



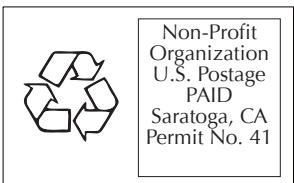
Drama tackles multiple shows.



Staff discusses school issues.



Girls' soccer beats Los Gatos.



THE saratoga falcon

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COURSES

NUMBERS DWINDLE IN FRENCH

BY Michelle Leung, Trevor Leung & Oksana Trifonova

Fifteen students. That is the size of the current French 1 class that greets French teacher Kim Bergkamp every day.

A combination of the lack of language options at the middle school level and competition from other electives have resulted in increasingly small French classes, endangering the program as a whole.

"The biggest problem we have right now is that they are no longer offering [French classes] at Redwood [Middle School]," Bergkamp said, "so that's what we're up against, where kids want to come here, and start in a level two [in French]."

Without the head start that students get from beginning French classes in middle school, most can no longer reach French 5 without having some kind of background in French.

Several classes in the French program already hover dangerously near being cut. According to assistant principal Brian Safine, the administration generally opens classes depending on how many people sign up for the class.

"We will be able to serve students who want to take French provided there's

>> CLASS on pg. 3

Sophomores Neythra Srinivasan and Kirthana Ramesh race each other at an inflatable game during the school carnival on Jan. 23.

Igniting change
SPEAK UP FOR CHANGE WEEK INSPIRES STUDENTS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

BY Neehar Thumaty & Oksana Trifonova

Students eagerly lined up to play games ranging from traditional carnival games to inflatable ones. On Jan. 23, the Quad was filled with the excitement of students playing ring toss and gladiator games among others as they enjoyed various kinds of food from three food trucks in the company of friends.

Intended to help students relax and celebrate a successful week

>> CARNIVAL on pg. 4

FALCON // LAUREN LOUIE

STAFF

Nguyen takes leave for second semester

BY Jenny Qian & Kelly Xiao

Students who have had AP Language and Composition and English 10 teacher Ken Nguyen know him to be humorous, witty and skilled at teaching. So, it came as a shock when they learned he wouldn't be around to complete the year.

Nguyen has taken a one-semester leave of absence to return to his hometown of Seattle and help his mother care for his father, who has since passed away from lung cancer. In the meantime, his classes are being taught by substitute Deborah Caterina.

To demonstrate their appreciation for him, Nguyen's AP Language students held a farewell party the week before first-semester



Nguyen

finals during a Wednesday tutorial.

After decorating the classroom and preparing food for the occasion, Nguyen's seniors presented him with their main gift, which senior Linus Lu described as "a small but affectionate booklet filled with student-signed messages and a collection of classroom highlights from that semester and years past."

The farewell party might be considered only a small reflection of Nguyen's reputation as a talented and caring a teacher who has been at the school for seven years.

"I always liked his sense of humor, the way he made the class interesting," Lu said. "It never hurt that he

>> NGUYEN on pg. 6

FALCON FOCUS: SOLOMON BAILEY

Adopted freshman finds niche at SHS

BY Rachel Hull & Michelle Leung

Sept. 24, 2011. Four years later, freshman Solomon Bailey can still remember the exact date he came to America — and he will likely never forget it.

Solomon hails from Gonder, Ethiopia. After his parents passed away when he was 4, he was placed in the care of his aunt, and when she too passed away five or six years later, he ended up in an Ethiopian orphanage.

The orphanage was fairly small and housed more than 100 children. Because it was part of an apartment building, the children were not allowed to play for fear that they would disturb tenants with their noise.

Instead, they mostly watched TV and movies, which Solomon said sometimes made him unhappy

because he wanted to be outside playing soccer.

He said the orphanage was "not really strict," but certain restrictions conflicted with his individual needs.

For example, he and all the other children were required to sleep for four hours after lunch, which posed a problem for Solomon, who often has trouble sleeping.

"We'd get in trouble if we don't sleep," he said. "We can't get dinner or something if we don't sleep. We have to go to sleep."

