin Saldana and current senior friend Samantha Francis hyping up the club for so long, I decided to check it out. Jeopardy was one of my favorite game shows; I was probably the only person in my class who cared when Alex Trebek died. I can whole-heartedly say that almost nothing compares to the feeling of getting a Jeopardy question correct. So, when I learned quizbowl was basically like Jeopardy for high schoolers, I figured it was right up my alley. "What country has the lowest birthrate?" Mrs. Guenther asked. Wrong answers echoed across the room: Japan, Congo, Finland, North Korea. Then, our coach Mrs. Guenther told us we were all going to groan at the answer, which happened to be Vatican City. Quizbowl keeps you on your toes, and I've been really needing something like that.

I was invited to the Literature Bowl in Seward. Inside the building, I was greeted by a 5-foot-tall cardboard cutout of Dolly Parton and her imagination library. The teams were intimidating, large schools with smug faces and matching T-shirts, sixteen schools to be exact. Everyone looked so sure of themselves, like they've been genetically modified for quizbowl. I, on the other hand, hardly knew where to walk.

I felt prepared when it came to literary knowledge. I watched a mound of videos the day before and quizzed myself for fun. Yet, I found out I was nowhere near prepared when I sat for my first round. In fact, in these rounds I was learning new things more than remembering anything at all. Repeating in my brain and through the proctor's mouth were the names of Keats, Hemingway, Wells, Dickens, and Longfellow. In between rounds, I studied up on their works.

Mrs. Guenther once said that the young people of quizbowl prove that "we have lots of really smart kids coming up that will be good leaders in the future."

It was apparent in the way people acted that particular day. In the age of ChatGPT and AI slop, I've been increasingly more concerned with the way that society is shifting. But when I watched the quizbowl tournament, I restored my hope for the future, and honestly for myself.

The chairs gave way to minimal comfort, heightening my sense of anxiety. My hand hovered over the red buzzer. This moment would determine if we got 3rd or 4th. It felt like I was pulling answers out of nowhere, suddenly just having them pop into my head. Then we were somehow sixty points ahead of the other team. Everything felt like it moved really fast, but I was impressed with myself overall.
Mrs. Guenther gave me advice as a first year quizbowl student, saying, "Just take a chance." That has resonated with me for a while as I have been rethinking my whole first-time experience. Quizbowl builds your confidence to say what you feel is right, and I think that moves past clubs and activities and into the building of the future world we all will live in.

From Batman to Hansen

Robert Pattinson takes on a different role in the movie "Primetime"

By Joshua Gonzalez

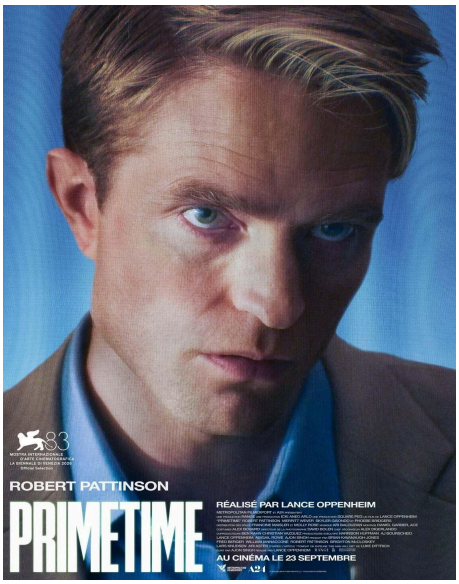
Robert Pattinson is stepping into unfamiliarity as he takes on the role of Chris Hansen in this upcoming thriller, Primetime. Although Pattinson has played many characters throughout his career, his performance in The Batman is what stood out to Senior Ally Wolken, who said it made her interested in seeing how he will portray Hansen.

However, Wolken also considered how Hansen might

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feel about being impersonated in the movie. She stated he could see the portrayal as "almost kind of like a bounty hunter or something like that." Wolken explained that "when you look at it from the standpoint of someone making a living off of predatory operations and turning it into entertainment and media," that is where she feels "it gets kind of a little bit corrupt."
When asked how she feels about the concept of a show that exploits child predators for entertainment, Wolken strongly discussed this point, saying, "I think there's kind of a line to be drawn. I think obviously people can learn from it and get telltale signs of predators." However, she said that using the story "primarily for entertainment" can take away from its serious purpose.



Wolken's thoughts offer one perspective, while Mr. Gay shared his own view on the role. Speaking about Pattinson's role as Hansen, Mr. Gay said, "Looks-wise, I think they're a little different," but added that "Robert Pattinson can play any dramatic character I feel like." He described the role as "kind of a perfect spot" for Pattinson.

