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Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA

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## FOOTBALL

### Falcons win spot at CCS

BY Michelle Leung, Arjun Ramanathan & Devin Zhao

The Falcons beat the Palo Alto Vikings 41-33 on Nov. 14, securing a coveted spot in the CCS playoffs — a feat they last accomplished two years ago. Their first Division III CCS game is against Pioneer at 7 p.m. tonight at Pioneer High.

Against the Vikings, senior wide receiver Joey Medeiros had three touchdowns, senior running back Ken Wu had two rushing touchdowns and junior wide receiver Vinny Faylor had one.

After a series of turnovers in the crucial first quarter by both Saratoga and Palo Alto, Medeiros scored the first touchdown. The defense held the Vikings to only one touchdown and offense was able to score another touchdown, with two extra points added by senior kicker Robby Gragnola.

After a disheartening Hail Mary touchdown that the Vikings scored on

>> **FOOTBALL** on pg. 22



Senior Andrew Harter races down the final stretch of the CCS Championships at Toro Park on Nov. 15 to place fifth individually.

## BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY ENDS FRUSTRATIONS, MAKES STATES

BY Dorrie Tang

Flashback to three years ago: Then-freshman Steven Sum stood behind the starting line of the state cross country meet, the first large-scale race he had ever attended. He looked around him, starry-eyed. There were around 300 other runners, each one of them with top-notch times.

In contrast, despite his natural ability in the sport, he was only slightly prepared, unsure and nervous. The only thing that he thought about was what his coach had told him to do, and he had no

>> **XC** on pg. 21

FALCON // ELLEN WU

## ADMINISTRATION

### Rally commission frustrated by joke restrictions

BY Oksana Trifonova

As a group of senior girls tarred and feathered junior Isa Berardo in front of the cheering gym on Nov. 7, students in the bleachers stomped and laughed, unable to contain their excitement. But what the students found uproariously fun-

ny, the administration found incredibly offensive.

The incident illustrated the conflict between rally commissioners who feel pressure to make their audience laugh and administrators who want rallies to be clean, non-offensive and not hurtful.

For reasons ranging from the

generation gap to the perspective from which a person sees jokes, the administration and the rally commission sometimes struggle to find agreement. In fact, during the most recent rally for the Saratoga-Los Gatos football game on Nov. 7, the administration instituted a rule that prohibited any nega-

tive jokes about the rival school. Previously a staple of game-day rallies, jokes that insulted Los Gatos made in the spirit of energizing students were now off-limits.

"It's hard to please the [administration] with their restrictions and still pump up the students without being able to say

anything other than 'Go Toga,'" rally commissioner senior Natalie Miller said.

Before a rally, the commission must turn the script into the office and get it back for revisions. The second version is usually approved, but that was

>> **RALLY** on pg. 5

## ORGANIZATIONS

### Common Roots changes method of helping peers

BY Rachel Hull & Gitika Nalwa

With the arrival of Sources of Strength, a nationwide youth suicide prevention program, a wave of confusion emerged among Common Roots members. Although school adolescent therapist Kim Cousens had discussed this change with last year's co-presidents, then-seniors Anup Kar and My-Lan Le, she had not realized that this information was not being passed on to other members.

This lack of communication

sparked surprise and concern among those who had been uninformed about Sources of Strength.



Cousens

"I honestly had no idea what Sources of Strength was [when it arrived]," said senior Jessica Uong, a member of Common Roots.

It all started last year, when Cousens grew concerned as she contemplated the future of Common Roots.

"I was worried about the sustainability [of the pro-

>> **ROOTS** on pg. 5

## FINANCES

### A novel idea: Senior's book hits the market

BY Kelly Xiao

Twenty hours a day for 10 days; that's how long it took senior Mahir Jethanandani to amass his 11 years of studying finance into one grand masterpiece: "The Immaculate Investor."

Spanning 136 pages and containing eight chapters, Jethanandani's self-published book guides readers from their first investment to their retirement.

"People [have] a clear interest in how to grow their money [and] how to make more money," Jethanandani said. "[So I thought], why not teach myself first the power of investing and then spread it when I'm old

enough to be taken seriously by elders and my peers?"

Two main incidents sparked Jethanandani's interest in writing a book on finance.

The first experience came when Jethanandani was in kindergarten and his older brother, Rishabh, was in fifth grade; the siblings ran what Jethanandani jokingly describes as a "Ponzi scheme." They made \$500.

"We broadcast the idea of a private wealth management firm, which in a 5-year-old's terms means, I give you my money, you make me more money and I get more money back," Jethanandani said. "I

>> **BOOK** on pg. 4

## >> what's inside

### ■ SEMINARS

Are they Socratic or traumatic?

Students too often value grades over learning in Socratic seminars. **pg. 8**

### ■ REALITY

The domino effect: life without a home

One couple shares its story of the path to homelessness. **pg. 18**

### ■ PREVIEWS

Basketball, soccer and wrestling

Teams gear up for the new season. **pg. 23**



**Cheer team finds a coach after two months**

An offer for the coaching position of the cheer team was made to Dominique Davidson last week after the team went two months without a coach.

Davidson began teaching the girls at practice on Nov. 6 and helped them prepare for the rally as a trial run to see how she worked and got along with the team.

Davidson continued to show her support and dedication for the team by attending the rally on Nov. 7.

"I think that [Davidson] is exactly the kind of coach we need," said junior Nicole Eckerman. "She is perfect for encouraging the growth of the team by allowing us to explore different options of routines and stunts."

She is also the type of person who we can depend on to make smart decisions for the good of the team."

The new coach is just in time to help the girls prepare for their last halftime performance of the season at their senior night at the football game against Palo Alto on Nov. 14.

Davidson, now 24, participated in her high school cheer team all four years she attended Del Mar High School. Davidson has also taught the Berryessa Cougars for several years, a cheer program that works with girls ages 4-13.

It is unclear whether the cheer team will have a competition team this year due to the lack of time to prepare with a knowledgeable coach, but the team plans to create a stronger foundation for next year's competition team to work off of.

"I think the team will finally be able to focus on improving routines and cheers instead of how to contour having practices without a coach," said senior Madeline Ryan. "Without competition season, we can focus more on improving our routines for basketball and rallies, and create a better and more cohesive team for future years."

— Summer Smith

**Art and literary magazine seeks submissions**

For many years, the annual Soundings magazine has been a forum for students to have their artwork, photography and writing published. This year's editors, juniors Michelle Cen and Ashley Chen, hope to improve Soundings by including a greater diversity of submissions.

"This year, we really want to represent as much of the school as possible," Cen said.

Soundings also hopes to gain more submissions through increased advertising. In addition, the editors' goal is for Soundings to be well reviewed by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA), which Soundings has not been submitted to in the past few years.

This year's staff consists of seniors Rachel Hull and Linus Lu, juniors Katherine Liu, Ingrid Pan and Luke Salin and sophomore Kevin Chow. Students interested in joining the 2015-2016 staff should contact Cen or Chen.

"I hope that the content will be more interesting and relevant to high school students," Cen said.

Submissions should be directed to soundings2015@gmail.com and include the author or artist's name and grade and the title of the work. The deadline is Feb. 1.

— Ashley Chen

>> picturethis



SARATOGA IDOL >> Senior Nik Aji belts out "Ain't No Sunshine" during Idol auditions on Nov. 13, in Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez's room. Idol will take place Monday, Dec. 1, in the McAfee.

**SPEECH AND DEBATE**

**Novices impress at Gilroy**

by Maya Prasad & Amulya Vadlakonda

When new underclassmen join the speech and debate team, coach Lindsay Ayotte tries to emphasize that "practice makes perfect." Students are expected to be prepared, be present and more than anything, practice again and again.

At the Coast Forensic League Novice Individual Events tournament at Christopher High School in Gilroy on Nov. 1, this work ethic paid off. Freshman Varun Viswanath took first place and freshman Divya Rallabandi won third in oratorical interpretation.

After attending practices Mondays from 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Tuesdays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Rallabandi and Viswanath were able to kick off the season with a bang.

"I attended every single practice," said freshman Divya Rallabandi. "I realized

that I had a lot of resources in the speech and debate team that were going to help me reach my goals."

But even though the students have many valuable resources, Ayotte said that for

both from student and coach — paid off at the tournament. "I am so pleased and ecstatic with the success the students are having this early," said Ayotte. "But that is not to say there is not work to be done. There is always room to continue to evolve in your public speaking performance."

The point of starting out with tough tournaments in the novice year is to get newcomers as much experience as quickly as possible.

"I really want everyone to learn," said junior Shrey Desai, a talented debater who holds the role of communications director for the team. "We want [the novices] to get more exposure at tournaments, so we can apply it to our practice and get them started on the more important tournaments that come up in the rest of the year." ♦

**"I tell the students that [I will] meet them 100 percent if they are willing to put in 100 percent."**  
coach Lindsey Ayotte

her to be successful, "the students have to come to practice prepared. This means having written a speech and have memorized it on their own."

"I tell the students that I am willing to meet them 100 percent if they are willing to put in 100 percent," Ayotte said. And all the hard work —

**ELECTIONS**

**SUSD board prepares for 2015**

by Trevor Leung & Neehar Thumaty

After much campaigning, current board member Patty Buchanan, retired Redwood Middle School teacher Susan Germeraad and parent and consultant Cynthia Miller were elected to the Saratoga Union School District (SUSD) board of trustees on Nov. 4. The other candidates were community volunteer Laura Tillett and software engineer Yongjian Wu.

Buchanan hopes to keep the district's positive learning environment alive, as well as maintain students' well-being.

"I intend to keep [students'] academic success at the forefront of any decision," Buchanan said.

Ensuring that the school board remains open and communicative with parents is also important to Buchanan. For example, televising events may allow more people to watch council meetings. She also plans to make sure that community conversations are held regularly so that all stakeholders have the opportunity to share and concerns with the board. According to Buchanan, communication with parents was not strong in the past.

"Although we may feel that a message has been sent, our audience may not have

received it," Buchanan said. "It is the school board's responsibility to find communication channels that are effective and that provide a two-way exchange of information."

Miller said she will be able to contribute much of her financial knowledge to the board, as it is her primary area of expertise.

Like Buchanan, her No. 1 goal is to work with the board, teachers, parents and community to improve communication in the district. Problems that she has dealt with in the past involve the unexpected changes with Redwood's Wednesday release times.

"Parents were both surprised by the change and concerned that learning on those days was substantially reduced," Miller said.

The new math pathways as a result of the new Common Core curriculum and the transition between Redwood and Saratoga in terms of curriculum were also problems in the past, according to Miller. One way Miller will improve communication is by opening a blog about SUSD.

"The good news is that I believe many of the current and newly elected school board members agree about the importance of solving this communication problem," Miller said.

The Falcon could not reach Germeraad for comment. ♦

**DRAMA**

**Department prepares student productions 'Honestly, Now!' and 'Cyrano de Bergerac'**

by Melissa Wagner & Sayasivaram

The drama department held auditions on Nov. 6 for two new student-directed productions: "Honestly, Now!" directed by senior Nastasya Kutuyev and "Cyrano de Bergerac" directed by senior Andrew York.

"Honestly, Now!" will take place in Jan. 16, 17 and 18, while "Cyrano" will take place Feb. 6, 7 and 8.

"Honestly, Now!" is written by Jack Sharkey and is a relatively unknown play. But after finding the show online, Kutuyev liked its combination of romance, mystery and farce.

"Originally, I knew I wanted to do a comedy show with a relatively small cast," Kutuyev said. "When I found 'Honestly, Now!' [I knew it] was the perfect show. It's pretty ridiculous and a bit over-the-top, but it's so witty and charming that the audience is enticed and goes along with everything."

Set in the mid to late 1960s, "Honestly, Now!" takes place in the French Riviera, where Carlita Umbro, played by sophomore Lea Moustakas, throws a masquerade party at a fancy hotel. Soon, she runs into complications: Not all of the guests are quite what they seem, as a pair of jewel thieves and detectives are among the group. Many of the participants were drawn in

by the allure of a small eight-person cast.

"Being in a small cast means that you get to know your castmates really well and you become a really tightly knit group," said senior Jay Sehm-bey, who plays Comte De Guiche in "Cyrano."

Furthermore, many students want to support their castmates.

"The cool thing about being in a student production is that you get to be a part of a person's first time directing, and that's really special and exciting," said sophomore J.T. Hulme, who plays Raoul in "Honestly, Now!"

Kutuyev is excited to rehearse and focus on making the play as strong as she can.

"Character-wise, I want to focus on the physical humor, wit and genuineness of every character," Kutuyev said. "Even though the show is an over-the-top comedy, the characters are still empathetic and the audience needs to believe everything that is happening."

One month later, York will put on the production of Edmond Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac," a story of a valiant and witty man, played by sophomore Raymond McCarthy, and his love for a woman who he believes will never love him back because he is cursed with a hideous big nose. To woo her, he enlists the help of another,



Student actors perform a scene from the student production "Honestly, Now!" during callbacks on Nov. 10.

more attractive man. The play is both humorous and tragic, filled with banter.

For York, the complexity of "Cyrano" coupled with the elaborate sets and multi-faceted characters made it one of his top choices for shows.

"I chose 'Cyrano' because I fell in love with the [play] when I first read it my freshman year," York said. "To me, the character Cyrano was everything I could ever dream of being. He was witty, brave, lovable, romantic and somehow human. He was my first and only hero."

There are more than 30 roles available in York's cast list, but

he hopes to have students double up on roles so that he can keep the cast small.

"There are many characters in 'Cyrano,' and the way I am going to go about that is through tetra-casting, meaning that I am going to have ensemble members play multiple roles," York said. "Because there are five acts that all take place in different locations, I'm going to create three [stages] that alter in a clockwise direction every act."

The play is widely known, and Moustakas predicts that this will make the production more challenging.

"With so many people having read 'Cyrano' in freshman year, they will most likely have a very high expectation for the production," Moustakas said. "It will be interesting to see how [York] spins this character into something personalized by his own take."

Senior Melissa Rogan, who is stage managing both shows, thinks they're both good picks.

"They're both on the comedic side with some romantic twists, and I think the directors are going to do a great job of executing these productions when we finally put it on the stage," Rogan said. ♦

**ORGANIZATION**

**American Sign Language club embraces deaf culture**

by Cassandra King & Amelia Schwabe

The room is silent, apart from a scattering of excited laughter, as senior co-president Sarah Deva and Sara Elzeiny's hands fly up simultaneously, their hands forming the phrase "How are you feeling?"

Nodding and smiling, around 20 students swiftly respond with their own signals.

The American Sign Language (ASL) club, founded this year by Deva, aims to teach students ASL and increase awareness about the deaf culture.

"[Deaf people] have turned something [that] can be considered a disability into something really beautiful," said Deva.

Deva became interested in learning sign language through watching ABC's hit TV show "Switched at Birth" and quickly became fascinated with ASL's graceful movements. She then enrolled in ASL classes at West Valley.

"It's not just a language, it's a language where you can move your hands," Deva said. "[It's] like linking movement and language together."

The club holds meetings on Tuesdays in room 501 and Deva has already begun to teach members how to sign the alphabet and express emotions through

signals. Ultimately, club members hope to be able to converse in basic ASL.

During meetings, members review signs they learned the previous week, go through demos and work together to improve their skills. A PowerPoint slideshow prepared by the officers teaches the new signs and concepts.

Senior Constanza Bravo, who joined ASL club, said she appreciates the way Deva and Elzeiny use group activities to further the club members' knowledge of sign language.

"If you have a question, you just go to them and they show you more about the sign language," Bravo said. "They also make you sign everything you learn, which is really interesting."

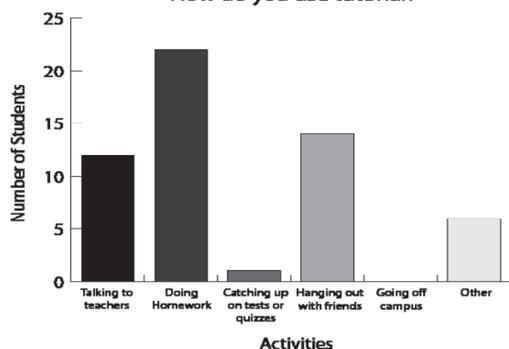
Eventually, as club members grow more confident in the language, they plan to attend events for the deaf and learn more about the ASL culture. According to Deva, who has already attended several events for the deaf, they provide students with a way of immersing themselves into the culture.

"There are so many different people you meet and they all have interesting stories that you want to learn about," Deva said. "It was eye opening for me to learn about so many cool new life stories, signs and people." ♦

**"It's not just a language, it's a language where you can move your hands. [It] links movement and language together."**  
senior Sarah Deva

>> falconfigures

**How do you use tutorial?**



The Falcon polled 55 students.

—Trevor Leung

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BOOK >>

continued from pg. 1

didn't know too much about investing, but I was very lucky in [that I] invested in the companies that were just happening to be doing well."

For example, when Google came out as an IPO and entered the stock market in 2003, Jethanandani invested in it and found himself with a 300 percent return. Despite his success, he and his brother's plans were cut to an abrupt halt when the parents of the students who had invested in his project found out.

**Jethanandani was initially worried that others would "judge" his writing style.**

"One of the parents — I can't remember the kid's name — caught their son without their birthday money, and their birthday savings," Jethanandani recalled. "And then the [son] explained [how he was participating in] the Jethanandani private wealth management, so we got caught red-handed investing 50 fifth graders' money and had to return the profits — positive profits too — and I never got a thank you from the parents or anything like that."

Second was the promise his parents made him as a 7-year-old: He could keep a dog so long as he managed it and the costs himself.

"After estimating and

crunching some numbers, I calculated that it cost about \$534 per month to take care of, feed and maintain the dog," Jethanandani said. "So after collecting some birthday money, I realized the power of compound investing, which [states that] I can really fund this dog if I somehow come up with 34 percent monthly returns on investments."

Jethanandani's pre-teen self came away from these experiences with a desire to see what finance could offer him. Beginning from about age 7, he began to teach himself. For him, his childhood held no video

games; it was about studying the financial field. The first thing Jethanandani read was "Investing for Dummies," followed by what he deems is the best book on investing, the "The Intelligent Investor." In fact, the title of Jethanandani's own book is a playoff on "The Intelligent Investor."

Though Jethanandani's interests and high level of reading were unusual for any second grader, they were unrecognized even by his parents.

"[My parents] thought it was cute that I was flipping through pages every two or three minutes," Jethanandani said. "They'd just be like 'Oh, he's pretending to absorb something' but I was [actually] absorbing a lot; I was learning

how to Ponzi [scheme] people's money."

During the winter break of Jethanandani's junior year, when his parents were on vacation, Jethanandani spent 10 days writing his 600-page first draft, leaving room for only about four hours of sleep per night.

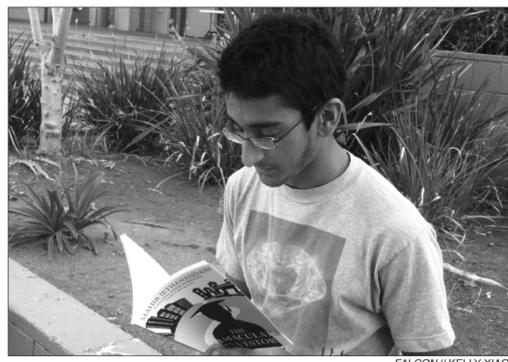
The nearly nonstop draft-writing became increasingly difficult as the days passed; by the third day, he had written 200 pages and was exhausted. Oddly enough, the main challenge for Jethanandani was maintaining the physical stamina, not the mental dedication.

"I [always] just came back to it because I thought, 'This is going to be [like] my senior thesis for what I've learned in high school,'" Jethanandani said. "[So] I'm going to get this done in these 10 days [of winter break]."

Almost no one knew about the book while it was in progress. Jethanandani was initially worried that others would "judge" his writing style.

"I think every English teacher I've had has called my writing dense, so at first I didn't give it to my brother or my parents or any of my friends," Jethanandani said. "I contacted a friend of mine at Morgan Stanley, who had a very in-depth financial background. To hear how few criticisms he had and the great praise he had for it just made me confident that I could publish [my book]."