One year into his time at the orphanage, he was adopted. His adoptive parents found him through Adoption Associates, Inc. (AAI), a Michigan-based organization that facilitates both domestic and international adoptions.

Four years ago, Solomon

>> BAILEY on pg. 8

January 30, 2015

**Math club prepares for competition season**

For members of the math club, the past months have been quite relaxed, scattered with minor contests.

But coming up next month for the mathletes are the most important series of math competitions of the year: the American Mathematics Competitions (AMC) 10 and 12. The AMC 10 and 12 A will be held at the school on Feb. 3, and the B will be held on Feb. 25.

During their weekly meetings, members of the club have practiced problems from past years' released contests to prepare for the tests.

"The practice AMCs really help with the real thing," math club president senior Kevin Chiang said. "Hopefully they'll be effective in getting students a question or two more correct."

In past years, club members have consistently done well in the contests. Last year, 28 members qualified for the American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME), which is achieved by scoring at least 120 points on the AMC 10 or 100 on the AMC 12, out of 150 possible.

Chiang hopes the team will continue the successful streak the club has achieved in the past.

"We want every student who has taken the test before to show improvement," Chiang said. "We're hoping a good majority of students can qualify for the AIME."

— Dorrie Tang

More students enter National History Day

Thirty-one projects will compete at the school level of the 2015 National History Day competition, themed Leadership and Legacy. Compared to just 18 projects entered last year, the number of projects this year has doubled.

History Day competitors spend hours conducting research before creating a website that synthesizes all the information they have gathered into a cohesive project. Students can compete as an individual or as a group, in the website, exhibit, paper and documentary categories.

Three projects will advance from each category to compete at the county level. Those that advance past the county level will compete at the state and then the national level.

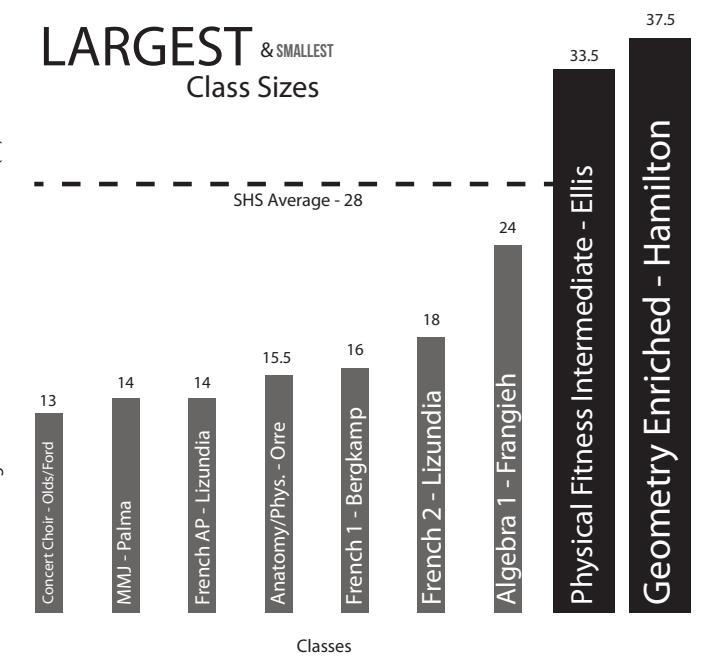
History Day coordinator and school librarian Kevin Heyman said that the process of National History Day is more important than the result.

"I'm always hopeful that we will do well, but the most important part of History Day is for students to develop a real appreciation for how important studying history is," Heyman said.