Mr. Gay also shared his thoughts on how Hansen might view the movie, saying, "I could see where he would take it as an insult," explaining that the movie could be exaggerating something Hansen "took so seriously for so long."
The discussion then turned to whether the film crosses a line by using these situations for entertainment. He said, "I do feel like it's exploiting them," but added that "most stuff that people are entertained by is exploiting the people involved." He explained that this is "a societal storm now."

An AP article about the movie provided another perspective on Pattinson's portrayal of Hansen and the purpose behind the film. The article explains that Pattinson originally joined the movie as a producer before becoming interested in playing Hansen himself. Pattinson said the role became "irresistible" to him, showing his interest in taking on the role.

As the article continues, Hansen's reaction to the movie has been mixed. The AP reported that he has questioned the filmmakers' motives and said he had "always thought Denis Leary should have played him." The former To Catch a Predator host was also invited to see the movie before the festival, but he "took issue with the NDA" he was asked to sign.
To wrap up, the article addresses the question of whether these events should be turned into entertainment. Director Lance Oppenheim explained that he wanted to explore "journalism, television production and Hollywood." Overall, the different perspectives show how Pattinson's portrayal of Hansen brings up questions about how real people and serious situations should be represented in entertainment.

A President's Promise

President Donald Trump promises adults $5000 if Republicans win big

By Javier Berganza

Whether they be Republican or Democratic, President Trump has stated: " I will issue a dividend to every adult citizen in the United

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States of America $5000 if republicans win the election." Teachers from West Point Public Schools gave some answers on what they think about his promise.

Teacher and Assistant High School Football Coach, Mr. Remington Gay was asked about what he'd do with the $5000 if President Trump fulfilled his statement. He said "I'd probably invest it into some kind of mutual fund depending on how the market goes. It could go well."

However, fulfilling this promise will be difficult. Experts say giving $5000 to every American adult would cost the government around $1.2 trillion, which would further grow the government's nearly $1.8 trillion annual budget. Since this is a lot of money, it leaves many people wondering if the plan will happen and how it would affect the economy.

Within an hour of the promise that Trump had made, Vice President JD Vance appeared to walk back Trump's proposal, stating that the $5000 payment would not go to the wealthy. Vance recommended that it could be paid by U.S. tariff revenues. Tariffs are taxes that are on imports brought in from other countries. Some leaders think that this is a smart way to get the money, but other people worry it will just make everyday items from overseas cost way more for regular families.

Even with these questions, a lot of voters are super excited about the idea. For normal people, $5000 is a huge deal that can help them pay for rent or fix their cars. But on the other side, a lot of politicians and economists are stressing out because they think the math doesn't add up. They say the country is already in too much debt to be handing out giant checks.

In the end, whether this actually happens depends on who wins the election and if Congress passes these checks. English Teacher Mr. Carter Ossian said, "Leading with the stipulation that you will only get the money if Republicans win sounds corrupt even by those getting the $5000 and using it." Many people think it is corrupt, but others don't.

Until then, it is definitely making a lot of noise online and in the news. Furthermore, making noise in real life, due to the fact that what Trump is doing seems very unfair.



Let's Take a Deep Breath

Alligator Alcatraz caught putting detainees in "calming cages"

By Blake Wegner

Forty miles west of Miami, a surprise investigation revealed extreme methods being used in an ICE holding

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facility. During this investigation, they found many "calming cages" that were only four feet wide and seven feet tall where they put detainees.

In this facility, there were many other items that people questioned. As the New York Times states, "Investigators discovered non-functioning, overflowing toilets with fecal matter seeping directly into sleeping quarters."

Moreover, rooms inside the facility which were only supposed to hold eleven people were holding up to around thirty-two.

This facility took advantage of these vulnerable people. On top of that, families had no way of communicating or knowing where their loved ones were, leaving these detainees to be isolated.

As West Point-Beemer's psychology teacher, Dr. Stevens said, " Long-term isolation and close quarters can lead to traumatic events and freak-outs."

If these detainees had more freak-outs, they were probably rethrown into these small cages, and the cycle continued. As the Guardian states, "people were regularly shackled outside in metal cages for hours as well as exposed to brutal heat, sunshine and swarms of mosquitoes."

Not only did these detainees face possible traumatic long-term mental health issues, but they also had to push their physical bodies to the limit. Heat illnesses can affect people in as short as thirty minutes, and with the guards not handling the detainees properly, the seventy-nine individuals who were put out in that extreme heat are at risk.