And publish Jethanandani did; after creating an account on CreateSpace from Amazon, editing his work to a book of



Senior Mahir Jethanandani reads his book "The Immaculate Investor."

about 136 pages and garnering publishing approval from the CreateSpace experts, Jethanandani had his first book finished, published and ready for distribution on Amazon for about \$9 each.

Though the publication date was in October, Jethanandani had already finished the book's final draft in July. He felt then that he wanted a "need" to finally publish.

"Releasing the book on a non-specific day in the middle of the school year wouldn't have [had] much significance for me," Jethanandani said. "Someone must have said something that must have really irritated me — something about how I'm not worthwhile or anything — so I said 'I'm going to release the book and silence my haters.'"

Jethanandani currently runs several finance organizations,

such as "The Immaculate Investor" blog, DECA club and Investing Club. He plans to release an additional collaborative book in 2015, "Two Billion Under Twenty," which highlights 20 teens and their progress in becoming visionaries.

For Jethanandani, his first encounter with the publishing world has shown him the "empowerment of education."

"[Writing is] about empowering and understanding, though not necessarily about understanding your own potential because I believe that you can grow your potential infinitely by arming yourself with knowledge [that] will prepare you for the real world," Jethanandani said. "Books should be catalysts and lower the required amount of effort and the required amount of time [it takes] to empower yourself and become a master." ♦

FUNDS

Recent budget cuts prompt sports teams to fundraise

By Caitlin Ju, Nupur Maheshwari & Gitika Nalwa

Senior Amanda Moriarty lugs five water bottles around campus, anxiously hawking her wares to passing students. She is selling these bottles priced at \$15 for students and staff and \$20 for people outside of school as part of the water polo teams' fundraising efforts, prompted this year by cuts to the sports budget.

This year district leaders decided to lower Saratoga High's athletic asked-for contribution from \$275 to \$225 — the same amount now being sought at Los Gatos High School. Los Gatos' contribution has been raised from \$200 to \$225.

Principal Paul Robinson said Los Gatos' athletic boosted group provides much of its donations.

According to Robinson, the district's decision to lower Saratoga's asked-for contribution has left SHS sports programs with a \$12,000 deficit.

As a result, the school is employing fewer assistant coaches this year, accord-

ing to athletic director Tim Lugo. In addition, teams who wish to hold the same "lifestyle" as before have had to hold fundraisers to pay for equipment.

The biggest concern so far has been paying for the total \$15,000 cost of uniforms, said Lugo.

The boys' and girls' water polo teams are among the teams that have fundraised. Last year, each water polo team received \$2,000 from the athletic fee, compared to \$1,000 this year.

However, Sports Boosters, a separate foundation that raises money to aid teams, has been helping teams with their expenses, said Robinson. As a result, the administration has expressed a lack of alarm about the athletic budget. Sports Boosters has also helped in other projects around the school.

"[Sports Boosters has] contributed to redoing the weight room, they bought

water polo more caps, and they've helped contribute to the Sports Plaza," Robinson said.

On the other hand, the optional \$225 contribution helps pay for coaches and team expenses.

According to Robinson, while the school controls the contributions, Lugo divides it among coaches. After getting Lugo's approval, coaches

**District leaders decided to lower Saratoga High's athletic asked-for contribution.**

decide how funds are spent. Both the girls' and boys' water polo teams have reacted to the budget cuts by selling water bottles and T-shirts at school, as opposed to the less profitable tri-tip sandwiches the boys' team has sold in the past to buy new \$1,600 cages, the goals used in water polo, according to boys' water polo coach Courtney Crase. The team also lacks money for equipment, which Sports Boosters will cover.

"So far, the teams have raised \$600 in

two months, which is definitely something to be proud of," Crase said.

The water polo teams have also been asking for donations. They have received donations from parents and DACA (De Anza Cupertino Aquatics). Girls' tennis, too, has seen their funds decreased and even boys' tennis, which has yet to start until spring, has been affected.

Upon buying team sweatshirts, the girls' tennis team collected checks for the apparel ahead of time instead of using the team's funds and paying them back as per the years before, as a result of a decrease in funds in the team's account.

Sophomore Neeka Nikfar complained of flat tennis balls that were only replaced in the last days of the season.

For now, teams are trying to make do with less money or find ways to get more money with the help of Sports Boosters.

"I hope that people continue to purchase the water bottles," Crase said. "It is important to stay hydrated, support Saratoga Athletics and look good while doing both." ♦



Common Roots members senior Eddie Chen, 2014 alumnus Anup Kar and junior Miles Albert pose together in the quad last year for an event.

have everything in the back-ground. We have our financials down. We have our club name down. We have members."

Aggarwal added that despite initial concern about the introduction of Sources of Strength to Common Roots, adult intervention is not something members should worry about.

"The only part that adults are really part of is the initial training, where adults and the teachers who are an essential part of our campus, too, are also trained," Aggarwal said. "Other than that, it's all student-driven. It is still student-oriented. It is still student-led."

On Nov. 3, teachers and Common Roots members took part in a four-hour training session during school, led by Sources of Strength. Members took part in activities and discussions about mental health, medical access and family support. They also learned to recognize signs of suicidal thoughts.

In addition, they brainstormed ways that Common

Roots can impact the school, including social media efforts, events and presentations.

"We're going to do a lot of projects just to spread all the great stuff we learned, but we really learned about ourselves and how to find help, how to realize that we can help others," senior Christina Chin said.

Through the session, Sources of Strength trainer Scott LoMurray emphasized the importance

of spreading positive messages. The session concluded with students being given cards to give to their own sources of strength.

"[Sources of Strength] is meant to be very hope-based. It is not meant to be negative or depressing," Cousins said. "We all have strengths. Now, what are your strengths, and how can we use them when trouble comes?" ♦

MUSIC

Marching Band finishes season with right angle

By Jade Bisht & Jenny Qian

After a long month of intense rehearsals and consecutive competitions with its show Sacred Geometry, the marching band saw the season come to an end last weekend, and again the music room's counters overflow with trophies.

The group took part in three competitions in a row on Nov. 1 in Dublin, Nov. 8 in Long Beach and on Nov. 15 in Union City.

The band competed against 5A Division bands including Foothill High, James Logan High, Amador Valley High and Mountain View High at the Dublin competition.

The band took home first place in percussion and tied for first in general effects with James Logan, which has one of the area's top programs.

The group departed for Long Beach to compete in the Bands of America Regional Competition the following Friday. Under the rough SoCal heat, the band struggled, but still put in their best effort.

"The weather was well over 80 degrees in the direct sun," said junior drum major Katie McLaughlin. "Unfortunately, this difficult weather condition as well as any performance nerves and a short warm-up time caused an off mentality in the band."

Morale was low, but the band held hope of making the top 10 and advancing into the finals round.

"I wasn't exactly sure," said drum major senior Josh Pi. "Although our per-

formance was decent, it's hard to say if it would have placed us because there were some really good bands there from Arizona and other states. We weren't able to see all their shows, so it was a toss-up."

Despite the weak start with the preliminary round, the band marched confidently onto the field and by the end of their performance, received a standing ovation.

Standing on the field in neat rows of seven, the band was awarded fifth place among the top 10; first place went to Ruben S. Ayala High located in Chino Hills, which scored first at BOA 2013 as well.

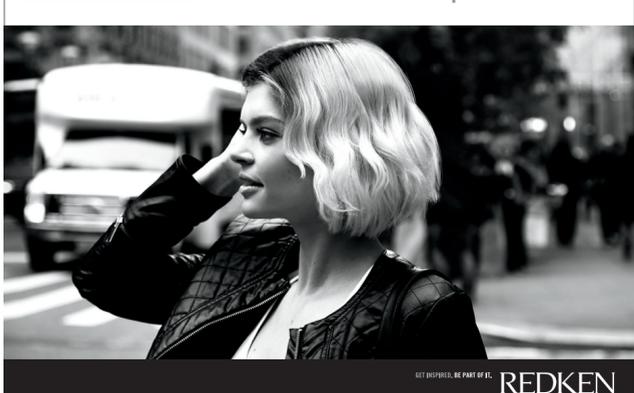
To close the season, the band performed at James Logan on Nov. 15 and won first in music effects and second place overall with Amador Valley scoring first.

"I felt initial disappointment about our placement, but a score's just a score," senior trombonist Sameer Iyengar said. "It doesn't reflect the time, effort and energy put into the production. The last moments of our performance were surreal, and I'll never forget the feeling of it."

With the season over, the seniors are reluctant to say goodbye to marching band.

"It's sad that I'm done with four years and 2,112 hours of my life that I will never get to relive," senior tenor-saxophonist Vivek Murthy said. "I will never be able to redo the adventures we had on all the competitions, hotel rooms and bus trips across the country with the same group of people ever again." ♦

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ROOTS >>

continued from pg. 1

gram] because the students who started the program, [Kar and Le], were graduating," Cousins said. "They were worried about its momentum."

At the time, Cousins had been in communication with faculty at Gunn High School, home of the ROCK (Reach Out. Care. Know.), a program that bore a striking resemblance to Saratoga's own Common Roots, which began after Audrie Pott's suicide two years ago to prevent similar situations.

ROCK, too, had been "losing steam," according to Cousins.

However, ROCK was revitalized by Sources of Strength, and Cousins thought that Sources of Strength might be just what Common Roots needed to revamp its own program.

Coincidentally, the district had simultaneously decided on Sources of Strength for a school

prevention-based program.

When Cousins learned of the district's plan, she felt even more strongly that Sources of Strength should merge with Common Roots. But when Sources of Strength finally arrived, members who were out of the loop felt bewildered and concerned that adults would take over Common Roots.

As a result, Cousins said that when she told them about Sources of Strength, "It felt like, 'Hey, this is what you need to do now,' instead of 'This is something we have been working on and yay, yay, yay, it's finally happening.'"

Looking back, Cousins said she would have communicated directly with the club to avoid such confusion.

In a club meeting on Oct. 20, Cousins and Common Roots presidents senior Anshul Aggarwal and junior Luke Salin cleared up any remaining questions over the nature of the club. "Now, we are finally established," Aggarwal said. "We

RALLY >>

continued from pg. 1

not the case for the most recent rally. According to Miller, the commission had to rewrite the script every day during the week leading up to the rally. It wasn't approved until the morning of the rally.

For his part, assistant principal Kevin Mount commended the recent efforts of the rally commission with just a couple of exceptions.

"I would rather see rallies — which I think they did a good job of — [as a way of] bringing our school together around all the positive things that we represent here," Mount said. "Overall, I think 98 percent of the rally was awesome; I thought there was a sense of unity I haven't seen in a long time."

As for the tar-and-feathering episode, Mount said it was offensive because it parodied the tar-and-feathering abuse that occurred in the late 1700s.

"There was a time in this country's history when people who were marginalized were tarred and feathered," Mount said. "I don't think that was [the rally commission's] intention, but the context was insensitive."

According to rally commissioner junior Zhan Ng, the rally commissioners had not even considered the connection before the administration brought it up

— and said that few students would either.

"Remarks like that are just completely ridiculous and way too out there to be even considered a possibility," Ng said. "Such questionings not only highlight the [administration's] irrationality when it comes to harmless satire, but also de-mans the rallies, as we are categorized as offensive and insensitive Neanderthals."

Miller acknowledges that the administration has reason to be wary of jokes: She cited a racist "Home Depot" joke made during the junior Quad Day as one example of something in poor taste. She speculates that poor-taste jokes from the past have contributed to the administration sometimes over-analyzing scripts written by the rally commissioners.

For his part, Mount said the administration is merely trying to redirect the culture of rallies.

"We're really trying to move the rally commission beyond the practice of singling out people, making fun of people and using inappropriate jokes," Mount said. "The rally is not just for the rally commission and the [popular] crowd at school. It's for the whole school."

In fact, according to Mount, the most recent rally had nothing that caused particular scrutiny. The only major difference between this rally and the other rallies was the timing right before the Los

Gatos game.

"I was trying to communicate that just because there's a rivalry between schools doesn't give us leave to say nasty things about Los Gatos students, to drag the school's good name through the mud and use those direct putdowns," Mount said. "That's not who we want to be."

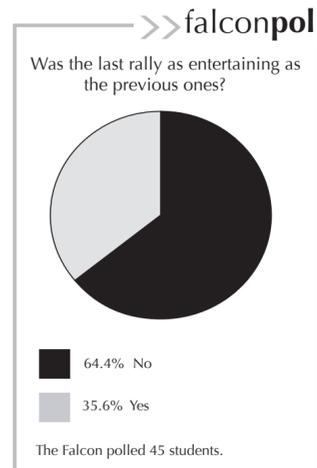
In order to prevent such scenarios from occurring, the administration keeps a close eye on what students say at school-wide events.

After all, Mount emphasized, the school's main goal as a learning institution is to ensure that no students feel uncomfortable or bullied on campus, particularly during school events like rallies.

Junior Camille Bismonte, who regularly attends rallies, thinks that while it is important that the administration review jokes, there is a point at which the administration needs to let the rally commission take the reins.

"I'm sure it doesn't hurt to have some jokes that are a little more offensive — as long as they don't target certain people [or] groups," Bismonte said. "I feel like the new administration is a little paranoid."

Berardo predicts a downhill path for rally attendances and spirit if such restrictions remain. Not only does the monitoring of rally scripts lead to the cutting of the majority of jokes, but it also wears out the rally commissioners as they must revise their scripts, she said.



# Emergency Procedures for Dummies

The Falcon surveyed 77 students about their knowledge on the school's emergency procedures for Code Red and Fire. Each figure below represents approximately 10 students. Answers were excluded if inappropriate.

## 1. What are you supposed to do during a Code Red?

PEOPLE WHO HAD CORRECT ANSWERS: 

SAMPLE: Look all doors and cover the windows, barricade doors, turn off all lights, hide in a specific location in the classroom -- as designated by the teacher -- surrounded by a barricade, and be completely silent.

PEOPLE WHO HAD WRONG ANSWERS: 

SAMPLE: Save yourself and don't care about others! Just run into the room and barricade yourself so none of your friends can enter the room.

## 2. What are you supposed to do during a fire?

PEOPLE WHO HAD CORRECT ANSWERS: 

SAMPLE: Exit the classroom that you are in; go to the designated location (upper or lower field, or parking lot in front of McAfee).

PEOPLE WHO HAD WRONG ANSWERS: 

SAMPLE: Run around in circles and spit at the fire.

## BONUS: Which period teacher do you meet with on the field during an evacuation not during class?

PEOPLE WHO HAD CORRECT ANSWERS: 

PEOPLE WHO HAD WRONG ANSWERS: 

CORRECT ANSWER: 3rd period

GRAPHIC BY DORRIE TANG

### SAFETY

# School emphasizes danger preparation

BY Cassandra King & Dorrie Tang

Desks lay side by side, stacked on top of one another against the door with backpacks piled on top. Thirty students huddle together in a corner of the room, trying to resist the temptation to talk.

As more on-campus attacks have occurred in high schools across the nation, Code Red drills like this have become an integral part in the school's emergency procedures. Along with fire and earthquake drills, they ensure that the students are fully prepared for the types of emergencies that are most likely to happen in the area.

"Any emergency procedure that we practice is important because the better prepared we are and the better informed the students are, the better we can act and protect ourselves if something [happens] here," Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez said.

In recent years, the school has been strongly emphasizing Code Red drills because of the increasing number of school shootings.

Most Code Red drills have occurred during passing periods in recent years

to simulate actual situations, assistant principal Kevin Mount said.

Although the school is regularly commended for excellent execution of emergency drills, some students feel that many of their peers do not take the drills seriously enough.

The biggest challenge for any school is to convince students the drill is important.

"To some people, [emergency drills] are not real," sophomore Mason Tian said. "They treat them as a joke."

Teachers also have trouble keeping a random group of students quiet in their classrooms for half an hour or more.

Despite these few shortcomings, administrators feel that overall students and faculty are well prepared for emergency preparations, especially since students have regularly practiced fire and earthquake drills since elementary school.

"I never feel in danger on our campus because our students and staff make safety a priority," principal Paul Robinson said. "I hope we never have to use any of [the emergency procedures] for real, but I feel very confident that people will be safe [if we do]."

### CLASSES

# Students reflect on choice to 'double history'

BY Rachel Hull & Devin Zhao

As if the hours of reading and thesis-writing required for AP U.S. History classes were not enough, nine juniors this year are taking AP European History as well, a 200 percent increase from those in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. Both classes require a lot of reading and effort.

Junior Lisa Yu knows the difficulty of doubling in history all too well: She once spent seven hours on a documentary project for AP Euro one Sunday, only to return home to a mountain of APUSH homework.

"By the time I got home, it was 10 p.m. and I had 30 pages

of AP [US History text] to read, as well as [writing] a bunch of these statements that I had procrastinated on doing," Yu said. "I ended up getting no sleep that night."

According to APUSH teacher Kim Anzalone, the social studies department sees "doubling" in both APUSH and AP Euro as a good opportunity for those with a liberal-arts bent.

"Many of the AP offerings in the past have been geared toward those students who are passionate about math and science," Anzalone said. "By offering AP Euro and AP Gov, we are giving those students who are passionate about social studies an opportunity to take AP classes dealing with a sub-

ject matter they enjoy."

For junior Ingrid Pan, who is in the Media Arts Program (MAP), the decision to take the two classes was a simple one.

"I've always been a humanities person, and I don't really want to go into science and math when I'm in college, so it seemed like a good fit," Pan said.

Despite the significant workload from APUSH MAP and AP Euro, Pan said that her interest in history makes the classes seem less demanding.

"It's weird, because these two are probably two of my easier classes," Pan said. "English 11 Honors is harder."

Junior Jayee Malwankar said she took both classes because of

their differences as well as an underlying love of history.

"I wanted to do double history because I really liked World History, and I also liked it when we learned about different perspectives, and so I wanted to do AP U.S. History," Malwankar said. "But then Euro kind of gives context for events that [are] going on in U.S. History, and it goes further back in time."

Because AP Euro covers a wider breadth of information, Malwankar said, the course tends to focus less on specifics and more on overarching ideas.

Malwankar said that time management skills are a must for those who take the two advanced history classes.

"The biggest thing is that there's a lot of reading per night, but then it's kind of OK because APUSH has weekly homework, so you can manage it the way that you want," she said. "[Doubtless have] to be really fast at reading or they have to be willing to put in more time on the weekends."

If students are serious about history, doubling can be a worthwhile experience, Pan said. She herself decided not to take a science class this year.

"It's weird to say, but I actually sometimes like studying for history tests versus in science, I'm just like, 'I don't know what's going on,'" she said, "and it's just a different mindset that I have."

# Seniors experience social side of college during trips

BY Becky Hoag

Senior Ethan Ngai woke up at 3 a.m., forgetting for a second where he was. When he remembered that he was in a dorm at Tufts University and why there were 15 students who did not belong to the school sleeping on his floor, he sighed and went back to sleep.

Ngai visited Tufts University in Massachusetts from Oct. 23-25. He spent two days sampling Tufts' famously good food, sitting in on college classes and sleeping in college dorms. Ngai also encountered the other side of the "college experience."

At one point during his time at Tufts, Ngai's dorm roommate, a student who volunteered to host a high school student, invited him to a fraternity party — one part of college that Ngai has been dreading.

"I chickened out because I was like 'Um, no. I'm a good kid,'" Ngai said.

Instead, he went to an ice cream social. According to Ngai, his roommate "didn't look so good when I saw him in the morning."

Adding to the erratic events that Ngai encountered during his brief college experience were the 15 protesters sleeping on the floor of the dorm he was staying in. They were from Georgia and they were protesting the mistreatment of the Israelis in Gaza.

Ngai's host was one of the organizers of the group and since they did not have any place to stay, they crashed in Ngai's dorm. Despite some of the nerve-racking parts of the experience, Ngai said the tasty food made up for some of it.