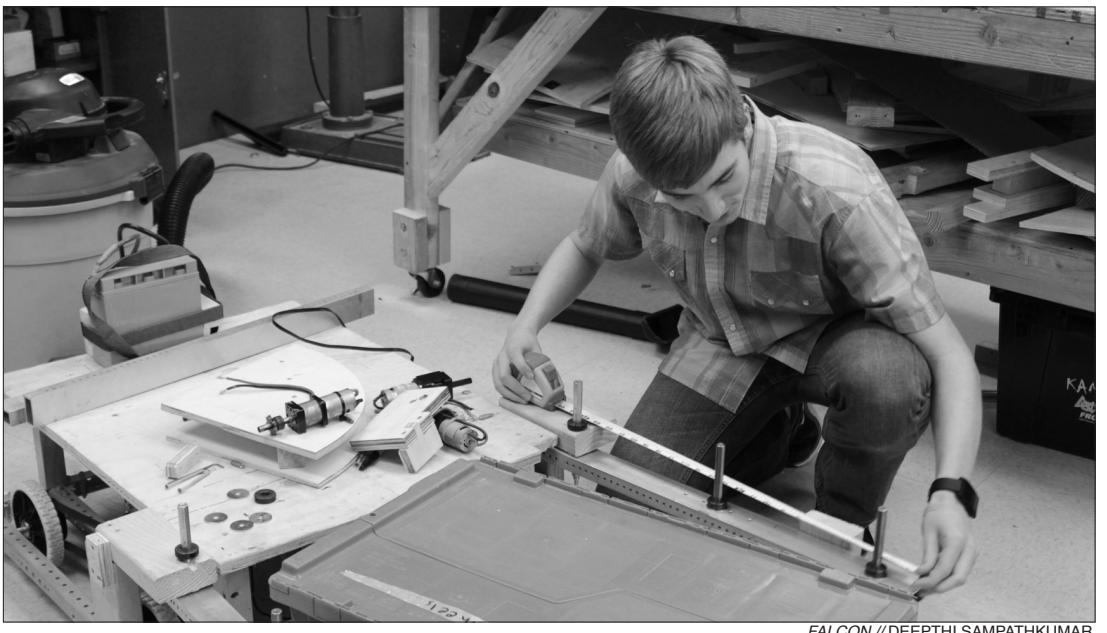
— Michelle Leung

>> corrections

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>> falconfigures

— Rotem Shaked

>> picturethis

A PEEK INTO M-SET >> Sophomore Kyle France measures parts of this year's partially done prototype.

ACTIVITIES**Robotics begins build season**

BY Michelle Leung
& Nupur Maheshwari

Day One of the M-SET build season began on Jan. 3, when this year's challenge was revealed to teams all over the country: Build a robot that can stack totes, or little boxes, and recycling bins on top of one another for varying points.

The major changes in the competition this year are a lack of size limit for the robot and no interaction between the two alliances that play against each other. Usually, challenges involve interactive activities like shooting baskets or tossing discs.

Six weeks of the M-SET build season will be followed by six weeks of competitions. M-SET is divided into seven sections — hardware, software, electrical, safety, marketing, administration and outreach — each led by a different leader. The president, junior Naveed Riazat, oversees the sections.

Administrative and safety officer sophomore Samay Garg describes the M-SET team as tight-knit — mostly because of the 40-hour weeks they have sometimes spent together working on the robot.

The competitions are round-robin style, with around 50 teams competing in each. The highest-seeded teams make it to elimination playoffs, and the overall winner makes it to the world championships. Their first competition is March 5.

M-SET is about halfway

through its build season.

The process of building a robot follows a formula: Week 1 is for brainstorming, Week 2 for choosing designs and making a complete computer model of the robot, Week 3 for creating the various parts of the robot and Week 4 for running the code successfully and assembling the robot using materials like wood and aluminum.

Junior Elizabeth Li, who is working as head of electronics for the team, said that the challenge this year is less dramatic than last year's, because "last year there were things flying around and things were shooting at each other and it was exciting."

Safine said that M-SET is divided into seven sections — hardware, software, electrical, safety, marketing, administration and outreach — each led by a different leader. The president, junior Naveed Riazat, oversees the sections.

While we may lack experience, the amount of enthusiasm and dedication the team has is just beyond belief," Riazat said, "and even if you don't have a certain amount of skill, just spending that amount of time in the room and that much passion for robotics basically guarantees that you'll do something good." ◆

CLUBS**JSA gets head start on politics**

BY Summer Smith

The school's Junior State of America (JSA) club, which seeks to educate teens about politics and government, is making a comeback after years of inactivity.