With this facility being caught abusing power, it leads many taxpayers to worry where their tax money is going. This led to taxpayers being angry about how much strain went into that one facility. This also led people to talk about how this already harms the sensitive wetland ecosystem in Florida.

This abuse of power only validated many people's opinions on possible abuse inside of many of these facilities. This then leads people to believe that many other facilities are running right under our noses, harming the people inside of them.

As Reuters reports, the former Alligator Alcatraz detention center failed to comply with multiple federal standards for humane treatment, medical care, food service, and personal hygiene."

Yet many officials, like Florida's governor, defended what happened when the news came out, saying its goal was to exceed federal standards, pushing back against a federal watchdog report.

These officials can't agree on what is right or wrong inside of this facility. Many officials defended the guards, saying they didn't know the proper procedures, or claiming that this facility actually exceeded expectations and those cages were just for calming purposes only.

This breakdown leads people to believe how many of these facilities believe they are above the law or proper procedures, and how much more suffering people will have to endure inside of these facilities.

Many groups are advocating for better oversight to make sure something like this never happens again because, in the end, we all bleed the same blood and deserve equal treatment even in prison, holding facilities, or detention centers.

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AI Child Ruling Shocks Nation

Federal Court rules Explicit AI Child Photos Legal

By Viviana Morales

There's no doubt that the topic of artificial intelligence has become controversial to many. A recent federal appeals court ruling has only intensified the growing debate over how the law should address the use of AI, especially when connected to criminal activity. The case involves Wisconsin resident Steven Anderegg, who generated multiple disturbing images of adolescent children engaged in explicit behaviors using the AI platform Stable Diffusion and shared those images to a minor's account through Instagram. He was charged with producing, possessing, and sharing the material. However, the federal offense for possessing the synthetic images in private was not added to his charges.

The case became complicated because of past rulings and the fact that the images were generated by AI rather than being actual photos of real children. The judges defended that they were bound by former U.S. Supreme Court rulings. It was found in the past case of *Stanley v. Georgia* that the First Amendment protects a person's right to the private possession of obscenity within their homes. In the case of *Ashcroft v. Free Speech Coalition,* the Supreme Court found that the government could not ban specific speech because it involved a similar portrayal of minors engaging in explicit acts. Now, the possession of AI-generated child sexual abuse material is technically protected under the First Amendment.

The court's decision poses a difficult reality for many. Today, generative AI programs can now create high-definition, realistic images from written out instruction within seconds. This development creates challenges for law enforcement, courts, and lawmakers. Many laws were written before AI systems became so advanced. It's because of this that we have issues when it comes to cases such as this one. Courts must face the difficult decision of determining whether laws written for past forms of technology should be applied to our ever-improving technology.

Anderegg's case brings this problem to light. The rulings that were used to drop the charges are from archaic cases that date back decades. One of the most influential rulings, Stanley v. Georgia, was decided by the Supreme Court back in 1969. Another case, Ashcroft v. Free Speech, was decided in 2002. Neither of these cases involved the type of generative artificial intelligence system that exists today. The 7th Circuit was then faced with applying older constitutional rules to technology that didn't even exist when those decisions were made.

The case raises questions about what should happen when faced with decisions between the concern for the safety of children and the limits the government faces regarding speech and private possession when it comes to justice. Child-safety organizations have raised concerns about the ways in which synthetic materials could be implemented in exploitation. Just because a real child isn't involved does not mean there are no real-life consequences. AI-generated content like this can make it harder for investigators to determine what is real or not. Our legal system now faces the challenge of keeping up with technological changes without violating protections.

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Ask Jazzy Joan

Issue No. 2

Dear Jazzy Joan,

I think I'm starting to hate my best friend....:(

Thanks,
Friendly Foe



Dear Friendly Foe,

I suggest talking to them. If you haven't talked extensively with them about how you feel or listened to how they feel, it's hard to get the full picture. Then again, if you know you hate them and have a true reason, you should unfriend them. No one deserves to have a friend who hates them unknowingly, just as you don't deserve to have someone who is treating you horribly.

Keep Magically Thinking,
Jazzy Joan

Ask Audacious Andy

Submission #20

Dear Audacious Andy,

I always stick my gum under the desks, it makes me feel powerful.

Thanks,
Trident Teether



Dear Trident Teether,

Finally, performance art I can get behind. Someone please take this artist's desks and put it in the Louvre.

Audaciously yours,

Audacious Andy