He liked how classes at Tufts assigned papers and readings rather than worksheets as in high school. He also found the people there to be helpful.

"One of the things that I really liked about the campus was that I never had to open my map because every single

time I started to there would be a person who would be like 'Hey do you need help?'" Ngai said.

Senior Randy Tsai, who has visited universities such as Stanford, Brown and University of California, Los Angeles, said that in a way the school campuses reminded him of his old home of Taiwan.

"A lot of places [in Taiwan] were a lot like [college campuses]," Tsai said. "It's usually like one university and the city around it is built around to encompass [the university's] needs."

Tsai was able to talk to students and attend a few classes since he chose to do a self-guided tour.

"I spent time walking around campus and observing how students interacted with each other," Tsai said. "I loved it. It was very different from the somewhat cliquy nature of Saratoga students because I could see people with all different interests chatting with each other."

Senior Jennifer McAfee, who visited and toured Santa Clara University, had an eye-opening experience when she realized that whatever college she chose would be her home for the next four years.

"It really hit me that by this time next year I will be moved in to a dorm full-time, not with my family, for the first time ever," McAfee said.

McAfee found the Santa Clara campus beautiful and calm, and the people there really accepting and welcoming. Surrounded by new people, she considered how going to college would mean starting with a clean slate.

"We've been going to school with the same kids, [some even] since kindergarten, and we will be graduating with those same people," McAfee said. "[When we go to college] we will be with a new population of people who we won't know. It will be a great opportunity to meet new people."

### FUNDS

# Turkey time: Seniors try to alleviate debt

BY Fiona Sequeira & Neehar Thumaty

After using most of its funds for reserving parts of Senior Ball, the Class of 2015 is trying to dig its way out of debt by planning several fundraisers.

The first was a coin drive fundraiser called "Turkey up Your Teacher" that took place between Nov. 10-21. According to senior class president Josh Pi, the proceeds will help lower prom bids, which is expected to be a pricey event.

Liter-sized coin jars were placed office for teachers Seema Patel, Matt Torrens, Michael Boitz, Hana Chen, Todd Dwyer,

Matt Welander, Arnaldo Rodriguex, Jill McCrystal and principal Paul Robinson. The teacher whose coin jar ends up with the most money will dress up as a turkey the Tuesday before Thanksgiving Break, and the second- and third-place teachers will dress up as pilgrims.

Class officers hope the competitive nature of the drive will encourage participation.

Senior class treasurer Jane Park said that they are hoping to raise a couple hundred dollars.

To publicize the fundraiser and ensure its success, class officers created a Facebook event and featured it on the morning announcements.

The teacher whose coin jar ends up with the most money will dress up as a turkey.

### CLUBS

# Girls with Courage hosts movie night

BY Deepthi Sampathkumar

The lights are dimmed and the credits begin to roll on the projector's screen. Twenty to 25 girls huddled around the ceramics tables ready to watch the romantic comedy "Begin Again" while munching on specialty snacks.

This was the scene of the movie night that was hosted by Girls With Courage in ceramics teacher Leah Aguayo's room on Nov. 8.

Aguayo first created the group 20 years ago, but it was inactive until the events surrounding then-sophomore Audrie Pott's death in 2012.

"It really is about all of us learning the issues around campus and in [the] lives of all girls on and off campus and how girls as a whole could come to-

gether and gain courage," junior Saia Ghelichkhani said.

Since its formation, the group has grown to 85 members. They have had events to improve the self-esteem of girls on campus.

"Begin Again" shows the relationship struggles of a young couple.

"[The movie night] was really fun. We had lots of food and we all enjoyed the movie a lot," junior Priyanka Kakkar said.

Kakkar said that the highlight of the evening was Aguayo's spread of food. While enjoying the snacks, the girls were able to learn valuable lessons.

"The movie taught us that you should do whatever makes your heart happy and that one should not change [oneself] for the sake of others," Kakkar said.

### BUSINESS

# Freshman starts his own T-shirt company, Ansail

BY Trevor Leung & Neehar Thumaty

Freshman Roland Shen remembers when he got the inspiration for his T-shirt company. He was watching ABC's hit show "Shark Tank," and on the show was 9-year-old named Mo, who made and sold decorative bow ties.

Seeing what Mo had done and the success that followed the show, then-middle schooler Shen had an epiphany. Shen conducted extensive research online and then launched a T-shirt printing company, which he named "Ansail," last summer.

Shen's T-shirt production is a two-step process. First, he

sketches designs for the T-shirts and then he has an outside company print the shirts.

His favorite design is a cartoon sandwich overflowing with meat, cheese and lettuce. A pickle speared through by a toothpick peeks out from behind the bread, and onions balance between slices of tomatoes.

"It is well drawn and it has

a lot of colors," said sophomore Clifford Wong, who has purchased a shirt from Shen.

Shen sells his online T-shirts to friends and strangers alike for \$20 each. Ansail is a small-time project now, but Shen has big plans for the future.

He hopes to start with advertising. Shen invests most of his profits from the T-shirts he sells

back into his company. Shen plans to continue running the company from his home, even if it expands.

"I like to interact with customers, and it's really fun to talk to them about their order," Shen said. "It feels really good when you see that the thing gets out to them and they receive it."

### STUDENT GOVERNMENT

# Inside ASB: What students really do during meetings

BY Apon Kwatra & Anant Rajeev

Junior class treasurer Spencer Yen and junior class representative Kanaai Shah sit chatting across the floor to each other in the main office filled with about 30 student body officers and other interested students. Cereal and chips are passed around as officers discuss events, dances, finances and ways to fundraise for the class. The mood is lighthearted and students laugh as they chatter about school events.

ASB meetings, which are open to all students, are held every other Monday from 6-7 p.m. According to ASB president senior Adrienne Kim, the meetings are more relaxed without the urgency of Homecoming. Meetings now center around fundraisers, dances and policies.

Activities director Rebeca Marshburn oversees the ASB meetings, which are presided over by Adrienne, vice president junior Luke Salin, secretary junior Nihar Agrawal, treasurer junior Aakash Thumaty, board representative senior Neel Kattumadam, head commissioners seniors Jennifer Kim and Anshika Maheshwari and clubs commissioner senior Sherrilyn Ling.

The ASB's focus has now shifted to Winter Formal. Leaders are now making decisions about the venue, the price and the atmosphere.

"[We are] just coming up with ideas [to] ensure that the student body has an

incredible time at formal," said dance commissioner senior Jade Bisht.

ASB upperclassmen have an extra challenge to focus on: prom. According to junior class president Darby Williams, the juniors are under a lot of pressure to do well, as all the fundraisers throughout a class's four years go primarily to funding for prom.

"We got the venue [for prom] over the summer so that there would not be as much stress during the school year," Williams said. "Right now we are talking about menu and going to the venue to think about decorations."

ASB also approves clubs during meetings. There are often many students at meetings, eager to present their ideas for voting. After voting on clubs, meetings wrap up with a report from all the grades about future fundraisers.

Despite the work that ASB does, there is often criticism, especially during Homecoming.

"Sometimes people don't really know what we do so they think we don't really do anything," Adrienne said. "But I think there hasn't been any major [criticism since Homecoming]."

Aside from making a difference in the school, ASB officers also enjoy being a part of a tight-knit, positive team.

"Through ASB, all the officers have grown very close," Adrienne said. "Even though [ASB] can't make every person happy, it's the positive support that we get from students that makes being a part of ASB so rewarding."

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# College presentations need more relevance

BY Lauren Louie & Arman Vaziri

Are you worried you won't get into your first choice college? Well, according to the dozens of college presentations that have been held at school, there's no need to worry — every school is perfect.

College presentations aren't nearly as effective as they could be. Rather than emphasizing what makes a school unique, each is a marketing pitch that invariably says it's "a great college for students just like you."

**Rather than conveying information students want to know, college presentations feel like a quick and dirty crash course filled with information that's easily accessible from a school's website.**

In fact, the primary use for college presentations is not, as one would think, to gain a better understanding of the school; rather, many students use these presentations to speak to school representatives in the hopes that their name will be passed along to admission officers.

Although these students have a valid reason for going to the presentations, it seems like the nature of college presentations have changed to fit only their needs.

This makes it difficult for students who are undecided about a particular school, since they are not gaining anything from the presentations.

Rather than conveying information students want to know, college presentations feel like a quick and dirty crash

course filled with information that's easily accessible from a school's website.

The purpose of college presentations should be to present aspects of colleges that can't be conveyed in just statistics. What differentiates some programs from others? What does a certain campus have that others don't? From the resources provided to specific programs and opportunities, there are many different parts to a school — aspects that cannot be discovered by a simple Google search.

What students really need from college presentations are the more intangible aspects, and the best candidates to offer that information are alumni (the more recent, the better). Whether it be in person or on video, it would be valuable for someone's who has been in a similar position to tell why and how they made their decision and how they feel about that decision. Also, alumni can convey aspects of campus atmosphere and what there is to do on campus in a way that admissions officers cannot do.

When students take class time to attend a college presentation, they deserve more than just a regurgitation of the college's website. Students put a lot of effort into being the best applicants they can be. In return, colleges need to show off their unique attributes in order to really help seniors make the best college decisions. ♦

# Teachers coordinating tests helps reduce stress

BY Dorrie Tang

On Oct. 29 this year, I nearly died. Maybe not physically, but the stress sure overwhelmed me mentally and emotionally. That day, I had back-to-back AP Calculus BC and AP Physics tests during my fifth and sixth periods. For me, and for dozens of other upperclassmen, these two classes are among the hardest that the school offers.

I clearly remember trying to study late into the night the day before, and stressing out about the upcoming physics test even while I was trying to focus during my calculus test. And I'm not alone in having this problem of back-to-back major tests — I'm sure almost every student at the school gone through it, or otherwise will experience it soon.

The problem is this: Teachers in different departments rarely coordinate their exams, and students are suffer from it. Don't get me wrong — I'm enjoying all my classes this year — it's just that the scheduling of huge exams on the same day is really stressful for students.

Teachers should not expect all students to be Hermione Grangers with time-turners. There are only 24 hours in a day: a third of it should, theoretically, go to sleep, another third to school and the last third to homework and extracurriculars and maybe a little fun or relaxation.

Needless to say, students simply do not have the time to finish all their homework, participate in extracurricular events and study for more than one major exam for the next day. And even if they have studied the material in advance, a final review is crucial to refresh their memory and remember everything again before the exam.

Most obviously, exams piled up on

one week or so lead to unbelievably stressful nights. With so much work to do and so little time, students lose sleep, motivation and energy.

Having to study for one test after another gets repetitive and boring, too. The purpose of studying is supposed to be to help students review the material that is going to be tested and understand parts they don't remember. They have, unfortunately, turned into cram sessions in which students spend most of their time memorizing information rather than truly understanding the subject.

From the teacher's point of view, exams are supposed to be a measurement of how well students know the material for a unit. If students are trying to study for multiple exams at once, though, they won't be able to do as well on them than if tests were spaced out and ample time was given in between to study.

There is a simple solution to this problem. Teachers, especially those teaching the same grade levels, should coordinate major tests between their classes. They should also take students' complaints into consideration by keeping schedules flexible and ready to change if they hear that students already have a large exam on the same day that they are planning their own.

Canvas and other common systems could offer teachers with a way to see each other's plans and change their own accordingly after simply entering in their exam schedules and sharing them with others.

The solution isn't complicated. But until teachers decide to coordinate tests, students will have to pull harmful all-nighters in preparation for multiple major tests on the same day. That's a fate better planning and coordination could go a long way toward preventing. ♦

# Administrators' censorship of jokes unfair and excessive

It's a rumble. Hundreds of students are pounding their feet, cheers heard from across the campus. Four distinct colors represent each class in each corner of the gym; the rally commission has once again met expectations with another engaging and fast-paced event.

Below the cheering bleachers, however, the administration monitors the content closely, watching the laughing commissioners carefully. The script for the rally has been revised and revised who knows how many times, and there may still be problems to find.

Despite the numerous hours that the rally commission puts into its scripts and skits, the administration too often disagrees with the kinds of jokes they include. It's unfair that the rally commission is censored to the point of absurdity, smothered by a perpetually growing stream of rules and regulations.

Most memorable in the latest rally was perhaps the "tarring-and-feathering" of junior rally commissioner Isa Berardo by her friends on the varsity soccer team. Berardo was covered in maple syrup and then plastered with brightly colored feathers, a seemingly harmless joke.

But while most students laughed at the spectacle in delight, the administration saw a connection that few others would have ever noticed. Comparing the maple-syrup-covering to the infamous "tarring-and-feathering" that slaves and colonists feared during the 1700s is more than a bit of a stretch.

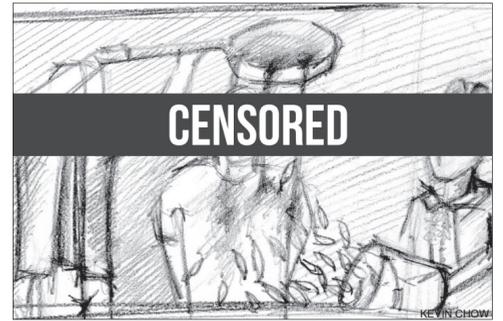
The humiliating practice was forced upon anybody who defied social norms, and while it may have been sensitive 300 years ago, it no longer applies now, and it is doubtful that students were actually offended by the joke. In fact, it almost seems as if the administration is finding problems with the script just for the sake of finding problems.

This issue extends past the few rallies that take place each year, however; the administration's stringent censoring has been apparent in the annual Homecoming skits.

While it is understandable that jokes with slurs and derogatory comments that are clearly targeting specific groups should be edited out, the administration needs to exercise better judgment in the kinds of jokes that are included in the variety of school-wide events. Yes, we understand that we should not be making jokes at the cost of another's feelings, but there are situations where a humorous dig, whether about Los Gatos or the freshman class, can bring the school together in a moment of shared laughter.

The solution is simple. The difference in perspectives between the administration and the rally commission can be bridged by taking into account that opinions of the ASB. As student leaders, members of the ASB should

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have the tact and the skill to discern the offensive jokes from the funny ones, fairly and objectively. As peers of the rest of the school, the ASB should be the primary inspectors of scripts for rallies and Homecoming Quad Days, and could better anticipate the rest of the school's reaction. Following their review, the script would then be handed to the administration to look over.

The administration does not want to over-censor the scripts; they are simply doing the best that they can with the knowledge that they have. With students helping monitor other students, a healthier balance can be met.

The number of rallies has decreased to only three this year, and students have only a few chances left to experience what most people would call an essential part of the high school experience. The sole goal of the rally commission is to provide the student body with laughter and school spirit. Why are they being so strictly roadblocked by an administration that so constantly supports school spirit? ♦

# Grading pressure taints Socratic seminars

BY Fiona Sequeira & Kelly Xiao

By definition a Socratic seminar is a discussion in which participants offer and discuss opinions and ideas. The method originated with the Greek philosopher Socrates as he sought to question, explain and possibly resolve difficult issues.

And then, of course, there is the school version of the Socratic seminar. Students sit either in a large circle or concentric circles and debate questions such as "Is Hamlet a coward?" while the teacher observes and awards points based on students' contributions.

In this set-up, the "analyzing" is more of an aggressive verbal performance (complete with textbook and journal props!) dialed to impress. As for the "offering of thoughtful ideas," it is often more of a race to see who can say "I think" the fastest after the last speaker's final word.

In all of our English classes thus far, we have endured graded Socratic seminars. In theory, analyzing text through the Socratic method is an enticing prospect. But in practice?

Well, it gets pretty frustrating sitting with our heads propped on elbows and cringing at how disgusted Socrates would be at the lack of listening and productive discussion.

The problem arises largely because of the graded nature of Socratic. Many students force their contributions, doling out phrases they believe teachers like to hear rather than formulating original, probing insights about the topic at

hand. They ramble on and on, talking in circles and losing sight of their original purpose.

Then factor in participation points. The phrase invariably sends shudders down the backs of high school students. When the Socratic seminar is tainted with these, true listening becomes a moot point among grade-anxious students.

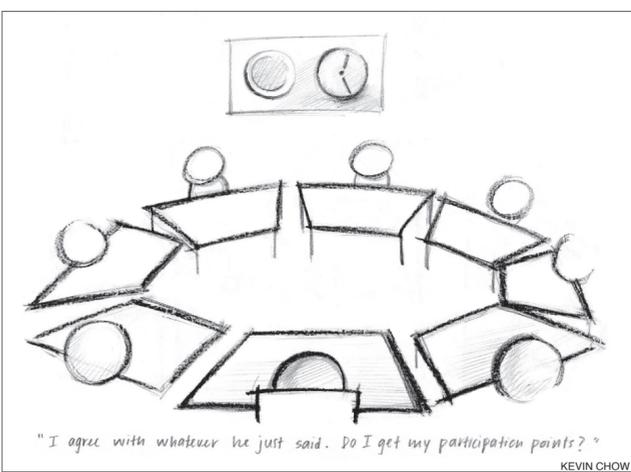
For an activity so centered on productive discussion, Socratic seminars are surprisingly good at dulling students' auditory abilities. Students would rather rehearse their next point and wait, tensed, for a break in the discussion so that they can jump in and seize the lime-light. By then, those students are usually only half-comprehending the current speaker's words. In this sense, it is not listening, but simply waiting for one's turn to spout.

Other times, people regurgitate previous information. Thanks to the forced participation system, most of points brought up are carefully rehearsed, nonsensical, repetitive and plain ridiculous.

Often, in a self-facilitated discussion, students may spend far too long on a specific detail or small aside rather than addressing the larger thematic picture. While every so often we might gain insight from a Socratic seminar, they too often leave us feeling a bit impatient and confused, as one meaningful contribution is followed by 10 disjointed ones.

Adding to the disjointed nature of the sessions, students often hastily change topics simply because they themselves have nothing to say on the subject. This usually arises in the form of "so let's

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move on to the next question" and silences the others who may have been planning to share some original contributions about the previous subject. The desperation to secure a good grade ends up limiting students' desire to hear everything their classmates have to offer.

Besides, what about those students who are inherently better listeners rather than speakers? Some students would rather hear the opinions of others than just their own voices. These students came to the Socratic seminar to learn,

and that can't be done easily while nervously thinking about what to say next.

One alternative is for teachers to use the more traditional format: Raise your hand and participate when you want to without fear of getting a poor grade. It would be better to offer thoughtful content or to just to leave your hand down when you would be better off listening.

With some common-sense reforms, Socratic seminars might become something even Socrates would recognize and approve of. ♦

# Smaller teams hurt by unnecessary lowering of athletic contributions

BY Caitlin Ju

In the beginning of this year the superintendent and administrators decided to lower the suggested amount Saratoga parents can donate to athletics from \$275 to \$225 and raised Los Gatos' suggested donation from \$200 to \$225. When a student registers for a sport, the school recommends but cannot require this donation as it did in the past.

Athletic contributions are the key to making the sports program a success, as they provide much-needed funding. With this in mind, the school is desperately trying to cope with the budget cuts and the reduced suggested contribution amount this year. It is strange, though, that Los Gatos even with its active Los Gatos Athletic Association that helps to raise significant funding, needs its suggested contribution amount to be raised \$25. If it has done well in the past with the \$200, why does it need to be increased just so Saratoga does not have to decrease its amount to an even lower \$200?

Saratoga High should be separated from Los Gatos, because it does not have as able a foundation to help with fund-

ing. Its contribution amount should remain at the original \$275, because now many teams are unable to hold the same "standard of living" they had before. The tennis team lacked new balls and water polo needs balls and swim caps and has resorted to fundraising to have the usual equipment.

The donations parents make fund everything in sports, yet teams such as water polo, tennis and golf still suffer from lack of funding, despite the generous contributions from parents.

In recent years, the school itself has been able to choose which sports get how much money, based on their spending in previous years, even though 93 percent of parents contribute the \$225. But what if the need for money for a certain sport increases, or parents want to have all their money to go to their child's sport?

It makes little sense when parents donate over \$200 to athletics for their student who plays a sport like field hockey or cross country, which uses considerably less money, for all of that money to go to a different sport such as football.