Ever since the 26th Amendment in 1971, the legal voting age has been 18. Despite the lower age requirements, most people are unaware of how the system works or what they believe in.

"I am passionate about history and politics, and these two subjects find a home in JSA, where we openly debate a large variety of topics," co-president junior Farbod Moghadam said.

These conventions also offer awards to the clubs which have been most effective in carrying out their missions, such as raising the most money or reaching the widest audience.

In October, JSA organized a Q&A session with the Saratoga City Council candidates.

January 30, 2015

EXTRACURRICULARS**Cheerleader performs in London Day Parade**

BY Summer Smith

(UCA) cheer camp that the cheer team attends every August holds All-American tryouts. These tryouts are for any high school cheerleaders interested in traveling to London for a week during winter break to perform at the London New Year's Day Parade. Each school is allowed to have six cheerleaders try out of all of their seniors.

This past summer, six of Saratoga's seniors tried out; only Bellamy, Uma Kumar and Megan Marshall were accepted.

Due to prior commitments, Bellamy was the only one able to travel to London.

"I was really excited and relieved [when I found out I made it] because I thought I had messed up and wouldn't make it," said Marshall. "It was a really

great feeling."

The tryout consists of performing a dance and cheer learned two days prior. Cheerleaders also have to show off two of their best jumps. The UCA staff judges and decides who makes it, making the announcement the following day.

The girls are required to pay for their own flights, uniforms and hotel rooms in London, so Bellamy elected to give up her end-of-senior-year trip in order to attend the event.

Around 1,200 American cheerleaders including Bellamy went to London as part of the group. The girls had already learned and drilled the dance they would be performing in the parade prior to flying to London.

"A lot of the girls were there by themselves, like my roommate, who I became really good friends with," Bellamy said. "Everyone was really friendly; I didn't have a hard time making friends at all."

Outside of having one practice to cement formations and ripples, the girls spent their time in London sightseeing. They visited tourist attractions such as Big Ben, The London Eye and Buckingham Palace.

"I liked all the sightseeing, but actually being in the parade was a really different experience," said Bellamy. "I think everyone on the cheer team should try out, and if they make it, they should go. It was something I would never be able to experience otherwise." ◆



Senior Emily Lowdermilk and French teacher Laura Lizundia listen during a Socratic seminar that took place in a French class on Jan. 22.

CLASS >>

continued from pg. 1

enough to form full classes," Safine said. "So we always look for classes that are in the low 20s to run. We would like to see a number of 20s, mid-20s in order to have continuity in the program."

Sophomore Brite Wang, one of the last students to take French at Redwood, said that taking French early is key in his ability to learn the language.

Wang said that he took French because it allows to "distance [himself] from social and academic pressure," since not many other students know what the class is like.

Wang said that contrary to the popular belief that French is becoming an obsolete language similar to Latin, it does have many useful applications.

He'll be able to "communicate with locals in Canada, France and some 30 other countries."

For freshman George Yoshinaga, the elimination of middle school French classes has been a loss.

"They have to figure out 'What am I going to do, advanced orchestra or French, am I going to do journalism, which I really love, or Spanish?'" said Bergkamp. "And that's where they had to make decisions. In the past, they didn't have to

make those decisions."

On the one hand, the low numbers in the five French classes are a bad omen for the future of the French program. On the other hand, Bergkamp does see the benefit of smaller classes, particularly for language courses.

"Having a smaller class means that they all get to participate, ask their questions, [and there is] more time to review," Bergkamp said.

Although French has been particularly hard hit by the elimination of the beginning Redwood class, all language programs have been affected by the huge variety of electives at the school.

Bergkamp said many students choose to take another elective, such as journalism or orchestra, at the expense of a language course.

He felt confident about continuing to take French in high school and laments the fact that students in the future will no longer get the same exposure to French in middle school as he did.

"They have to figure out 'What am I going to do, advanced orchestra or French, am I going to do journalism, which I really love, or Spanish?'" said Bergkamp. "And that's where they had to make decisions. In the past, they didn't have to

make those decisions."

