

Black History Bowl arrives on Feb. 28

AHS prepares to honor Black History Month with the annual Black History Bowl. Interested students have begun meeting with team coaches and will soon start training for the quiz show-like competition.

“What we have attempted to do over the years is just to teach and enlighten people as to how African-Americans have contributed to our culture, society, our history, and also make it a kind of fun experience,” Black History Bowl (BHB) co-sponsor Kathlyn Berry said.

The BHB is a long-standing tradition at AHS and could date back more than ten years, to 2000 or 2001. Over time, the BHB has become an anticipated event at AHS.

“This is an activity that the entire school community looks forward to,” Berry said. “Teachers are excited about it and over the last couple of years, I’ve tried to involve more people.”

Both students and teachers at AHS get involved with the Bowl: students are contestants and teachers coach teams or organize the event. Teams are organized by grade, with a coach for each team of several students. This year, the seniors will be led by Katherine Gould, the juniors by Joel Jepson, the sophomores by Whitney Hardy, and the freshmen by Joe Valentino.

“[We’re proud to be] representing our grade as freshmen,” freshman Meriem Awlaki said.

Students and teachers preparing for the bowl receive a list of questions and answers about “awareness of African-American contributions or contributions of people of African descent to history and to the greater world culture, but particularly to

American history,” Berry said.

While the BHB may honor African-American contributions, teams typically represent several ethnicities.

“I know that for us, this year, we’ve got several different nationalities, not just African-American,” freshman team coach and former BHB judge Joe Valentino said.

Participating students like Awlaki and freshman Rebecca Soulen train with coaches by studying the provided questions and answers.

“[The hardest part will be] the learning and memorization,” Soulen said. “[Our team is looking forward to] learning more about Black History.”

Participants do not go unrewarded for their hard work. The BHB is funded by the PTSA and they provide the winning team with \$200, half of which goes to their class treasury. The remaining money is divided among the team members.

AHS will hold the BHB on Feb. 28 during school hours. Limited sign-up is available for auditorium seating, and sponsors are hoping to stream a live video of the competition to W4 classes.

“I hope that my team and everybody else will learn more about the subject,” Valentino said. “That’s really the whole goal for everybody, the audience and the participants, that they leave smarter than they were when they came in.”