Parents should be able to direct their own contributions rather than having all their money go into one large pool. Since only four or five teams have their uniforms paid for



## >> Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

<b>Editors-in-chief</b> Megana Iyer Amy Lin	<b>Opinion Editor</b> Bruce Lou	<b>Reporters</b> Jade Bisht Megana Iyer Amy Lin
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The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 37-1 in support of the editorial.

# Club advisers prove hindering and useless

BY Neehar Thumaty

According to ASB, advisers are an essential component of every club. But when one walks into almost any club meeting, the adviser is sitting behind their desk, grading papers and paying no attention to the club whatsoever.

Yet clubs are obliged to keep this redundant relationship with advisers and vice-versa. A lot of teachers who are advisers make use of their lunches by going out to run errands or by

grading assignments. But with the burden of being confined to their room and with the distraction of clubs having their discussions and activities, advisers are often not in the most suitable conditions to have a productive lunch.

The requirement of club advisers is a detriment to both parties, and both would greatly benefit if this archaic rule was removed and replaced. ♦

**Not only is the requirement of a club adviser a hindrance to the formation of a club, but it is also an unnecessary burden for the advisers themselves.**

# Journalism bias: a matter of circumstance

By Michelle Leung & Sava Sivaram

It is said that the first obligation of journalism is to the truth. After all, newspapers hold a lot of power over the general population's perception of events, as well as future generations' memory of history. And as the school newspaper, the Saratoga Falcon has the obligation to report major events that influence the student body.

In terms of outright ethical issues like changing quotes or intentionally printing false content, the Saratoga Falcon does a pretty good job avoiding dishonesty.

Subtler bias than blatant lying occurs more often. It may seem that the newspaper covers many of the same people over and over again — the "friends" of the reporters.

Sometimes, this accusation of convenience sampling is founded: If a "Toga Talks" is necessary and we have a deadline of one hour, sometimes the only choice is to turn to students nearby.

The Falcon's surveys will never reveal more than a possible indication of the student population's views.

After all, surveys rely on voluntary participation, which is a type of bias in itself.

It is also unavoidable that there will be a tendency to cover a certain personality type in the people whose quotes we use; those people with the best quotes will be featured most often.

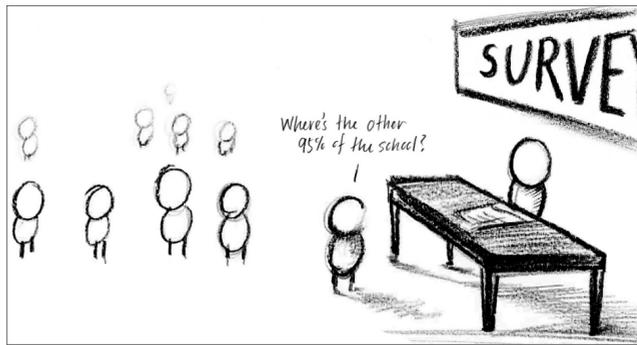
After all, the purpose of a newspaper is to save students time by summarizing and reporting only the most interesting information. The Falcon tends to cover the most high-profile students or those who hold more important roles in clubs and organizations because those students are the most newsworthy.

One of the first things we learn in Journalism 1 is that it is impossible to be completely objective. Whether in the wording of the sentence, or the placement of the quote, a reporter exercises at least unconscious bias in writing an article. There are definitely limits to how far the staff will go in covering sensitive topics; however, we try to ensure that no one will be harmed by the articles we put out.

If there are inaccuracies, such as misreporting of quotes in the newspaper, they are usually a consequence of miscommunication between the source and the reporter.

When a serious mistake is brought to the attention of the staff, the Falcon will either print a correction in the following issue or print a letter in a subsequent issue addressing the offending article.

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In fact, mistakes in the exact wording of a quote are generally a result of reporters over zealously cleaning up sources' language.

Although most reporters make a sincere effort to quote exactly, it is not always efficient to include every sentence a source utters.

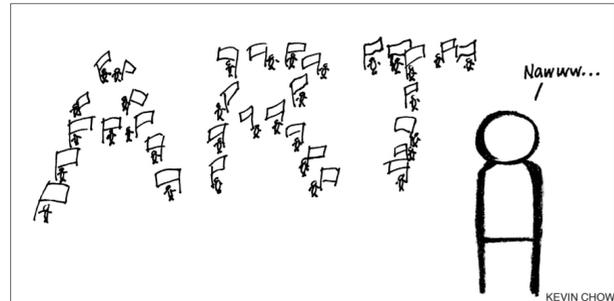
If you've noticed that your commentary sounds more professional than usual, it's because the Falcon takes out

"um's" and "like's" when transcribing quotes. Sometimes, we insert words to make a sentence clearer; through brackets, we can clarify that "he" means "Mr. Robinson," or "over there" means "the library."

In the end, the goal of the Falcon is to provide news to students, but it will never be 100 percent free of bias.

There's a name for the type of article that is perfectly, clinically objective: a fact sheet. ♦

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November 21, 2014

# Challenge Tube

## Reporters attempt YouTube challenges



For more of these videos, visit Saratoga Falcon: Online Edition on Facebook

### Chubby Bunny

#### marsh fellows

Anant Rajeev and Rotem Shaked



It was the middle of school one day when our Lifestyle section editors came and started chatting with us. Nothing unusual — just a regular conversation among friends. At the end of the conversation, though, we'd been convinced to take part in the Chubby Bunny challenge.

We know what some of you may be thinking: What even is the Chubby Bunny challenge? We're glad you asked, because for about a week leading up to it neither of us could even say the tongue-twister name correctly.

The Chubby Bunny Challenge involves two or more people who, for no reason whatsoever, shove marshmallows into their mouth one after another until the phrase "chubby bunny" is no longer pronounceable.

Seemingly simple, it turns out that just a couple of marshmallows completely fills the average person's mouth, making the average number (according to The Falcon's extensive research) of marshmallows that fit into a person's

mouth three.

It's not too difficult to put marshmallows in your mouth, however; that is the easy part. The real hardship comes when you have to enunciate "chubby bunny" with marshmallows blocking your tongue, an essential element of the speaking process.

This is where our first piece of advice comes in: ALWAYS stuff your marshmallows all the way back up in the roof of your mouth. This leaves room for your tongue to move and gives you the ability to talk, while maximizing the number of marshmallows you can fit in your mouth.

The second tip is to take your time. While this may technically be cheating, waiting for your mouth to fill with saliva and "melt" the marshmallows makes the challenge (albeit more disgusting) easier. As your opponent slowly struggles to fit another marshmallow in his mouth, use the time to plot your next turn and reduce the volume of your marshmallows.

After we both had about three marshmallows in our mouths, it became



Juniors Anant Rajeev and Rotem Shaked attempt the Chubby Bunny challenge.

harder and harder to speak, and Anant came dangerously close to choking. Rotem, on the other hand, was happily stuffing his face with marshmallows, saying "chubby bunny" with no real trouble. We did the challenge three times, Anant sitting back in his seat in disappointment as he lost round after round. It's fair to say that this challenge isn't exactly for everyone.

The experience leaves us with a couple of questions: Why do people do this challenge? It's more of a hazard than something to do for fun. We highly advise all potential Chubby Bunny undertakers to rethink their decisions, because there are definitely better things to do with your free time. ♦



### Five Nights at Freddy's

#### tall and small

Lauren Louie and Arman Vaziri



Lauren

I don't like horror movies or stupid scare trends. So when Arman Vaziri suggested playing the nightmarish computer game Five Nights at Freddy's, I was completely against it. But I have a duty as a member of The Falcon to complete sometimes unfavorable tasks; in this case, I play a computer game that would most likely result in me crying.

OK, maybe that's an exaggeration, but the computer game really is scary. Arman and I played at fellow Falcon staff member Atirath Kosireddy's house, where I had a hard time hiding from the screen considering his computer was hooked up to a TV monitor.

Essentially, the goal is to survive the night at a haunted Pizzeria in which these demonic mobile animatronics mistake you for the naked electro skeleton of an animatronic, and in turn try to stuff your body into one of their own furry suits.

My character was an underpaid night security guard named Mike Schmidt. For nine minutes of real time, you just wait for the animatronics, adorably named Freddy Fazbear, Bonnie the Bunny, Chica the Chicken and Foxy the Pirate Fox, to inevitably attack you in this godforsaken run down facility.

Throughout the game, you're given very little to survive. All you have is a power source which has to last the entire midnight to 6 a.m. shift. So you have to balance your limited electricity with your gut instinct to shut off the large metal doors on either side of the screen, which block the animatronics from killing you.

In addition to the doors, there are two lights and seven glitchy surveillance cameras that hardly do their job of monitoring the movements of Satan's stuffed animals.

Keep in mind, closing the doors heavily drains your

battery, which only makes things harder.

It's hard to explain the immaculate sense of "I'm dead" when the power goes out and the doors go up, and all you can do is wait while Freddy strolls to your location.

As the animatronics make their way toward your room, making screeching noises, the merry-go-round-like music gets louder and louder, until they're right outside. Their mechanical jaws unhinge and out comes this wail that sounds like a possessed Mariah Carey. You can't brace yourself for that.

The game got less scary as we continued playing, and we became more focused on the challenge than the scare factor. Not that we got very far. We only got to Night Two.

Arman and I ran back to his car because daylight was fading and Atrath lives in the woods. We didn't want Freddy to be lurking around behind some tree as we took our time to say bye.

If you want to try to game, go ahead. But know that it doesn't end after one game. I'm surprised I didn't cry and even more surprised that I can sleep at night. But there is a sequel set to come out in 2015 and I want no part in it.

Arman

Like Lauren, I am not a big fan of the horror genre. I don't really understand the love for spine-chilling adrenaline rushes and sleepless nights. However, out of pure boredom and to further procrastinate college applications, I recently started playing terrifying games like Slender and when the opportunity came to play horror games for the Falcon, I knew which game I wanted to play.

Five Nights at Freddy's has been dubbed one of the best horror games of all time and popular YouTubers

like Pewdiepie and Markiplier, who both have millions of subscribers and create gameplay videos, have filmed their gameplay and reactions to the game to display the game's wicked nature.

Since Lauren was too scared to take control of the game, I wound up controlling the cameras, lights and doors.

The pressure of having to keep an eye out for the four demonic animatronic creatures got to me during the second night when I ended up just closing the doors, waiting for the power to run out, and having one of the characters jump scaring Lauren and me.

At first glance, the game is not really scary.

All that happens is that some robo-animals wander around a dark restaurant and jump at you if you happen to enter the room. It sounds pretty repetitive. But it's not.

There is so much happening in the game at once and so many characters to monitor that it is hard to convince yourself that it won't be too scary when the antagonists inevitably arrive.

You end up focusing so hard on the dark screen in order to make out the blurry shapes of the animatronics that when something pops up on the screen and makes a loud noise, you're abruptly removed from your state of focus.

Despite avoiding being in dark areas alone for one night, I ended up downloading the game on my iPad the next day. So far, I am on night four and update Lauren on my progress daily.

Before, I didn't understand the purpose of horror, but now I see how intoxicating the fear can be, and I am looking forward to playing the sequel, which has just been released. ♦



### Random Smoothie

#### wu-qian clan

Jenny Qian and Ellen Wu



Chunks of banana and tortilla chips peeked out of a rotten lettuce-colored liquid as we turned on the blender. Just watching the ingredients blend together made us squeamish.

When we heard about a popular YouTube challenge that involved consuming blended food, we were immediately up for it. The Smoothie Challenge began trending last summer and has been attempted by numerous Internet entertainers such as Joey Graceffa and members of O2L. As food enthusiasts and risk takers, we were 110 percent up for it, although many videos ended up with popular YouTubers spitting out their self-made concoctions.

Scavenging around the house, we looked for possible smoothie elements, ending up with 10 ingredients: an apple, a glass of lemonade, a pear, a carton of greek yogurt, a perfectly ripe banana, jam, a bottle of expired mustard, some guacamole, a bag of stale tortilla chips and some mixed nuts. We wrote

down each ingredient on slips of paper and then took turns drawing to determine what would go into our smoothies.

We found that the smoothie gods clearly picked a favorite; one blender contained an apple, a pear, a cup of lemonade, strawberry jelly and an unfortunate squirt of bright yellow mustard. In the other blender sat a lump of guacamole and a browned and mushy banana, sprinkled with nuts and stale tortilla chips. The only common ingredient was the greek yogurt, which didn't really help when mixed with the rest of the ingredients, and a nasty and repulsive odor seeped out of the container.

As the blenders started, the colors in each container swirled together, the blades swallowing up each unsavory ingredient. The first smoothie blended into a subtle peach color, while the other turned into a pale, thick smoothie with a milkshake-like consistency.

Each taking a deep breath, we cautiously sipped our odd beverages. The first drink, which we assumed would actually be like a smoothie, tasted like applesauce, but the sour aftertaste of lemonade lingered in our mouths for quite some time. We had added mustard



too, but a small enough amount to drink without much hesitation.

The second smoothie had an overwhelming and unusual stink not unlike vomit. One sip was barely drinkable. It tasted like a stomach stuffed after a Thanksgiving feast, drowned in nasty flavors with a mixture of food chunks. While the applesauce like smoothie was somewhat bearable, the second one was a challenge Sisyphus task. The first sip proved so painful that we ended up pouring the rest down the drain. Neither of us dared to drink more.

In the end, this challenge required much more luck than skill. When presented with an entire glass of the vile mixture, even for food enthusiasts like us, it was impossible to finish. After the challenge, our respect for chefs increased as it made us wonder how they could create such exotic yet delicious foods incorporating the most random ingredients. ♦

>> **thebigidea**

**The Final Smoothies**

**Smoothie #1:**  
-apple  
-pear  
-cup of lemonade  
-strawberry jelly  
-mustard  
Overall: Tasted like lemonade with a bit of mustard.

**Smoothie #2:**  
-guacamole  
-old banana  
-nuts and stale tortilla chips  
-greek yogurt  
Overall: Tasted like vomit and was barely drinkable.

### Blindfolded Makeup

#### rama mama

Arjun Ramanathan



Ladies of the world, I finally understand your perils.

When I agreed to participate in a makeup challenge with editor-in-chief Amy Lin, I had no idea what to expect. But as I watched Amy and the Life editors, Nupur Maheshwari and Melissa Magner arrange the dozens of wands and brushes, lipsticks and foundations, I knew the result was going to be a disaster.

The challenge had two parts. The first involved me applying makeup on Amy (without a blindfold) and seeing how it turned out. Being a male, I know nothing about applying makeup. After I finished, it was Amy's turn to put makeup on me — while blindfolded.

As I sat down and opened the mascara, Amy immediately winced, foreseeing the butchering of her face that was about to take place. Needless to say, I didn't know how to apply the mascara (I swiped it downwards on her eyelashes with the tip of the mascara wand, which apparently is incorrect — who knew?), and it resulted in black dots and smudges on Amy's eyelids, as well as unnecessary and painful poking and

prodding. Oops.

Next, I used some eyeliner and Amy's eyes became even more black and ghostly. I gave a nervous chuckle to assure her that it didn't look as bad as she thought and continued my masterpiece.

I proceeded to apply lipstick and finally concluded my project with a heap of foundation all over Amy's face. This was yet another mistake, I learned later, as foundation should have been applied first.

As soon as I finished, Amy took a mirror and expressed a shocked reaction as Nupur, Melissa and photographer and videographer Jade Bisht laughed uncontrollably. I didn't think it was that bad. I mean, at least I knew where to apply everything!

Only after I finished did Amy kindly explain mascara was for eyelashes and to be applied from the bottom up, a tip that would have helped us both greatly. All I have to say is, I'm glad I don't have to use makeup. The complicated array of materials and methods of application made me dizzy and thankful I was free-

not in contact with it. Next, it was my turn. As Amy blindfolded herself, I couldn't help but feel a little nervous. She began to feel around the table for the various brushes, and as she began to apply eyeliner, her blindfold caused her to miss my eyes,



Junior Arjun Ramanathan and senior Amy Lin try the makeup challenge. Blindfolded, Lin applies makeup to Ramanathan's eye, but misses.

going a bit higher than was needed and smearing the eyeliner just under my eyebrows. Although she used the mascara the correct way, she sadly missed her target and produced the same dotted black pattern that I had conjured on her just minutes earlier. Take that, Amy.

Next, Amy found the foundation and generously applied it to my face. After this — and much laughter from our audience — Amy topped my face off with bright lipstick. Though she was able to locate the left half of my lips, she ended up getting more of my cheek than my lips.

After she finished, she took off her blindfold and let out a cackle at the sight of me. As I looked at myself, I, too, was shocked and amused at my appearance.

After displaying myself to everyone in the journalism room, I washed the makeup off and returned to my usual self; I have to say, makeup is quite the experience. ♦



# 'Frozen Heart' toward Disney movie

BY Jade Bisht

Let it go. Like, actually. It's been 11 months, and the lyrics still drift through autumn air as people refuse to let the movie go. Disney's most recent addition to the critically acclaimed line of princess movies, "Frozen," concluded 2013 with a sweet reminder that love is an open door, as long as family stays loyal to one another; however, there's only so much that Olaf can giggle about before it becomes painful. The movie that I once worshipped and memorized line-by-line has become an irritating musical more disturbing than the obnoxious chirping of my alarm clock. I saw it twice in theaters and its sing-a-long equivalent once. In fact, I wrote a personal column for the Falcon on the beauty and my thorough enjoyment of it around this time last year. But times have changed, and "Frozen" is being overhyped everywhere. A year (more or less) has passed since it was released, yet it seems to be more advertised these days than when it came

out. Potential advertisements and prospective "Frozen"-themed rides have been promised at various amusement parks, and pictures of toddlers crying next to "Out of Stock" signs propped against a "Frozen" aisle in toy stores continue to float around the Internet. Of course, it's hard to bash the top-grossing animated film of all time. Yes, it's cute and has a sweet message of family before anything, please, Disney, take a step back and stop promoting



GRAPHIC BY JANE PARK

your movies so aggressively. At one point, "Frozen" puns used to bring about hearty laughs, but now encourage judgment and permanent ridicule. "Frozen" is just... everywhere. Of course, you can't necessarily put all the blame on the company so much as the audience for hyping the movie up as strongly as they did. Yes, the soundtrack is catchy, but the demise of nationwide love for the movie was anticipated once audiences began declaring it the best movie of all time. Come on, compare it to movies like "Shawshank Redemption?" "The Dark Knight Rises?" "Titanic?" The movie lacks a strong enough plot to be worthy of being the top-grossing animated film of all time. E v e n

after my first viewing (beneath the hysteria for the beautiful animation and outstanding vocals), I admittedly acknowledged the lack of a proper plot and extremely weak ending. Other animated movies hold similar themes and morals but have stronger plot lines. "Tangled," a notable Disney competitor to "Frozen," encourages watchers to step out of their comfort zone, avoid gullibility, not judge a book by a cover, chase their dreams and believe in themselves. "Frozen" mimics this in an icier environment, promoting the idea that Disney is running out of ideas and overselling the movies that have strong vocals. A Broadway voice as a lead doesn't mean the movie deserves greater recognition than another that has less experienced singers. Honestly, the annoyance regarding this movie comes down to the painful moments of friends blasting "Do you want to build a snowman?" All I can do is hide in a corner and pray no one asks the dreaded question. I promise you, my response will not be as gleeful as it used to be. ♦

# Students explore YouTube as creative outlet

BY Jenny Qian & Ellen Wu

The YouTube revolution is underway. With more than 1 billion unique users every month, the site's popularity has skyrocketed, and with it, the popularity of hundreds of YouTube stars across the world. Among those trying to make their mark on the site are four Media Arts Program (MAP) students: senior Tony Holt, junior Saro Acharya and sophomores Nathan Ching and Ryan Westman. The four started a YouTube channel called Project Cinatus in the beginning of 2014 to share the script writing, filming and editing techniques they learned in school. "I think the reason why we came together was because we understood and saw the passion and dedication [of filmmaking] in each other," Holt said. In April, the group directed and filmed a short film called "Trust." Reaching nearly 700 views, the film

received positive comments and praise for its script, filming and editing. "We post videos, not because we want to become popular," Ching said. "Our only reason is to entertain. We want to make people laugh, cry, smile and frown, but at the same time to practice our skills as filmmakers and to help get feedback from other people." The four haven't added new content for a few months due to their tight schedules during the busy school year, but they hope to produce more films in the near future. Ching and Westman have been writing and producing a script, separate from the group channel, for a new short film called "Redemption." They hope to film it this winter break and post on their other channel, The-MobiusTheory. Each of them also has his or her own individual channel and post a variety of different videos. Acharya posts video logs (vlogs) every few weeks, while Ching and Westman

like to focus on creating meaningful short films that incorporate morals related to modern society. Holt follows a different theme and produces sketches and other miscellaneous videos. Making videos and posting them online where the world can see them may be intimidating, but that is hardly a concern to the four MAP students. "[Making videos] bonds us together as a small family, not just a couple of guys who like to film. It is sort of like that saying, 'Enjoy what you do and you'll never work a day in your life,'" Ching said. In addition, some YouTubers have garnered attention through videos relating to fashion and beauty. These "beauty gurus" upload makeup tutorials, fashion lookbooks and lifestyle advice. Freshman Camilla Taysi, who has watched videos relating to beauty since seventh grade, started her own channel in the summer of 2012. Titled RosieBeautyLife, her channel pro-

vides tips and advice on beauty and fashion. "I've been into [fashion and beauty] ever since I was really young," Taysi said. "And watching [beauty gurus'] videos got me more into it which eventually motivated me to start making my own videos." Taysi's video schedule was consistent over the summer because she was not busy with school or homework. She was able to post a video once or twice a week, ranging from outfit ideas to clothing "hauls," videos that show recent purchases of new clothing. In the end, YouTube will always be an outlet for people to share and connect with others alike — and teens are likely to be the next N i g a - h i g a , Michelle Phan or J a c k s - G a p . ♦



GRAPHIC BY JANE PARK

# End of popular manga brings tears to loyal fans

BY Arjun Ramanathan & Devin Zhao

Reading manga and watching anime are frequently pastimes enjoyed by a large number of students who enjoy the action and comedy woven into plot lines. When the ending of a big-name series was announced, there was some logical panic among its regular viewers. Recently, popular manga publication Weekly Shonen Jump announced that Masashi Kishimoto would publish the last chapter of his masterpiece, the manga "Naruto," on Nov. 10. The manga, in circulation since the early months of 1999, has become one of the most widely-known mangas and animes in the world. Producing a final total of 700 chapters in two installments, "Naruto" and "Naruto Shippuden," the series seemed to last forever. What seemed to us like a harmless way to spend free time became an addicting habit of checking manga websites every Wednesday for the newest chapter in circulation.