Green about possibly restarting a class. Lizundia said she hopes the French program remains at the high school despite enrollment difficulties.

"I'm hoping that it will just continue as it has been," Lizundia said. "We'll have five levels, as we've always had, and we've been doing that forever."

Safine said that the administration will wait to make decisions for next year until after students sign up for courses in February.

Bergkamp said that the French program hopes to talk to Redwood principal Kelly

EDUCATION**Varied class sizes provide diverse learning opportunities**

BY Melissa Magner
& Oksana Trifonova

he can spend more time helping one student rather than switching from student to student.

With about 1,350 students on its campus, Saratoga High has an average class size of about 28. And although 28 is lower than the state public school average class size of 30, some classes vary significantly from the mean.

"With more students, there are different personalities, backgrounds and learning abilities," Orre said. "In smaller classes it is harder to bring the perspective of those who aren't there."

For science classes specifically, Orre said that with too small of a class, it can feel like a lot of time and money spent disproportionately on few students.

"However, if you look at the depth of learning that can come from labs [with smaller classes], it's definitely a worthwhile investment," Orre said.

"I think the best thing about smaller classes is that [the students] get to know each other better," Orre said. "In class, students interact with each other more and ease the stress of a larger class."

"There's less stress in smaller classes because it's easier to get closer to people," Orre said. "If you get an answer wrong or are having trouble with

something, you're so close with your classmates that it isn't as embarrassing."

French 2 and French Language AP teacher Laura Lizundia also has smaller than average classes, with a 14-student third-period French Language AP class and an 18-student French 2 class.

"Last year French 4 there were a number of seniors, so because of that we lost those seniors to graduation," Lizundia said.

Because of this drop, Lizundia thinks her classes are more efficient. In a language especially, according to Lizundia, smaller class sizes allow for each student to have plenty of time to speak.

"Speaking is key in learning a language," Lizundia said. "And so in smaller class sizes, it's easier to interact with the teacher one on one and that makes it easier to learn."

But small classes also offer their fair share of problems. Financially, smaller classes, especially electives, run the risk of being cut, and classes of around 30 stand a far better chance of being offered than classes with lower numbers.

Still, that doesn't mean that large classes are easy to have either.

Differing greatly in number from the

smaller class sizes, the largest academic class on campus is math teacher Kristen Hamilton's fourth-period Geometry Enriched class, with 34 students.

"I think that the hardest part about teaching a large class is crowd control," Hamilton said. "In a large class, there's more talking and with more students it's harder to maintain quietness. It's easier to have control of a smaller class."

Freshman Alex Yu, who is in the 34-person class, also thinks that smaller classes are easier for not only the students, but the teacher.

"I think that in larger classes, it's harder to not only divide up time but to control the classroom setting," Yu said. "Personally, I don't mind a large class, but I think for most students and teachers, smaller ones are more efficient."

Larger and smaller classes differ more than in just number: teaching changes according to the number of students.

"I think both class sizes have their benefits," Hamilton said. "Large classes allow diversity, and small classes allow students to get more teacher attention and help if they need it. I think it comes down to what kind of student a person is and how they learn." ◆

>> corrections

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— Rotem Shaked

January 30, 2015

CARNIVAL >>

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in a fun and different way.

"We [had] a variety of activities for all students," Leadership adviser Rebecca Marshburn said. "The carnival [was meant to] help students relieve some of that stress they have to go through here and school and home on a daily basis in a really fun kind of way."

The cafeteria was open for the entire

lunch, and three food trucks sold churros and burritos along with vegetarian and other food options.

The administration agreed to modify the Friday schedule with one-hour periods to create more time.

For the Leadership class, student participation was especially important.

"We wanted to make sure everyone could be on campus for [the events on Friday], so we moved sixth [period] since a lot of people have it as their free period," junior Luke Salin said. "We also didn't want periods ending the day before

cause we figured it would be best to get learning out of the way and just enjoy the rest of the day."

While Speak Up for Change week was about spreading kindness, its sub-theme Ignite Your Spark stressed the importance of pursuing one's passions.