One thing we can both agree on is that Naruto has become one of the most essential parts of our lives, sometimes even surpassing schoolwork. Now, with its ending, there will be a void. In a sense, Naruto has become vernacular to all manga readers, who should be able to recognize the blond, hard-headed and moral-oriented protagonist who overcame discrimination to become one of the most respected in his village. Or Sasuke, the one-of-a-kind ninja prodigy who served as both Naruto's best friend and main antagonist. Even when characters go in and out of the main storyline and various main characters are replaced, the feud between these Naruto and Sasuke stays essential to the storyline. Even in the end, these two decide the fate of the ninja world, as if Kishimoto wanted to display some important lesson about their relationship.

Warning: The spoilers start here. Other aspects of the manga have made it a hilarious read every day for the past few years. Typical Japanese humor, such as massive nosebleeds after an accidental peek at conveniently censored women, are incorporated into the manga as side gags. Who could forget the girls' reactions when Sasuke and Naruto accidentally kissed in the second chapter? Certain aspects of the series relating to bonds and relationships justify it as more than just a slapstick action comedy, however. Through reading Naruto, viewers can both enjoy and take away an overarching message about friendship. As an example, Naruto started his life in his village as an outcast. But after defeating several major threats, such as the Sand Village junchuukri Gaara and the leader of the rogue ninja Akatsuki organization, Pain, becomes recognized as the village's hero.

Even his former enemies value his current merit and accomplishments rather than berate him for his past. Relationships established earlier in the series resonate again and again as the story progresses. Naruto, Sasuke and a female ninja named Sakura are put into a three-man cell at the beginning of the "Naruto" installment, only to have Sasuke defect to the "dark side" at the end. Though this development shocked us and many others, the series was still able to deliver its trademark appeal by developing Sasuke as an antagonist and therefore establishing a new turnout for readers and watchers to look forward to. Most non-manga readers would see "Naruto" as a trivial comic, but only readers can realize the heavy morals Kishimoto put into his greatest contemporary masterpiece underneath the somewhat lame gags. This manga has fueled our lives for the past few years, and with its ending, readers will feel drained without that magic fuel. Oh well, at least the anime isn't over yet. ♦

With the ending of Naruto, readers will feel drained without that magic fuel.

# Era of rock returns as sophomores start band

BY Maya Prasad

In the 1970s, musical groups such as Pink Floyd, Black Sabbath and the Rolling Stones gradually took over the music industry, spurring a new love for rock bands throughout the world. Sadly, as the 21st century dawned, the age of rock has not yet returned to its former glory. But sophomores Kainoa Giomi, Samantha Sherman, Kanika Vora and Rajat Vora revived this past mania by creating a rock band in the spirit of the '70s: They call their band The Renegades. In the beginning of summer, fraternal twins — Rajat, a percussionist; and Kanika, a guitarist — called Sherman, a vocalist, and Giomi, a pianist, and asked them to join The Renegades. Their initial repertoire of 10 songs consists mostly of classic rock pieces. "We tend to focus more on rock or alternative," said Kanika. "[Sherman] can't do the full-on hard metal, but we like to play a lot of Green Day, Bon Jovi and All American Rejects since they have just the right amount of rock and roll." During the summer, they held 3-hour practices three times a week. Now that school has taken over their calendars, the rigorous band practices declined to once every three weeks for around an hour. The Renegades got their first live performance over the summer when they played at the Sevathon, a charity awareness walk, and Saratoga's Got Talent. In addition to performing, the band also promotes its music through a Facebook page started this year in July that has 225 likes as of Nov. 13.

With the help of Kanika's guitar teacher, Carl Atilano, the Renegades are able to perform at various gigs. Atilano is part of a music company called Musician's Mobile, which Kanika and Rajat have been taking lessons from since third grade. "Carl is like our mentor. He helps us perfect our songs, work on stage presence and sometimes finds places for us to play," Rajat said. Even being in a band can be difficult in terms of scheduling practices, the band members still find its process beneficial. Giomi believes that being in a band is better than working solo, since the friends build memories at every practice and show. Although The Renegades hope to play at a bigger variety of events and garner more attention, their goals do not ex-



Courtesy of A THOUSAND PIXELS

Sophomore rock band, The Renegades, pose during a photoshoot.

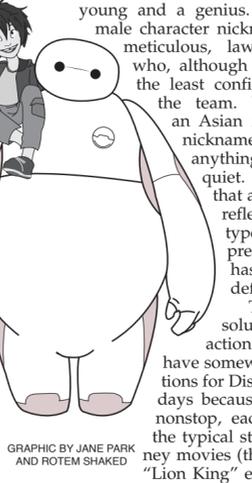
tend to the professional field. Rather than dreaming about becoming future stars in the music business, the band members play purely for fun. "Our goal is to get really good and hopefully start playing originals instead of covers," Kanika said. "It is more of an entertaining hobby that we all enjoy and we do with our best friends." ♦

# 'Big Hero 6' reflects Disney's recent successes

BY Jade Bisht & Lauren Louie

After intelligently deciding not to buy tickets ahead of time, we had a rough day trying to see this movie. It was sold out at 10:30 a.m. (because apparently too many people want to watch a movie at brunch time), and we were both busy until that night. Yet the 12 hours of waiting until we were both conveniently available were worth the 105-minute movie, as we came out of the theater with our steps tripping over laughter and wishing we could watch it over and over again. Directed by Don Hall and Chris Williams, "Big Hero 6" is Disney's most recent addition to its line of glorified animations. The movie features voice actors unfamiliar to most, which strays from the norm of at least one famous actor per Disney movie. Without spoiling too much, the movie revolves around Hiro Hamada, a brilliant 14-year-old who's already finished

with high school, a few friends and the inflatable, loveable, benevolent robotic Baymax, who fight against a masked villain who stole Hiro's invention, a plethora of microbots that respond to whomever wears the corresponding headband. It's a perfect family animation, though some parts may be too scary for children. It's hard to be impressed by film technology these days after movies like "Avatar" and "The Dark Knight," but we really did appreciate the animation for "Big Hero 6." The realistic detail and lighting are reason enough to see this movie. This movie is also groundbreaking in its characterization. The protagonist is biracial,



GRAPHIC BY JANE PARK AND ROTEM SHAKED

young and a genius. There's a black male character nicknamed Wasabi, a meticulous, law-abiding citizen who, although big and buff, is the least confident member of the team. Likewise there's an Asian female character, nicknamed GoGo, who is anything but docile and quiet. This isn't to say that all real-life people reflect these stereotypes, but it's impressive that Disney has recognized and defied the norms. This movie is absolute brilliance in action. Seriously, we have somewhat low expectations for Disney movies these days because they come out nonstop, each straying from the typical stereotypes of Disney movies (think "Pinocchio," "Lion King" etc). "Big Hero 6"

could easily pass as a Dreamworks film. Baymax the robot, too, is perfectly characterized. We felt a little uncomfortable upon first meeting his large marshmallow stature but quickly grew affectionate as his relationship with Hiro progressed. His refusal to take no for an answer and "huggable" body provide the perfect companion to the moody, pubescent Hiro. Although he is a robot, he thinks and cares like a real person, and it's easy for viewers to forget that he is programmable. He is there for each character in his or her time of need and provides solid entertainment throughout the movie. In addition, there is a secret scene after all the credits, and it's worth staying for. Hint: Stan Lee. "Big Hero 6" is a heartfelt superhero movie worth watching. The artwork, characters and emotional rollercoaster it provides are well worth the long lines and screaming children. You'll find yourself wishing for a giant marshmallow waiting to greet you in your room. ♦

# Old movies boring? Just try them and love them

BY Sherrilyn Ling

"Old movies are so boring." Don't ever say that around me unless you want to get slapped. I know what you're thinking. Old movies are nothing more than moving black-and-white pictures with no action and long dialogues that sometimes don't make sense. But you're wrong. It kills me inside to think that so many people currently consider themselves movie fanatics without acknowledging the best movies of all time — those from Hollywood's "Golden Age," which ran from the 1930s to the 1950s. You may be thinking right now, "OK, Sherrilyn, why exactly are Golden Age films so much better than today's?" Well, I have the answers. Today's movies have become much too graphic in terms of both sex and violence. Don't get me wrong. I love a graphic, over-the-top Quentin Tarantino film every now and then, but if you're anything like my mom you can't handle that type of gore. During the Golden Age, directors were forbidden from putting too much violence into films. It takes a genius, such as Alfred Hitchcock, to be able to frighten an audience without showing actual blood, but with pure suspense instead. Try Hitchcock's "Rear Window"

(1954) starring Jimmy Stewart and Grace Kelly. The first time my sister and I watched it, we weren't expecting to be scared at all. I mean, come on, there isn't even a single drop of blood during the entire movie. But we were proven wrong, and within 45 minutes the suspense had us at the edge of our seats, anxiety-ridden and screaming at Grace Kelly through the television set to look out because the murderer was standing right behind her. The same goes for romance. I apologize if you find it offensive that I'd rather not have to watch two people do inappropriate things. Instead, I prefer subtle romances, such as Frank Capra's "It Happened One Night" (1934) starring Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert. During one scene in the film, my heart was about to explode even though the two characters were on separate beds. I've also noticed that today's movies are much too predictable. Especially with the generic rom-com, I can almost always accurately guess the ending, and it's almost always a happy one. During the Golden Age, there was a perfect balance of happy endings and sad endings. My favorite Barbara Stanwyck film, "Stella Dallas" (1937), centers around the complicated relationship between a mother and her daughter rather than the typical boy-meets-girl plotline. Plus,

it gets bonus points for unpredictability after I found myself in tears when the ending was completely opposite from what I expected. Not to mention, there was a much wider range of film genres during the Golden Age. I love a well-written film noir starring Rita Hayworth or Humphrey Bogart. Rather than in-your-face action scenes, 1940s film noirs featured hard-hitting dialogue that keeps you intrigued with every dramatic line. And I can't forget about those movie musicals, which are unfortunately nonexistent in today's movie industry. Whenever I'm having a bad day, I know there's nothing a little Judy Garland and Gene Kelly can't fix. Or maybe the best dancing duo of all time — Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. Watching one of their lively dance numbers, complete with tap shoes and flowy dresses, always leaves me in awe of how captivating they could be. I promise you, watching any movie musical leaves with a magical feeling inside. So, as much as I love some of today's modern film, nothing will ever compare to the glamour and enchantment of Hollywood's Golden Age. And to all you self-proclaimed film lovers out there — I'm really hoping that after reading this you'll want to add some early 20th-century films to your "To Watch" list. ♦

## Sherrilyn's top 4 must sees



"For Me and My Gal" (1942) directed by Bubsy Berkeley



"Rebecca" (1940) directed by Alfred Hitchcock



"To Each His Own" (1946) directed by Mitchell Leisen



"Leave Her to Heaven" (1945) directed by John M. Stahl



# Female power movement sweeps media age

**deepsters**  
Deepthi Sampathkumar

Oxford-educated lawyer, activist and author Amal Alamuddin is 36 years old and has already represented international political giants, been an advisor to the King of Bahrain and actively participated in the United Nations.

If you've also been following the world of movie stars and celebrities, you might also know she now happens to be Mrs. George Clooney.

With her deep-set, dark brown eyes and golden skin, Alamuddin is the embodiment of beauty. And a few months ago, she had a wedding fit for a queen.

But Alamuddin represents much more than beauty. With her extensive experience in international and criminal law, as well as her time as a human rights activist, Alamuddin is redefining women's roles and sparking an increase in feminism across the globe.

The whole world is buzzing with Alamuddin fever — even Ellen DeGeneres dressed up as Alamuddin for Halloween this year and commented: "What's more attractive than a woman with brains!?"

Most surprisingly, Alamuddin was

initially never interested in Clooney — in fact, it was Clooney who was head over heels for Amal after meeting her at a charity dinner in September of 2013.

The marriage of Amal and Clooney demonstrates a change from society's attraction to women for solely their looks to an appreciation for women with personality and brains.

The feminism fervor has only increased, with stars across the entertainment industry promoting the concept.

Donning a swan tutu and bright red lipstick in her recent hit music video "Shake it Off," Taylor Swift looks more like a Barbie doll than a symbol of feminism. But according to critics, below Swift's thick layers of makeup lies a hard-core feminist. And she agrees.

According to Cosmopolitan magazine, Swift commented on her claims of being a feminist by saying, "My girlfriends and I talk a lot about feminism and the inequality between the way men and women are talked about."

A majority of her hit songs, "I Knew You Were Trouble" and "Shake it Off" are all demonstrative of one feminist

theme: Girls have the power to be strong individuals without male counterparts.

There are plenty of other icons in the entertainment industry including Beyoncé, Nelly Furtado and Katy Perry who are not afraid to declare themselves as strong women.

Commonly known as Queen Bey, Beyoncé is renowned as a goddess in all counts. Although she is married to famous rap singer Jay-Z, her reputation is independent of his and a majority of her followers are fans of him because he is married to the Queen Bey.

Beyoncé promotes female empowerment through her songs "Diva," "Flawless" and "Run the World (Girls)," each earning millions of views on Youtube daily. Although Beyoncé focuses many of her songs on female empowerment themes, she does not in any way put down males, allowing her to perform successfully beside her husband.

In a recent interview with Huffington Post, Beyoncé said: "I guess I am a modern-day feminist. I do believe in equality. Why do you have to choose what type of woman you are? Why do you have to label yourself anything? I'm just a woman and I love being a woman."

Even more than Beyoncé, some female entertainers take a belligerent approach.

Through the songs, "Promiscuous" and "Maneater," Nelly Furtado delineates the males as being crazy for female love. By doing so, Furtado employs men's inherent tendencies as a tool to present females as worthier and better.

Furtado's bold views on feminism go back to her upbringing as she says in an interview with Huffington Post: "[My mother] was really assertive and she taught me that my opinion was just as important as anyone else's. I'm proud to say I grew up in a feminist household."

Even more inspiring than her bold lyrics, Furtado has been donating thousands of dollars yearly to the building of an all-girls high school in rural Kenya.

Women across the entertainment industry have joined the feminist movement. These women have proved to us that beneath the crimson lipstick and pink blush lie individuals who seek to forge the path for female empowerment around the world.

Despite the hurdles and criticism thrown at these catalysts of feminism, the faces of the entertainment industry will continue to change the way the world sees the female race. For glitter and glamour are surface deep, while intelligence can redefine the world. ♦

**Ellen DeGeneres commented: "What's more attractive than a woman with brains?"**

# Feminism crashing down by infamous wrecking ball

EMMA WATSON LEADS WHILE MILEY CYRUS TWERKS

**one-and-a-half Indians**  
Amulya Vaalakonda and Jade Bisht

But surprisingly, Watson has yet to appear on Time's 100 Most Influential Women; what's more, Cyrus is No.2 on the magazine's most recent list.

Is Miley Cyrus really a feminist? Or is she just attempting to explain her inappropriate stage presence by arguing that she's "showing girls that they need to be confident?"

Yes, because confidence is showing up pretty much naked to the VMAs and grinding on the one person in the world who is the opposite of a feminist; let's not forget, Miley Cyrus is the reason Robin Thicke's wife filed for divorce.

She dons a pixie cut to symbolize feminism, yet advertises herself in a less than classy manner, with nothing on except a thin piece of fabric and her hair tied up in two buns. Her wardrobe seems limited to clothing no less skimpy than leotards and a plethora of translucent crop tops. Modern elegance, no?

Cyrus does not define feminism. She has nothing to do with any of the values and morals that people like Emma Watson strive to achieve with the feminist movement. Equality doesn't mean that both men and women can objectify themselves. So let's leave Cyrus in the pages of the National Enquirer and off Time magazine's next list of most influential women. It's disappointing and disheartening to hear children singing "We Can't Stop" at elementary schools, or to see them twerking, as if nothing is wrong with it.

On the other hand, it's uplifting to know that our world has people like Emma Watson to lead us through issues like the struggle for gender equality. There's a lot of hope in this generation, despite the occasional Miley Cyrus twerking her way into headlines. ♦

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**feministtracks**

1. Respect
2. Flawless
3. Diva
4. Run the World (Girls)
5. Cinderella
6. Can't Hold Us Down
7. Independent Women, Pt. 1
8. Bo\$S
9. I Love It
10. New Agenda
11. Stronger
12. We Are Who We Are
13. Salute
14. Fly
15. So What

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# From middle school to high school: learning to appreciate who I am

BY Saya Sivaram

Most people see middle school as a time for growth and exploration. It's supposed to be an opportunity to seek out new passions and a bridge between the lightheartedness of elementary school and pre-college nature of high school. Middle school is supposed to be a good thing.

For me, it was anything but.

I entered The Harker School at the precocious age of 11 as one of the only transfers from Saratoga Elementary. I didn't have friends, lacked confidence and soon realized that I wasn't ready for the level of commitment the school demanded.

The first two conditions weren't the biggest problems; I managed to attract a small group of friends fairly quickly and, as I became more familiar with the school, I began to feel slightly more comfortable. But mainly what I gained was something that I would never wish upon anyone: a sense of inferiority.

I was at a lower math level than my classmates at Harker, and my general knowledge lacked in comparison to theirs. While most of my classmates started in pre-algebra in sixth grade, I started at the level directly below that. At Redwood Middle School, that isn't a big deal. At Harker, it was like wearing a scarlet letter. The environment never let me forget that I was not as good as everyone else.

The kids at Harker generally strive to be on top, no matter what the cost. The normal lunchtime conversation, instead of being about things like TV shows and gossip, centers on comparing and bragging about test scores.

Keeping scores private is a seemingly unheard of concept, as much of the satisfaction from good grades comes from the proof that the grade was better than someone else's.

I hated competition, and it caused me a lot of embarrassment. I remember getting a B on a test in my Spanish 2 Honors class and having the teacher overtly call me out on it. Even worse, though, were the snickers behind me from all the kids who had aced it. This wasn't a rare occurrence; it was embedded into the culture.

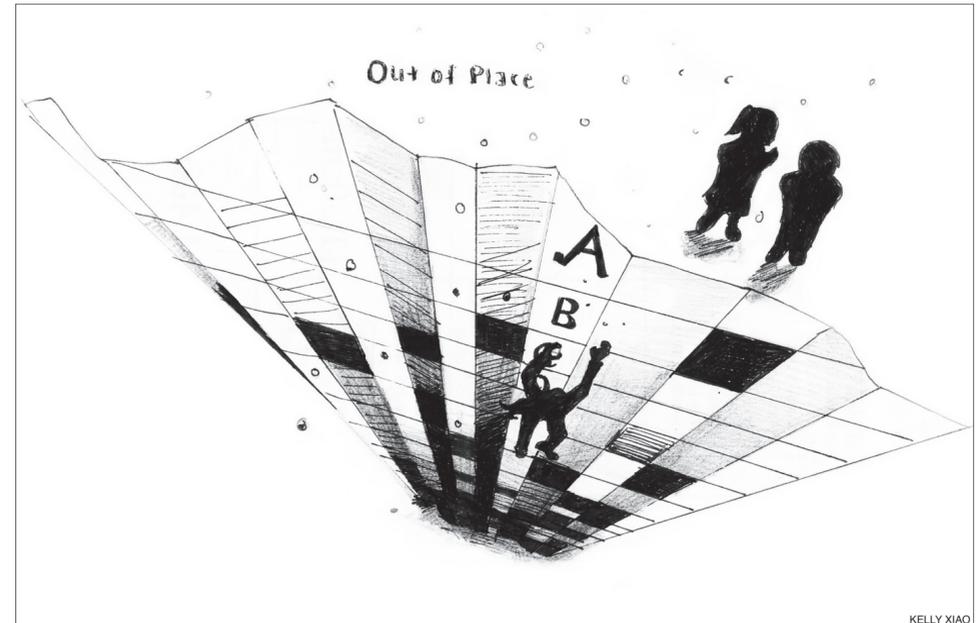
Most know that Harker is extremely rigorous, ranked as the third best school in California, but few realize that excessive competition and high standards take a toll on those who aren't at the top of the class.

In retrospect, these feelings were somewhat ridiculous, since the only class that I was truly behind in was math, and even then I was taking a class that was normal sixth-grade math.

Still, when you're in a group of highly motivated, competitive kids who function at ridiculously high levels, even the slightest feeling of inferiority can be blown up.

The thing about Harker is that every single student first has to pass rigorous entrance tests and interviews, guaranteeing admission only to the top students: ones who have ranked nationally in math or won incredible academic awards. I had somehow managed to scrape by with a passing grade on the exams.

I pushed myself constantly. I was hard on myself and I got straight A's, but I never got happier. That pit in the bottom of my stomach that told me that I would never be good enough, smart enough or motivated enough, pulled at me constantly.



KELLY XIAO

Even though I had clawed my way up to the same level as my peers, even though I was doing well in my classes, it was never enough. I always needed more, to be better, to work harder.

I had convinced myself that I was never going to be equal to my peers, and through that lost any shred of self-confidence that I had.

**The cause of childhood depression**

As alone as I felt during those years, I've come to realize that what I went through truly wasn't that rare. In fact, during my seventh grade, a high schooler at Harker tragically committed suicide, partly due to the high academic

pressure that the student faced.

According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, one of the leading causes of childhood depression is academic pressure or trouble at school, especially in private schools.

Furthermore, the children of affluent, well-educated parents suffer from anxiety, depression or somatic symptoms twice as often, according to Psychology Today. This is because the social standards for these kids are set so high and the definition of success and failure is polarized to reflect this skewed world view. Essentially, they end up thinking they have to be the very best or they're failures.

I never told my parents about my issues at Harker, although they seemed to deduce some of my unhappiness. I was scared that if I did, it would just give me another reason to feel weak and for others to look down on me. I didn't think

that I could handle pity from anyone else, let alone my own family. I concealed my unhappiness for three years and put on a smiling facade that nobody ever seemed to see through. I stopped taking interest in the things that I used to love and I stopped wanting to be happy.

Throughout my personal hell, I held on to one beacon of hope: After I got through middle school, I was going to leave. I knew from the second semester of sixth grade, I was going to a new school with a fresh start. I was going to Saratoga High.

My parents and siblings tried to change my mind. While they offered a wide berth of high schools for me to choose from and promised to support my decision, they truly believed that I would be happier at Harker. They made extensive lists of the benefits of going to Harker, citing the world-class facilities and the lauded teaching staff.

They believed that I would have more opportunities if I stayed at such a renowned school. They researched after school activities and urged me to invite friends over in the hopes that I would miraculously change my mind and want to stay. I never did.

I came up with fake reasons to leave, telling my parents that I wanted to experience a less sheltered environment, and talking about how the decrease in competition would help to let my academic achievements shine.

In truth, I just had to get away from

the ridiculous competition and the excessive focus on academics. I needed distance from an environment that had become toxic for me.

**The differences between schools**

Many people stop me when I mention this and remind me that Saratoga is also known for its competition. To that, I reply that compared to Harker, Saratoga's competition is almost nonexistent.

In Saratoga, students can be defined by anything, whether it be athletics, music, theater or a multitude of other activities. At Harker, academics is the sole factor that defines you.

The separation from such intense competition and the transition into an environment in which academics were not the be all end all factor were some of the reasons why I fell in love with Saratoga.

After just a few months here, I finally stopped stressing to the point of making myself physically ill. A few more and I was able to stop freaking out over my grades (to a certain degree). Before, I would beat myself up for weeks over even an A minus, but now I no longer see myself as purely defined by my grades. By the end of the year, I had begun to enjoy school. Best of all, I began to like myself again.

And so, if there's one thing that I've learned, it's that how you perceive yourself is much more important than how anyone else perceives you.

I no longer have to hide behind a happy facade, because I truly am happy now. I don't have to lie to my parents, because I have nothing to lie about. I'm proud of myself, and that's more of a reward than being at the top rung of an elite private school could ever be. ♦

**After just a few months here, I finally stopped stressing to the point of making myself physically ill. A few more and I was able to stop freaking out over my grades.**

sophomore Saya Sivaram

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# FALLING DOMINOES: A COUPLE'S PATH TO HOMELESSNESS

WE THINK HOMELESSNESS IS "THEIR" FAULT. WE TURN AWAY FROM "THEM" ON THE STREET. "THEY" ARE THE ONES WHO WE WILL NEVER BE, THE ONES WHO HAVE FAILED IN SOME WAY. BAD UPBRINGING, LACK OF EDUCATION — WE DON'T EVEN WANT TO HEAR HOW THEY GOT THERE, BECAUSE THEY'RE ALL THE SAME, YES? NO.

BY GITIKA NALWA & KELLY XIAO

She is a mid-1980s Los Gatos High alumna, now 48. Married once, mother of three. Former business woman. Optimist.

He is a 1980s Prospect High alumna, 46, formerly the proud owner of two houses and the kind of guy who fills the room with laughter. Likely a "class clown." Realist.

Kelleen Fransham and her boyfriend Monte Bippus were typical middle-class Americans. They were just like you. They were just like us. Until they lost everything. All it took was one domino to fall before it all came crashing down.

In the early hours of a Saturday morning, we sat in the Home First clinic waiting room, just the four of us. Fransham had on a black graphic-tee, a plaid button-down and gray slippers — her shoes had "broken" a while ago. Her wispy henna-red hair brushed against her forehead and past her shoulders. Every so often her upper lip would lift to reveal missing teeth.

Bippus sat a few seats down from her, scruffy hair pushed back under a baseball cap. He shot us an encouraging gap-toothed grin and we began our conversation.

## The beginnings

Fransham married at age 18, but didn't go to college so that she could help her husband manage a sheet metal and machine shop in Los Angeles. She had two kids and was pregnant with a third when her husband was diagnosed with terminal stomach cancer.

In a few months, he was gone, and Fransham never recovered. Instead, she grew steadily worse: She sank into a deep depression; she gave birth to her daughter, but was in no state to look after any of her children; she relinquished their care to her father. Fransham was left alone. That was 16 years ago.

"I had a life," Fransham said. "I had kids and the whole thing. And when [my husband] died, everything just kind of fell apart for me."

In her depression, Fransham began using drugs, which led to her addiction and eventually to homelessness four years ago.

Fransham said: "I was hospitalized [after my husband's death] for a little bit and then when I got out, I looked for any way I could get out of that depression, and it was drugs ... It was just one after another. Drugs was my double-edged sword: It was my savior, and here it's killing me."

While Fransham was in the throes of addiction to methamphetamine, she met her current boyfriend of six years, Bippus, another meth user. For two years, the couple lived in a house under construction that belonged to one of his

friends. They could stay as long as they "did some work" on it. But when the house was completed in 2010, Fransham and Bippus had to move out. They no longer had a home.

"I do remember the day," Fransham said. "It was November, right before Thanksgiving, and [we] got set out of the house that we were living in, and [we] stayed in the back of a U-Haul truck [we] had rented. And it was raining. It was pouring down rain and I had to go take the truck back. I kept it for two more days and paid the rental for it and slept in the back of it instead of taking it back. That was one of my first days of homelessness."

Since that day, Bippus and Fransham have resorted to various means to survive without a steady income to provide a roof over their heads. They first slept in his pickup truck, and when it was impounded, they slept in carpools, and on school rooftops in the summer. For food, they relied on Bippus' food stamps until those, too, stopped. Then, they started recycling cans and going through dumpsters and pawning items of value they found.

"To be honest with you, we'd go and — I mean, this is about honesty; I might as well give it to you," Fransham said. "We went to the hospital and said we were in pain and got pain pills and sold them."

At this Bippus added, "Hey, not me! I was [actually] in pain."

"OK, whatever," Fransham responded teasingly. "That's the honest truth."

## Sobering up

Meth eventually took a toll on Fransham's health, limiting her agility. On a particularly bad day, Fransham called the hospital, thinking she was having an asthma attack.

"The ambulance picked me up and said, 'Your lungs are fine and everything,' and they put the ECG (Electrocardiographic) things on me and said, 'Uh oh,' Fransham recalled. "My heart was not pumping the way it was supposed to."

Even after she was hospitalized, Fransham did not immediately forsake the highly addictive meth. When Bippus came to visit her in the hospital, he was high on drugs, triggering Fransham's craving.

"I made him give me some in the hospital and then I was like 'What in the hell am I doing; this is killing me' and that was my last time," Fransham said. "It took me to go and hit that pipe and think about what I was and where I was, sitting on a toilet, in a bathroom, in a hospital, in scrubs, in a gown with things hooked up to me everywhere, to

say, 'That's it, I'm done.'"

Fransham said she is now finished with using drugs.

"It was a life or death thing," Bippus said.

"Yeah, I don't think I would have done it otherwise," Fransham said. "I think I'd still be out there, high."

## A welcome relief

This all happened about a month ago. In late October of this year, Fransham and Bippus left the hospital and, on the advice of the hospital staff, headed for the Home First respite center in San Jose.

The center provides the homeless with a place to stay for up to six weeks if they have a medical condition, as does Fransham. Bippus, on the other hand, had to join the New Start program to be able to stay for up to six months. This program aims to help the homeless find employment by providing them volunteer-work experience and employment workshops.

Both Fransham and Bippus find their time in the shelter a welcome relief from the bitter nights they spent on the streets.

Fransham is optimistic that their stay at the center will break their spell of homelessness.

"I'm an optimist too," Bippus said. "[Some people think] you know, is the glass half full or half empty? I'm just happy I have a glass."

But Bippus admits it's hard to find the silver lining when recovering from chronic homelessness.

"If you don't have housing, it's tough to get a job because you can't groom yourself," Bippus said. "You can't keep your things so that you can go to the interview with nice clothes because, when you are homeless, you lose stuff every day. People are [al-

"I can't be [a] pessimist...and say, 'Nothing's going to happen, nothing's going to happen; we're not going to get housing.'"

Kelleen Fransham

ways] stealing your stuff."

Fransham spends her days resting, planning, going to church and attending the housing meetings the shelter holds; she keeps her eyes open for any opportunity to be granted subsidized housing.

"I just, I can't lose the hope, I mean I can't be [a] pessimist ... and say, 'Nothing's going to happen, nothing's going to happen; we're not going to get housing,'" Fransham said, "because I see people leaving; I've seen three people leave since I got here to their own

housing."

For Fransham, the hardest part about being homeless, other than the physical discomfort, is her separation from her family.

"When I got sick, I got in the hospital and got scared and called my family for the first time in a long time," Fransham said. "So, just recently, I got to hold my baby [who was given away for adoption] for the first time in ... oh God, years?"

Bippus interrupted. "Tell them how old your 'baby' is."

"She's 16," Fransham laughed. "She's 16 and she's still my baby ... all the time when I was gone, she was with [my father]. And she's rebellious and she's mad at me [for the drugs], but she has an open door for me."

Despite Fransham's recent contact with her daughter, her main bond now is with Bippus. Her father passed away this year, and she is not in close contact with her mother or her only sibling, a sister.

"[My mother] has her own issues, but she's [still] worried," Fransham said. "She doesn't want to lose a child."

Both Fransham and Bippus find it difficult to contact old friends and family, or even to talk to strangers because of the stigma of homelessness.

In addition to their loss of friends and family, homelessness has robbed Fransham of her dreams and aspirations.

"I wanted to do a lot of other things; I wanted to go [to] a lot of places. My dad wanted to live in Australia, and he and I had this argument [because] I wanted to live in Paris and he wanted to live in Australia, so we [agreed] to meet halfway," she laughed. "We didn't want to be here, but yeah, I had a lot of aspirations back in the day."

As for Bippus, his goals came crumbling down when he began to gamble his savings away.

"Addictions are addictions, you know?" Fransham explained. "It's not the upbringing, it's the [addictions]."

Bippus hasn't gambled for four years: He has nothing left to gamble.

"[The homeless] are normal people," Fransham said. "There's people here that would give you the shirt off their back and then there's people that will just turn their nose at you like they have lived in the highest class place; I think that we are trying to accumulate all the homeless people into one place ... I don't even know where that is..." "Concentration camp," Bippus muttered.

Staying homeless is not an option, they say. All of their energies are being spent on finding housing, and for good reason:

"Being homeless, staying homeless, staying on the street, I don't know how many nights I've just cried tears just being out there, telling my mind I'm so tired of it," Fransham said. ♦

# The story of an impoverished childhood: Volunteer helps boy recover from trauma

BY Rachel Hull & Michelle Leung

Editor's note: Junior's full name has been omitted in order to protect his privacy.

Senior Celia Kohler met Junior when he was 6 years old, and already he had experienced enough struggles to last him a lifetime. He ended up at the InnVision Shelter Network transitional home for mothers and children after his father lost his job and the family lost its apartment.

Four years ago, when Kohler first met him, Junior struggled with a "short fuse," aggression and a need for control. "[Junior is] from a bit of a tough back-

ground," Kohler said. "Substance abuse [has been] a really big part of his life. He has trouble with his anger; he really has issues with using his words, like he likes to swear and hit. He [had] that bad boy background, even as a 6 year old."

Kohler started volunteering for InnVision as a freshman after learning about it through the National Charity League (NCL). She has volunteered at two different locations in San Jose: one year at the Villa, and three years at the Commercial Street Inn (CSI).

Though her initial motive was only to gain enough hours to proceed to the next year of NCL, she ultimately stayed on past the required duration.

Paramount in her decision to stay with InnVision were the connections she formed with the children she was able to work with, including Junior.

Kohler buddied up with Junior at the start of her volunteering, back when he still suffered from a multitude of problems.

She said that because he lacked many things to call his

own, he often grew possessive. "Homeless people like to hold onto things and say [they're] theirs; they have that tendency," Kohler said. "And so he would use his pencil, and he would say, 'No, give it back, it's mine, it's mine, it's mine.' Mine was his favorite word."

Junior has grown over the past four years that Kohler has known him into a stronger and more confident 10 year old. In contrast to his aggressive attitude at the beginning of their relationship, Junior is now comfortable asking Kohler for help.

"Now he understands that he can share, and he's good with that, and he uses his words a lot better than he used to," Kohler said. "He has not hit anybody the entire year, and in summer camp, he didn't hit a single person. He did bite, but that's just normal. Kids bite."

## The reality of homelessness

Shielded by several pink-flowered trees and a low wall, the Villa has a light red-tiled roof and light pastel coloring. CSI has yellow-orange walls with arched windows and a bold green roof.

Both buildings, though seemingly inconspicuous, act as safe havens amidst the obstacles that families facing homelessness endure. What the children really need at this time, Kohler said, isn't pity.

"I just think it's nice for [Junior] to have someone to talk to, because his parents are really stressed with their circumstances," Kohler said.

And by "their circumstances," Kohler means the reality that these parents face: they may not have a place to sleep the next night. Their belongings are sparse, because the transitional home is only a "buffer zone" for them, a place for

them to get back on their feet. In fact, everything Junior owns could fit into a suitcase.

Though the program's goal is for families to stay in these homes for a maximum of six months, Kohler said that this is often not the case, as evidenced by children like Junior.

According to Kohler, the program's transitional homes operate with a set of "strict rules" that stem from their protective nature.

Because of issues with aggressive men in the past, fathers must live in separate housing from their families. The mothers and children live in rooms with one or two bunk beds, depending on the size of the family.

Kohler said that the sharp divide between her life in comfortable Saratoga and the lives of the children she works with is sobering at times; for instance, when she takes out her phone to check the time, the children ask to play with it because they have never touched an iPhone before.

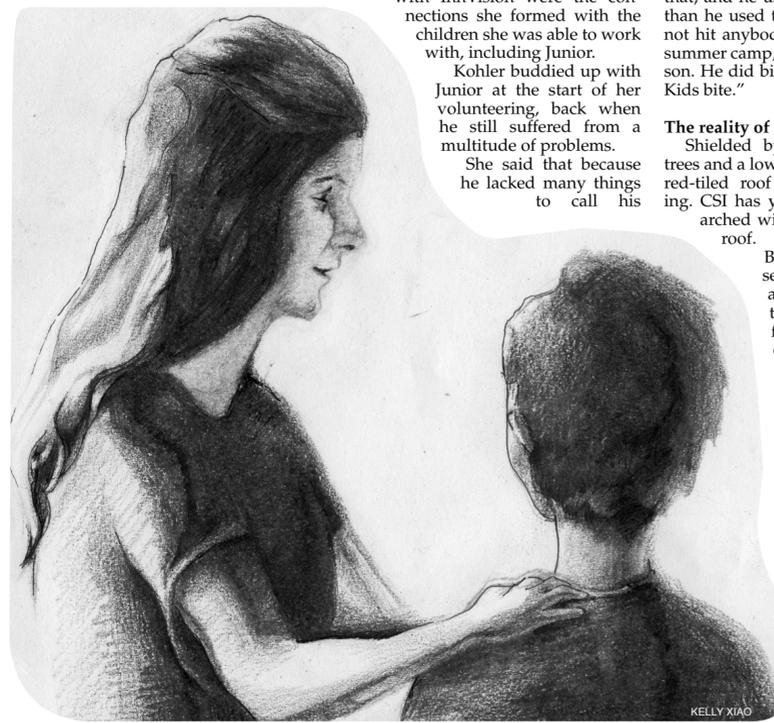
"That's heartbreaking, but that's when I feel a little out of place, because I can't really connect on that level," Kohler said. "I don't think any of us have really struggled like they have, and they're what, six? Twelve? That's awful."