"Do what you love and love what you do" was written on countless posters around school as a way to inspire students to follow their dreams.

The carnival was a pilot project by assistant principal Kerry Mohnike and the Leadership crew to have something other

than just assemblies to mark the week.

In the future, there will be different events at the end of each Speak Up for Change week, since the carnival was a big success in helping the students relax.

"[It was] a nice stress-free afternoon which was good because I'm taking the SAT tomorrow," junior Bita Naimi said.

The Leadership class has yet to decide the plans for next year, as they have been primarily focused on this year's.

"If we have exactly the same stuff every year, it loses that spark," Marshburn said. ♦

Ignite Your Spark

SPEAK UP FOR CHANGE: JAN. 20-23



FALCON // DEEPTHI SAMPATHKUMAR



ABOVE: A wish is granted as the school's maintenance workers receive gift cards to restaurants to show the students' appreciation.

LEFT: Seniors Neel Kattumadam and Jillian Bellamy introduce speaker Keith Hawkins and help encourage people to "ignite their spark" during the Jan. 20 assembly.

Speakers motivate students with inspirational messages

by DevinZhao

After a long three-day weekend, students filed into the Large Gym on Jan. 20, half-asleep and exhausted.

Much to their surprise, they were presented with the dignified, exciting motivational speaker Keith Hawkins, who interlaced humor with stories about his children and a never-emptying cup to teach them about enjoying the lives they currently have and helping those who are less fortunate.

His speech was engaging, bringing my friends and I to actually listen to what he had to say, especially with his funny stories and jokes," Lee said. "Overall, the way he delivered the message was motivational while not containing a boring atmosphere, and I think that's what it takes to be one of the best speakers in the world."

The Speak Up for Change week, themed "Ignite Your Spark," took place between Jan. 20-23. Wednesday and Thursday kept the normal block schedule, while Tuesday and Friday had special schedules to accommodate the activities held those days.

The events in the week were organized by members of the Leadership class. According to junior Luke Salin, Leadership met Hawkins at a previous National Leadership Conference in Disneyland.

"We really liked his message and working with him that day," Salin said. "So [assistant

ABOVE: A group of students battle with foam at the carnival on Jan. 23.



BELOW: Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez had students create handprints on colored paper with five things that made them happy.



FALCON // DEEPTHI SAMPATHKUMAR

ASB grants wishes

BY MilesAlbert
& DeepthiSampathkumar

principal Kerryl Mohnike went ahead and booked him for Speak Up for Change."

Students generally had a positive response to the first assembly. Senior John Lee believed that Hawkins was a huge improvement over previous speakers with his warm personality and his ability to appeal to students.

"His speech was engaging, bringing my friends and I to actually listen to what he had to say, especially with his funny stories and jokes," Lee said. "Overall, the way he delivered the message was motivational while not containing a boring atmosphere, and I think that's what it takes to be one of the best speakers in the world."

The Friday assembly featured alumni David Mandell and Brandon Oliveri, who spoke about combating their personal challenges and encouraged students to pursue the careers they like. Seniors Shreyes Balebal and Carmine Drahon also shared their personal stories of troubles they've faced and advised students to speak up when in trouble.

"The speakers were all really inspiring and interesting," said junior Akash Thumay. "I never knew about what some of these people went through, and now I want to be more

aware about what everyone goes through."

Although some of the content for the Speak Up for Change week remained largely the same as previous year, Salin said Leadership tried new things to excite students and drive home the "Ignite Your Spark" theme.

As part of the week, the Leadership class asked students and staff what wishes they would like to be granted. The practice is a continuation of last year's wish-granting initiative, led by then-senior Jennie Werner. Last year, several wishes were granted during the assembly, ranging from a story in the yearbook about senior Andy Chen to playing a video from sophomore Amanda Meserve's father, a serviceman stationed in Afghanistan. This year, the initiative was led by junior Luke Salin.