## What makes it worthwhile

Kohler has been volunteering with InnVision for 100 hours every summer, and during that time, she and the children take part in a variety of activities, including visiting the park, the Children's Discovery Museum and Happy Hollow. They also have math and art lessons to give each day a more "school-y" feel, according to Kohler.

She said her experiences with InnVision have cemented her future plans to continue working with children in some capacity. Whether she finds a career as a business woman or doctor, she still plans to work with kids on the weekends.

"Honestly, I could say the whole sappy 'Oh, it makes me feel better about myself helping out my community,' but it really is for the kids," Kohler said. "Just working with kids is great, no matter where they're from or what their background." ♦



# Juniors' documentary features lives of the homeless

BY Saya Sivaram

Six juniors decided that they were unhappy with the misconceptions about homelessness held by many students. They decided to take action and make a change.

Juniors Nina Nelson and Ashvita Ramesh learned how little they knew about homelessness a year ago, when they volunteered at a shelter in Santa Clara.

"When I saw the conditions that these people were living in, I felt responsible to take action and help out," Nelson said.

They did research on homelessness and were stunned at the results. While Santa Clara is one of the richest counties in the country, it also ranks fifth for the highest number of homeless inhabitants, about 7,631 people. Even more shocking was the fact that there is only one shelter in San Jose. As part of their efforts, Nelson and Ramesh decided to film a documentary about the stories and struggles of the center's inhabitants.

They began the project in late October and welcomed the help of juniors Meghan Shah, Ingrid Pan, Christine Raj and Jennifer Chen. They talked to many

of the people in the center and learned about their wishes, aspirations and stories.

"[There is a] stereotypical viewpoint that all homeless people became homeless in the same way, or that they all slacked off and didn't bother to get a job," Ramesh said. "The truth is that each person has such a different story, and it is absolutely wrong for us to group all of these people into one generic category."

For Ramesh, the ignorance and misconceptions about homelessness are outrageous, and are the main reasons that she is so determined to create the documentary. They want to showcase many of the similarities between the people in the shelter and those leading more secure lives.

"We plan to contrast the wishes of Saratoga High School students with the wishes of the people at the [shelter] and show students that there are bigger issues that we need to be thinking of," Raj said.

The students are filming, editing and cutting the documentary in their free time, usually after school.

"If Leadership [could] grant our student body wishes [that] were sometimes



Juniors Christine Raj, Nina Nelson and Ingrid Pan stand in front of the Home First respite center in San Jose Nov. 8. (Missing: Jennifer Chen, Meghan Shah and Ashvita Ramesh).

so trivial, why can't the whole school work together to give these homeless people their wishes?" Ramesh asked. "We hope that by bringing more awareness to Saratoga, we can change people's perspectives on homelessness."

Through their experiences while filming the documentary, the girls have been

able to empathize more with the inhabitants of the shelter.

"These people are lacking even the most basic things, such as socks, and they just don't know how to get back on their feet," Nelson said. "We really just want to help out the people who aren't lucky enough to live in Saratoga." ♦

>> TheStats

5 points off

The girls' cross country team scored fourth place at CCS, just five points off from third place and qualification for state meets. The Falcons were originally seeded third in their division, but amazing performances by Prospect kicked Saratoga to fourth. "We could have lifted in order to build up muscle to increase our stamina during our runs," junior Kimberly Chen said. "I was impressed with our performance during CCS and I hope that next year we can make it to states."

8 Goals scored

The field hockey team was able to score 8 goals to clinch an 8-1 victory in their first match in CCS. However, the girls were unable to elongate their season afterwards, losing 5-0 in CCS quarterfinals. "I thought our advance was great for our team especially after finishing second to last in league last year," said junior center Erin Norris. "Our team improved a lot this season and we really earned getting second in league this year."

17 minute race

At the final league meet at Crystal Springs, the top seven runners of the boys' cross country team all ran under 17 minutes in the hilly three-mile race. They then placed second at CCS to qualify for states. "I think freshman year there was never any like [for the team]," said senior Steven Sum. "No one ever really believed that we could do something. But after I came and we had a couple other people in my grade, we've turned around the mentality of the team."

money maker



Anant Rajeev

SEASON WRAP UP

The Falcons have had a successful fall season with many sports reaching CCS and achieving what was previously thought as impossible. The football team was able to defeat Palo Alto and clinch a spot in CCS playoffs, the volleyball team was able to win a match in CCS, and the girls' water polo team was able to advance to quarterfinals for the first time since 2006. In addition, the girls' tennis team was the first seed in their CCS playoffs run and the field hockey team was able to advance to CCS quarterfinals. Unfortunately, the tennis team lost against Menlo in a crucial upset that prevented the team from participating in the Norcal tournament. In addition to CCS success in those four sports, seven of the cross country runners qualified for states after placing second at a CCS event, exhibiting an overall accomplishing season for the falcons.

Sophomores dream of finesse on ice

wu-qian clan



Jenny Qian and Ellen Wu

Screams of terror filled the cold and barren ice rink as we slipped and plunged back, dragging one another along. We held onto each other, pulling each other down and digging our skates into the ice desperately. It was just as bad as we'd feared.

This was exactly what we thought would happen when Falcon news editor Michelle Leung, an experienced figure skater, offered to teach us to ice skate. What was once a terrifying idea turned to reality.

Ice skating, an artistic sport that requires grace and elegance, is something that neither of us has any experience in. Since we are clumsy and awkward, learning how to ice skate is like a baby learning how to walk.

Michelle is an instructor at Valco Ice Center and offered to teach the basics.

As we walked downstairs to the ice skating rink under Valco Mall, a gust of cold air blew at us — we privileged California residents already felt uncomfortable in the chillier environment. Because we went during the afternoon, not many people were at the rink, which was a relief because it meant that there would be fewer eyes watching when we inevitably fell or tripped over ourselves.

We rented our skates for \$12 each and cautiously stepped onto the ice.

With Michelle's guidance, we began by skating around the rink to adjust to the ice. We have to admit, after a few rounds our feet and legs were already beginning to become sore — it felt as if we were walking with high heels on ice.

Michelle started out by teaching us



FALCON // TREVOR LEUNG

Sophomores Jenny Qian and Ellen Wu pose happily after their ice skating show on Nov. 6.

swizzles, a basic move that helps control the direction of one's skates. This involves pushing the feet out and in, trying to create a smooth and continuous "V" shape.

We had gotten this move down quickly, but it was hard to look like Michelle, who was gracefully gliding like a princess on ice. With our bent backs, hands out and hunched appearance, we, in contrast, were frogs.

After the swizzles, we learned how to skate one foot at a time with our hands straight out, how to effectively stop on ice while skating and how to prepare to do some jumps. And while these all seem simple, each skill tested our unaccustomed bodies.

After the lesson, we decided it would only be right to create a routine that incorporated all the skills Michelle had taught us. Our final performance, while short and uncoordinated, was rather entertaining to watch due to our lively ef-

forts. Thankfully, it was a slow afternoon at the rink and no one else was there to witness the horrid routine.

After skating around the rink for an hour and a half, the soreness and fatigue began set in. At the close of the lesson, we concluded that we had neither the mental endurance nor the physical strength to be the graceful ice skaters that practiced around us. Although we were able to execute the moves taught to us, we did so in an uncoordinated and gawky fashion.

However, this opportunity allowed us to glimpse the challenges every ice skater must go through on the way to mastery, letting us to appreciate the sport much more. Although ice skating might look more beautiful than athletic, the experience was much more physically strenuous than we realized. Michelle may be a princess on ice, but considering how fit she is, we don't plan to get on bad side in the future. ♦

College football is my new hobby

JUNIOR FINDS UNPREDICTABILITY OF GAMES MORE EXCITING

money maker



Anant Rajeev

In fact, my interest level in college football was quite low until I watched the highlights of last year's rivalry match between the University of Alabama Crimson Tide and the Auburn University Tigers.

Auburn cornerback Chris Davis returned a missed field goal for a 100-yard touchdown to win the game as the game clock expired to give Auburn a famous and much needed victory.

Not only was it impressive because of the length of the run or the fact that it was the last play, but it was also spintingling to see the pure joy of the players and the crowd as they crashed the field to celebrate the victory.

Seeing the stadium and players' excitement sent chills through my body. I was hooked; I had entered the world of college football, and I couldn't leave.

The one thing that stands out in college football is the unpredictability of the games' outcomes. There is rarely a game where one can say with complete confidence who is going to win, since teams are constantly changing due to the graduating seniors and income freshmen. With offensively strong teams like Stanford, Oregon, UCLA and Cal all facing off in the same PAC-12 division and extremely athletic teams such as Auburn, Alabama, LSU, and Georgia all competing in the SEC division, there is no telling what can unfold in one game.

In contrast, the NFL has two distinct

campus: the good teams and the bad teams. The predictability of most of the games leaves viewers less excited because the divisions stay the same year after year.

But college football is just the opposite. Only two months ago, I sat down on my couch to watch the Stanford Cardinals take on the USC Trojans, fully expecting the Cardinals to win, because of their superior athleticism and size.

By the end of the second quarter, Stanford held a very unconvincing 10-7 lead, with their kicker Jordan Williamson missing two seemingly simple field goals. USC was leading by the end of the fourth quarter, although Stanford fought to make a final comeback.

However, USC regained possession of the ball after a fumble by Stanford quarterback Kevin Hogan, clinching their victory. As the clock ticked to the last second and USC celebrated a close victory on the field, I looked at the screen in awe. Even though I wasn't happy with the result, it was this kind of excitement that I yearned to experience, an excitement unlike that of the NFL where the games seem to end predictably.

Even with such detailed discussions with my passionate friends about each week's game upsets, there is no telling of what will happen in college football; it is a world where everyone must expect the unexpected, an element that makes a sport great to follow. ♦

XC >>

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other stable thoughts to ease his nerves.

Last Saturday, as a senior and a co-captain of the boys' cross country team, Sum won the individual champion title in the Division 3 CCS meet with his time of 15:21 over the 3.2-mile course at Toro Park.

Sum also led the Falcons' varsity team to a second-place finish as a whole, qualifying them for the state meet in Clovis on Nov. 29. Besides Sum, this team includes his brother, sophomore Nicholas Sum, juniors Kevin Duong-le, Stephen Law and Matthew Peterson and seniors and fellow co-captains Andrew Harter and Rohith Krishna.

"A lot of the team actually didn't run as well as they could have, so we were worried whether we were actually going to qualify for states, but it was a huge relief when we heard that we placed second as a team," Harter said.

The boys' cross country team has not gone to state since Sum's freshman year. For the past two years, the team has finished in fourth place at CCS, just one place short of qualification to states.

In anticipation for the state meet this

year, the 7-member team trained more than before. The previous summer, only Sum continued to run; this summer all members of the varsity team ran up to nine miles per day.

During the season, the team also went on distance runs four or five days a week for around seven or eight miles, as well as interval workouts on the track and upper-body building in the weight room two times per week.

"The workouts get our heart rates up and to the speed we need to win races," Law said. "After the long summer of distance runs, I wouldn't have been able to hit the times I can now without [more] training."

The team was confident about going to states this year because they had been consistently doing well in league meets.

In the final league meet at the notoriously hilly Crystal Springs on Nov. 4,

the team experienced tremendous success — all top seven runners, who are expected to go to states, ran personal records. Three new members also joined a select group of runners who ran under 17 minutes for the tough 3-mile race.

"I think the hard training schedule this year definitely paid off because our top seven guys got the fastest overall team time at Leagues and possibly even at CCS in [Saratoga Cross Country] history," Harter said.

Sum said that in previous years, although the team had similarly good runners, they trained for speed too early in the season and therefore peaked in the middle of the season rather than for the state meet.

He added that the team experienced a few unexpected events during CCS last year. Sum himself did not have a great race, the team's second runner almost passed out in the middle

of the race and some other runners felt slightly sick.

"I think I got too nervous last year," Sum said. "But this year, I have a different feeling. I don't really care [what the results are] — I'm just going to go out there and see what I can do."

Sum and the other seniors on the team have led the rest of the team to have a self-improving attitude.

"I sort of see the traits of amazing runners in all three of the captains," Law said. "[Senior captains Rohith Krishna and Andrew Harter] are living proof to me that you don't have to start out fast to be fast. Hard work makes fast runners, not natural talent."

As the state meet is approaching, team members have also become closer to each other.

"Before freshman year, we didn't necessarily all run together," Sum said. "But now we're always running together; a lot of the guys on the cross country became my best friends. I think running together and working out together [has] made us all better because we learn how to run as a team, [which is] really important if we want to qualify [for states.]"

No matter what, the team looks forward to states.

"This year feels good," Sum said. "We're in a good spot." ♦

>> #bigidea

Top 5 Boys Times (out of 74)

Senior Steven Sum  
Place: First  
Time: 15:21

Senior Andrew Harter  
Place: Fifth  
Time: 16:12

Junior Stephen Law  
Place: 12th  
Time: 16:57

Junior Matthew Peterson  
Place: 15th  
Time: 17:07

Sophomore Nicholas Sum  
Place: 42nd  
Time: 17:55

Help raise the hype in underrated sports

By Caitlin Ju

"Wait, we have a golf team? Since when?"

These are the words sophomore varsity golfer Cynthia Yang often hears when asked what sports she plays.

Golf is only one of many under hyped sports on campus, sharing the backstage with other sports like wrestling and lacrosse. Often overshadowed by the ever-present football, baseball or soccer, these unnoticed sports escape the recognition of announcements or accolades from classmates despite key wins and high records.

Yang attributes the lack of attention for sports like golf to the absence of familiarity for many teens.

"Golf is one of those sports that isn't played by many people our age," Yang said. "I find that there are more people who play when they get older because it does not really have age restrictions."

She points out sports like football receive more attention because of the pub-

licity they get and the reputation they have on campus.

"[Football] is a sport that has become cultural to our country, and therefore people pay more attention to them," Yang said. "Many people find golf games less exciting to watch than football."

Though people don't see golf as an "intense" sport, Yang believes people should give golfers more credit because of the equal commitment required.

"Just like any other sport, players work hard to excel at it so they should definitely be recognized more than they are now," Yang said.

With golf's league finals already secure on the shelf and the high possibility of CCS for individuals on the team, the golf team certainly should be given more acknowledgement.

Wrestling, which at this school has an even smaller team than most other schools and trails other sports in cover-

age, also lacks the recognition.

Senior Christian Murabito, a member of the wrestling team, compares the sport to football, but states that "[wrestling] isn't considered a popular sport that popular kids play."

Though Murabito says people should pay more attention to wrestling because of its challenging nature and the dedication it requires, he thinks part of the reason it lacks attention is the negative stereotype people have of the sport.

"A lot of people regard wrestling as a 'weird' sport, because it is not what they are used to," Murabito adds. "[Because of this] our team is very small, only five or six people, and not many people come to watch."

In general, sports that are regarded as less entertaining to watch are also typecast as easier to play. Tennis seems to have become one of those sports that has fallen into that category.



Murabito

Sophomore's life molded by Taekwondo teachings

By Apoorv Kwatra & Neehar Thumath

Standing at 5'5", sophomore Max Vo has sometimes been written off by others as too small in the competitive world of taekwondo. But he had a choice: either spend the rest of his life sulking about his genetics or use what he has to achieve more than anyone else could.

Vo began to hit the weight room, starting the summer of eighth grade.

He started out not being able to lift much and was often made fun of by his stronger peers, but soon, Vo could outlift everyone who doubted him.

"I had a chip on my shoulder," Vo said. "I felt like I had something to prove."

Day after day his physique grew, and those who had once mocked him were silenced.

He did not lift simply for appearances. Everything Vo did was to improve his taekwondo skills. His new found strength has allowed him to throw harder punches, finer kicks, and to overall excel in his sport.

"The moment I started taekwondo, I knew it was for me," Vo said. "I just

forget everything else and am at peace when I do taekwondo."

His training regimen consists of two hours of practice for five days a week. Each practice consists of both endurance training and technique repetition to refine kicks and punches.

Vo participates in tournaments around the nation. The biggest tournament he attends is the annual summer USA national tournament. With a total of 35 medals in, he participates in two main events.

The biggest tournament he attends is the annual summer USA national tournament. One is "kyorugi," where two opponents wearing padding spar against one another. Points are based on which body part is successfully hit.

However, Vo focuses on "poomsae," a form of taekwondo focused on patterns and techniques, with scoring based on accuracy and presentation.

Vo is recognized by the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) as a second-degree black belt and is training to become a third-degree black belt.

Official certification from the Korean taekwondo headquarters is given to people who pass standardized WTF



Courtesy of MAX VO

Sophomore Max Vo performs a spit kick in mid-air, chopping two pieces of wood in half.

tests given to them by administrators.

Vo started his taekwondo journey at the Hung Vuong Institute in north San Jose at age 6. Urged originally by his parents, he eventually became self-motivated.

"My biggest goal is to find time to practice and keep my commitment [to taekwondo]," Vo said. "It's something I look forward to every day."

Vo's skills have developed to a point,

"People don't know the rules so they don't pay attention to sports like tennis," freshman varsity player Stephanie Ren said. "Because few play them, people don't really understand how much more the sport should be appreciated."

These mindsets lead to a sharp contrast between so-called popular sports' attendances and of underhyped sports. For instance, a football game often attracts hundreds of attendees. In a tennis match, having three spectators is a rarity.

Senior Arathi Sabada, the co-captain of the girls' varsity tennis team, said, "It would be nice to have more people come to watch us against our league rivals because those are the tougher matches, and we could really use some support to help our team."

These sports, even those that have the highest chances of making CCS, are generally unknown to the public and should be better recognized. So next time, create a little hype and stop by a golf, wrestling or a tennis match. You'll be glad you did. ♦

FOOTBALL >>

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the final play of the first half, Palo Alto tied the score 14-14.

"During the second half, [our] defense had three huge stops inside the 10-yard line," senior linebacker Alex Hansen said, "but we brought in a new defense that worked really well and was able to stop them."

One of the highlights of the game was Faylor's 92-yard touchdown reception during the final quarter that beat his brother alumns Grant Faylor's record 89-yard touchdown. Senior defensive end and tight end Andrew Ferguson said the touchdown "basically sealed the deal for us."

According to Hansen, the final Saratoga record-setting receiving touchdown caught by Faylor "shut down Paly morale and we were able to finish them off and win the game."

"Our coaches and captains did a really good job of leading the team to compete and prove [to] people that we can play and compete with the teams in our league," said senior Alvin Kim, who played with an injured knee. "I think it's huge for any team to reach playoffs

because it shows that you can play with other high caliber teams in your league." The crucial Palo Alto game was important because it cemented the Falcons' position in the playoffs.

"Palo Alto is a very good team and we knew that, but we knew the better team was going to come out and get the win," Kim said. "Our team did a great job of competing and finishing strong in the second half."

The sizable crowd braving cold weather to support classmates and cheer on fellow Falcons also helped motivate the football team, said Kim.

Making CCS this year is a sign of great games to come in the following seasons as well, especially because six sophomores were pulled up to the varsity team this year, which doesn't usually happen, said Wu.

"Usually freshmen and sophomores are on JV and juniors and seniors are on varsity," Wu said, "but if coaches think you can help the varsity team they bring up the sophomores and have them play in the varsity level."

While the CCS games will not be easy matches, Wu thinks that the Falcons have a good chance of winning their first game. According to Wu, the Falcons are a team with genuine heart.

"I think [CCS] will be a battle because



Senior Alvin Kim accepts a bouquet of flowers as he walks down the football field with his family members during the senior night before the game vs. Palo Alto on Nov. 14.

the team we are playing is very similar to us," Wu said. "The offense they run [is very similar to ours]."

Rather than prove an obstacle, however, the Falcons' underdog status motivates them. Kim hopes that the team will be able to extend their season.

"We're usually not bigger than the teams we face, so as underdogs, we're trying to prove a point," Kim said. "On every sports team you're representing the name on the front of the jersey, and we're hoping to make our school proud and [go] as far as we can." ♦

CCS FIELD HOCKEY

After Rd. 1 victory, team loses to Gilroy

By DeepthiSampathkumar

In its first CCS match on Nov. 13 against Christopher High School at home, the girls' field hockey team won 8-1. The Falcons lost 5-0 in the quarterfinals to Gilroy last Saturday, ending their season.

Sophomores Tina Miller and Rachel Davey each scored two goals, and juniors Erin Norris and Anne Rollinson assisted each other to score four goals for the CCS win.

Prior to the first CCS match, the Falcons beat Cupertino High 2-1 on Nov. 7 to secure a playoff spot.

"The [Cupertino] game was a really crucial one for us as we had to win against them to move onto CCS," Norris said.

During the first half, the Falcons lagged behind and were unable to score a goal against Cupertino, while the Pioneers managed to score a goal. The

game quickly changed pace as the girls scored two goals in overtime and clinched the win.

Throughout the season, the girls' main focus has been to improve on assists and scoring.

"We really worked to play as a team and worked on our offensive skills," Norris said. "Our offensive tactics really came into play in the Christopher game as we were able to get a lot of goals in."

In their final CCS game on Nov. 15 at home against Gilroy High School, Gilroy's strong offense was the difference in the game.

Looking back, the girls saw how far they had come.

"Near the end [of the season], we definitely improved as working as a team rather than [playing] individually. I'm really proud of how far the team has made it this season, and excited to make it further next season," said Norris. ♦



Norris

CCS GIRLS' WATER POLO

Falcons' solid season finishes with loss in quarterfinal round

By NupurMaheshwari & GitikaNalwa

The girls' water polo team made quite a splash in CCS this year after two wins against Stevenson and St. Ignatius, on Nov. 11 and Nov. 13, respectively. The team won 7-4 against Stevenson and 5-3 against St. Ignatius in home games, and advanced to the CCS quarterfinals for the second time since 2006, only to be crushed by Sacred Heart Preparatory with a 16-4 loss in an away game.

Seniors Amanda Moriarty and Madison Gress said that it was the team's "solid defense" that led to its two CCS wins.

Moriarty said the team started out slowly on offense during the Stevenson game, but eventually picked up momentum as the game progressed because they were "able to identify who [Stevenson's] best players were so that [they] could shut them down on offense."

Defense also played a large part in its win against St. Ignatius.

The Falcons had lost 4-2 to St. Ignatius in a home game earlier in the season.

Although the team had troubling scoring early in the game, according to Gress, the Falcons were in the lead at the end of the first quarter.

"[That] pumped up the team right away," Gress said. "Saint Ignatius scored to take the lead in the middle of the game, and we all got a little flustered, but instead of getting down on ourselves like we would have done earlier in the season, we let it motivate us."

Gress said that the team used to have a slow offense, but recently had the opposite problem with too many people driving at once.

The team resolved this by working on its six-on-five offense during practices, which Gress hoped would help them "capitalize on [their] scoring opportunities."

Coach Nick Berg helped the team to do this by focusing on the team's defense before CCS.

"This year [Berg] has taught us a lot of defense, so we are now strong in both [offense and defense]," Moriarty said. "[Berg] has definitely helped us throughout the season, [which] shows since we made CCS."

With Berg's help, the team was able to overcome the absence of players such as senior Mackenzie Rosenthal, who plays hole-D, and junior Alexa Frieberg, who plays set, due to illnesses. Sophomore Sophia Sellers and junior Haley Rositano filled in and kept the Falcons competitive.

"We've all been able to power through [obstacles] for a [relatively] strong finish to the season," Gress said. "

With the season — and her high school water polo career — coming to a close, Gress said her motivation was high.

"Knowing [these] CCS games could be my last high school water polo games has motivated me to play my heart out because it might be the last chance we get," Gress said. ♦

20-game winning streak ends with semifinal loss to Menlo

By CaitlinJu

It was down to one match on the championship court. The tennis team watched anxiously, their eyes slightly averted. When the final point came and they heard the other team's screams of victory, the reality hit them.

After finishing the season with a 20-game winning streak and a record of 22-1, the girls' tennis team's post-season ended abruptly after being defeated 4-3 by the fifth-seeded Menlo on Nov. 17 at the Bay Club Courtside. The loss came as a blow especially because the team had beaten Menlo at the Fresno tournament in early Sept. 4-1, with two matches unfinished.

The top two singles No. 1 senior captain Smita Sabada and No. 2 sophomore Caitlin Ju lost in close three set matches,

and the top two doubles No. 1 junior Yu-Karen Asai and senior co-captain Arathi Sabda and No. 2 junior AiMarie Asai and freshman Stephanie Ren lost in equally nerve-wracking straight sets.

Though the team found the loss disappointing, they left the courts without regrets.

"It was a tough loss and we were all expecting to do better," said Smita. "But I couldn't have asked for a better team to finish my final season with."

After being named the top seed of the entire CCS team tournament, players felt slightly pressured, said Arathi.

"I think that it's always a little bit

nerve-wracking when people expect you to win every single match with our record," Arathi said. "But we dealt with the pressure of winning league really well."

The rest of the team's season was a success, with the team winning 5-2 against Leland High on Nov. 14 in the quarterfinals and 7-0 against Burlingame on Nov. 12, even with two of its singles players unable to play because of illness.

The CCS tournament began Nov. 11, but the team received a bye the first round.

"Since our first win at CCS was really easy," said freshman No. 2 doubles player Stephanie Ren, "it showed how

Though the team found the loss disappointing, they left the courts without regrets.

the Sabadas, thereby receiving automatic entry into the CCS doubles tournament, which begins Nov. 24. ♦

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Team wraps up season with loss at CCS quarterfinals

By TrungVandinh

The girls' volleyball team fell to No. 1-seeded Sacred Heart Cathedral Prep on Nov. 15 with a score of 3-0, ending their CCS participation with a win and a loss. The Falcons beat Monterey High in an away match on Nov. 12.

"Going in, we knew [Sacred Heart] was going to be a hard team to beat," senior captain Sara Parden said.

Adding to their stress, the team was in a minor accident on the way to the game.

However, Sacred Heart Prep was also the highest seeded team in the tournament, so they were prepared for a struggle either way.

According to Parden, this was a great contrast to their first CCS match against Monterey High School, whose team the Falcons beat 3-0, leaving Parden and her

teammates feeling ecstatic.

"It was the best game we played as a team so after that game it was cool to see all our team come together and all the pieces came together," Parden said.

So, despite losing to Sacred Heart, she and her teammates are still proud of how the season went.

Parden said a lot of the team were motivated to win league this year so that they could put a banner with their year

on the championship board and were ecstatic when it happened.

Parden attributes their success not to talent but their growth as a team.

"It was a great feeling," she said. "As the season went on we all got closer and more familiar to each other's play styles. The younger players stepped up since everyone improved a lot over the years. Without them, our team would have been nothing." ♦

WINTER SPORTS PREVIEWS

BOYS' SOCCER

Falcons prepare to take field

By AnantRajeev

After a disappointing 2013 campaign, the boys' varsity soccer team is preparing for a comeback under new head coach Chris Stott.

This year, the team will be competing in the El Camino Division after dropping down from the upper De Anza division.

The Falcons had a losing season last year, in part because of several injuries that plagued the team. Opponents will include Cupertino, Lynbrook, Monta Vista and other schools.

Despite last season's shortcomings, returning players like senior Samuel Breck and senior Kushol Bhattacharjee are excited to showcase their ability, looking forward to helping newer players adapt to the environment of varsity.

Among other things, the team wants to rebuild after losing key players, including alumni defender Nikhil Goel and midfielder Will Guy.

"We pulled a lot of underclassmen last year up to varsity so I think this year

will be similar," Bhattacharjee said. "We [now] have players to fill in those gaps."

It is not just the players that will contribute to the team's success. As for the new coach, Stott brings extensive experience in the game with his previous semi-professional career in England, Australia and the United States.

In 2003, Stott was selected to represent English soccer giants Manchester United in a friendly tournament before coming to the United States to undertake a new job as head coach of several teams in De Anza Force Soccer Club in Cupertino.

This year, Stott is planning to undertake a new fitness program that includes having the team train in the weight room. He is hoping that an extra strength regimen will ensure that the players stay fit through the season.

How will the Falcons do? "With the incoming freshmen players from last year," Breck said, "I think we have a likely chance of making CCS and getting back into the De Anza league." ♦

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Players say they are taking 'no days off'

By ApoorvKwatra & TrevorLeung

With the boys' basketball season quickly approaching, players have already started rigorous training to prepare for the season.

Key players include senior point guard Michael Cole, junior shooting guard Joe Eschen, senior small forward Gino Caloiaro, senior power forward Kevin Lee and junior center Jatin Mohanty.

Before tryouts, which started on Nov. 3, they had been attending open gyms and weight lifting sessions four times a week to get in the best possible shape.

"I've been taking a lot practice shots, and I've been running," Cole said. "For open gyms, I'm trying to push the pace I normally work at and get in shape for the season."

Along with preparing physically for

the season, players are also preparing for the mental aspect of the sport. Veterans are faced with the task of guiding the younger players to make it easier for them.

Additionally, the return of former coach Trevor Naas after a year away has further boosted the team's confidence for the season.

"It's really good [to have Naas back]," Caloiaro said. "[He] has been around for a while and he knows what he's doing as a coach, and all the players respect him and believe in him."

Players think they have a good shot at winning a lot of games with talented scorers like Cole and four players over six foot who can score and rebound.

"We want a league championship and to make a really deep run in CCS," Caloiaro said. "I think we have the talent, and we can definitely [go far in CCS]. We [have] the team to make a run." ♦

GIRLS' SOCCER

Team ready for tough opponents

By FionaSequeira

In its third year with head coach Ben Maxwell, the girls' soccer team is rebuilding after the loss of key alumni midfielder Stephanie Ho and forward

Lindsay Webster.

"We had six seniors who moved on [and went to college] who played key roles in the team's success, so the squad will be young, and it's going to have to develop very quickly [in order for us to be able to win]," Maxwell said.

However, a few players are returning for the season who elected not to play last year, including junior center-back Kaitlyn Chen.

Although the girls have a tough season ahead of them, they hope to continue their success in reaching the playoffs.

Star players include junior goalie Isa Berardo, senior center-back Anisha Nagarajan and forward Amy Shepherd.

The girls' varsity team will be playing in the De Anza division with schools such as Los Altos, Los Gatos, Monta Vista and several other schools.

A coach for West Valley and De Anza Force in the past, Maxwell values a positive environment where the players challenge themselves.

"We demand the best from every one of our players," Maxwell said. ♦

"We demand the best from every one of our players." coach Ben Maxwell

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Rebuilding team tries luck in higher league

By JennyQian & EllenWu

After losing key players Dharini Ramaswamy, Trishika Shetty and Tivoli Sisco, the team, up for a challenge, has moved up to the highest division in the league, the De Anza Division.

"We're elevated to the De Anza division. We aim to be competitive in the [De Anza] division despite being the smallest school in the league and advance to CCS," Davey said.

Since they're in the highest league, the Falcons are aiming to work even harder during practices and to remain as competitive as they were last year despite losing key alumni.

To do so, the team has pulled up three underclassmen to varsity: Sophomores Aryana Goodarzi, Rachel Davey and Jenny Qian, who will be playing small forward.

Other strong players are seniors Samie Davey, Mikayla Davis and Sara Parden, who, according to Davey, will help carry the team to success.

"We don't have a lot of seniors [on the team], but they have a lot of great leadership," Davey said. "Because of it, we'll execute our plays well, and it's a high learning level when you have a lot of sophomores to."

Even though this year's team is younger, the Davey and the girls are sure that with the leadership from upperclassmen, the team will compete in every game.

"A big difference is that we won't have Dharini this year, so we will have to rebuild what we're doing," Davey said. "I think we are a much more balanced team, we can score inside and score outside. We're a good team, but we are just playing in a much better league." ♦

WRESTLING

Wrestling team looking forward to success in season with new talent and veterans

By RotemShaked

As most winter sports prepare for their respective seasons with several last weeks of peace, the boys on the wrestling team begin to prepare themselves mentally for the grueling eating and training regimen that will be enforced on them from the start of the season.

As the major returning members from

last season, seniors Christian Murabito, Jason Tsai, and Nate Ludwig among others are expected to again lead the team this year. The trouble rests, instead, in the numbers of underclassmen.

"We have a smaller team [seven members] than usual, but hopefully we'll get in some new recruits," said sophomore Alex Hunt. "It's looking a little bleak right now, but it's still the beginning of

the year so we should gather some more members soon."

This lack of wrestlers coupled with the loss of keystone wrestlers like alumns Graham Grant meant that the team as a whole will struggle to win meets, regardless of personal achievements.

"We'll probably lose almost every meet entirely by forfeits," Ludwig said. "We will be going against teams with 25

players, and we'll have six, [we'll] just lose by the number of forfeits we have."

However, Ludwig believes that as individuals, members of the team have a fighting chance to make it to CCS and beyond.

"Individually we have a pretty good chance," Ludwig said. "We had five CCS people last year, and we should have at least three this year." ♦

## &gt;&gt; snapshots



FALCON // ELLEN WU



TALISMAN // KARISHMA SHAH



FALCON // JADE BISHT

Jane Park (12) sells treats to students as part of a senior fundraiser on Nov. 12.

Aakash Thumaty (11) poses with his trumpet during a halt at a marching band rehearsal on Nov. 6.

Katie Sabel (9) and Blake Propach (12) rehearse for their audition for the student drama production "Cyrano De Bergerac" on Nov. 10.

The cross country boys warm up before their meet at Toro Park for CCS on Nov. 15.



FALCON // ELLEN WU

## buzzworthy &gt;&gt; Cheers' 'Dart Game' knocks down barriers

BY SummerSmith

Do not be concerned if you see a cheerleader suddenly fall to the ground as if she has been hit by a dart in the neck. She's falling in response to another cheerleader mimicking spitting a blow dart at her. They're just playing a game.

The Dart Game is something the girls on the cheer team started playing a couple years ago and is it has become an inside joke that all the cheerleaders regard fondly.

The Dart Game is a game in which one person has an imaginary dart. If any one cheerleader makes eye contact with the cheerleader who has the dart, they can be "shot" with it, and has to lay

down. The cheerleader who had the dart then loses it, and it can be "picked up" from the cheerleader laying down by someone else. The one who is shot has to lay down where she was shot and wait for the dart to be "removed" from her by another cheerleader, pretending to grab it out of her chest.

"I get anxious every time I make eye contact with someone on the cheer team because I am not sure whether they have the dart or not and whether or not I am going to get hit with it," junior Cayla Zelanis said.

The game is played for fun and provides an opportunity for the girls to bond as a team.

"It's just fun to shoot someone at a really prime moment so they have to drop

in front of everyone," said senior Brianna Roseberry.

The cheer team began playing the game two years ago, picking it up after attending cheer camp during the summer.

"We saw the UCLA camp staff having fun playing the dart game, and so when we got home, we adopted it and put our spin on it so that it would work for us," said Roseberry.

Although the game has provided abundant entertainment amongst the cheerleaders, it has caused panic among parents in the stands during football games a number of times.

"Sometimes parents turn around during the game and when they turn back around someone is on the floor, so they

get concerned," Moriarty, "but usually one of our parents will explain what is going on."



The team had to stop playing during football games because parents kept asking the girls if they were OK, said Zelanis.

Despite the restrictions to the game, the girls still find it a great way to bond as a team not only at practice, but also during the school day.

"Due to our lack of a coach, we really need to stay together and work as a team," Zelanis said. "Even though we have to be serious during practice, the dart game helps us take our mind off of all of the drama going on." ♦

## Sophomores survive close encounter with cops

## MISDEMEANOR CHARGES AVOIDED IN HOMECOMING ADVENTURE

uno dos tres  
kwatra

Apoorv Kwatra

"You wanna steal a shopping cart?"  
How could we say no?

The Saturday before Homecoming week, sophomores Eric Wang, Max Vo, Raymond McCarthy and I were deciding how to make a grand entrance for one of our dances in Homecoming.

Our ideas ranged from jumping off the roof or over the crowd to parachuting from the sky. But when the idea of riding in with a shopping cart was pitched, our hearts were set: We had to do it. (We fully intended to just borrow the cart, of course.)

The four of us set out to Safeway. We were rather nervous. Upon arrival, we deliberated over which cart to take. It took a while to grab the right-sized cart, but once we found it, and without any discussion, we ran away as fast as we could, the cart rolling in front of us.

Max sat in the car connected to the cart, Eric sat in the cart, and Raymond and I pushed it. The thrill of a heist had us feeling rebellious, blasting music and waving to passersby, almost practicing for the entrance of our dance.

Although we walked boastfully from Safeway to school, the fear of getting caught for this misdemeanor rose in our guts.

We couldn't help but imagine what would happen if our secret got out. We'd be on the FBI watch list, desperately hiding in rundown shacks, unable to get into college. Dodging cops left and right, sacrificing ourselves for one another — I would have gotten shot. Seriously.

After walking around for about 20 minutes, Max had an epiphany.

"Maybe we should ask for permission to take this," he said.

Raymond and I walked back to Safeway, leaving Max and Eric to guard the cart. I don't know how he did it, but Raymond miraculously persuaded the a Safeway manager named Carlos into letting us borrow the cart for a week. Shout-out to Carlos.

We ran back to Max and Eric, ecstatic that we had thought to ask. The four of us walked on happily knowing we were no longer outlaws.

It was as though our thinking made it so.

About 10 minutes away from school, a passing Prius pulled over, and a young Asian man stepped out and walked toward us, an evil glint in his eyes.

"Did you steal this shopping cart?" he asked.

We told him we had gotten permission. He didn't believe us. He smirked malevolently, took out his phone and made a call.

"Hello. My emergency? There are four dangerous teenagers with a stolen shopping cart."

A few minutes later, a police car appeared.

As the cop got out of his car, he immediately called for backup.

We started to panic, wondering how we would explain to our parents that we needed a ride home from jail.

Once the second officer arrived, they asked us about our situation. Raymond took the lead, explaining how we had actually gotten permission to take the cart and hadn't stolen it. The deputy called Safeway to check, but there was no answer. Luckily, he believed us.

Once the whistleblower realized we weren't getting in trouble, he scurried away, presumably searching for other teenagers to bust for whatever they were doing.

The cops took Raymond's information, saying they would contact him if anything suspicious came up. Of course, nothing did.

Only after reaching the school did we realize that if Max hadn't told us to get permission, we might have actually gotten in trouble.

Laughing about how close we were to getting in trouble, we stashed the cart away in the staff lounge until the Wednesday of Homecoming week, agreeing to return the cart to Safeway the following Saturday.

Once our performance on Wednesday came, we could tell from the cheers of the crowd that our near-arrest experience had been a good idea.

And then some kid jumped over some other kids, or something along those lines — I don't really know; I heard it was OK. ♦

## &gt;&gt; topten

WAYS TO ASK SOMEONE TO  
WINTER FORMAL

- 10 **Over chat.** Lol formal?? xD
- 9 **Ask a friend...** to ask a friend to ask a friend to ask her for you.
- 8 **Send a Yahoo Evite.** Or Myspace, whatever you're into.
- 7 **Have your mom ask her mom.** She's bound to say yes.
- 6 **Put "Formal" in permanent spray paint on her car.** The element of surprise will surely leave an everlasting impact on her ... car.
- 5 **Tell everyone that you're going together without asking her.** Does she have a choice?
- 4 **Denial.** Everytime a girl says no, pretend it was the wrong one until she says yes.
- 3 **Realize you're too good for her.** Say "I guess I can go with you" really loudly so everyone thinks she asks you.
- 2 **Make sure you have backup.** "If your friend Martha won't go to formal with me, can you?"
- 1 **Let poetry speak for you.** Roses are red, violets are blue, everyone else rejected me, so I'm stuck with you.

&gt;&gt; Anant Rajeev and Summer Smith