Though it received dozens of requests, Leadership was able to grant 25 wishes, ranging from larger ones like those from senior Blake Propach and Andrew York, who wished to anchor SHS TV, to small wishes like giving gummy bears and flowers to junior Nandita Mohan. In Mohan's case, fellow student wished for her to receive her gifts.

"I thought [Hawkins] did a really good job [and] was a huge improvement from [the speaker] last year," Salin said. "Students and staff are starting to like [the event] more and more. It's a nice break in the year, and it's pretty gratifying to be done and know [the event] went well." ♦

anything else," Mohan said.

At last Friday's assembly, more wishes were granted. Senior Jessica Uong received a video message from 2014 alumnus Jason Li asking her to prom in the spring, and senior Christina Crolla received the chance to be principal for the day.

Maintenance workers were given gift cards to various restaurants, and students were awarded a weekend of no homework on the Friday before Spring Fling week. Senior Randy Tsai also asked for a stress-free day with his mother. They received two tickets to the San Francisco Symphony.

"I was really surprised, because all I wished for was a dinner with her," Tsai said. "But they really surprised me and my mom with the concert tickets. San Francisco symphony is one of the best symphonies in the U.S., so it'll be amazing for us to be able to be right next to them as they play."

The Leadership team plans to continue to try to make even more wishes come true as the year goes on.

"We just tried to choose reasonable wishes — ones that were doable," Salin said. "As our theme this year is 'Ignite Your Spark,' we want students to learn to find something that they're passionate in and once again, learn to find the balance between school and fun." ♦

January 30, 2015

FALCON FOCUS: NEESHA MALIK

Senior reflects on year spent living in Pakistan

by MelissaMagner
& NupurMaheshwari

It was a larger building, with gates built high for security. Walls surrounding the school corralled the students into the limited space. Sets of cars lined the parking lots, with guards escorting certain students into the closed-off complex.

This was the school senior Neesha Malik attended for a year in Karachi, Pakistan: Karachi American School (KAS).

Malik, who spent her junior year in Karachi, went to Saudi Arabia to visit her father, who was working there at the time. She intended to move to Saudi Arabia, but never knew that she would end up living in Pakistan for a year.

Within the next couple of days, a chain of events unfolded so quickly that Malik found herself unprepared for what lay ahead of her.

"My mom and dad suggested that I check out an American School in Pakistan, and to take the entrance exam just to see if I could get in," Malik said. "I decided to do so, but after I finished the exam, my mom and dad told me that I could choose to enroll in the school, or go back to Saudi Arabia for a year."

The school in Saudi Arabia was already making it hard for Malik to get in, and it was until she was accepted into KAS and her family had paid the nonrefundable entrance fee that her father revealed that he had completed his work in Saudi Arabia and would be returning to California. Malik was stuck.

"I don't know if it was originally intended for me to stay in Pakistan, but it was the way that things worked out, and what my parents needed to do," Malik said. "My mom was with me, but I was still confused, and it all happened so fast."

Although she was living with her mom and relatives, she wished she could go back to California, and began to ache for the feel of comfort. The unfamiliarity she felt in a country that she could not bring herself to call home made Malik appreciate the United States so much more.

Peers and school

Perhaps the hardest adjustment for Malik was the transition to KAS. She found that she did not truly fit with the students and encountered stereotypical "mean girls" at the new school. She noticed this during the first couple months, when she listened in on others' conversations.

Maintenance workers were given gift cards to various restaurants, and students were awarded a weekend of no homework on the Friday before Spring Fling week. Senior Randy Tsai also asked for a stress-free day with his mother. They received two tickets to the San Francisco Symphony.

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the part of Pakistan Malik lived in was Urdu. For the first few weeks, Malik, who knows Urdu well, pretended she didn't speak the language in order to spend time listening to other students.

During one incident, a classmate criticized her for being an American.

"My temper got the better of me, and I stood and told her, 'You don't know anything about me,' in perfect Urdu," Malik said. "She, and all of the other students, were definitely surprised, it was like a scene from a movie."

Even after the incident, Malik continued experiencing cruelty. From subtle animosity to outright hostility, she began to feel somewhat isolated. She recalls the boys in her grade telling her to go back where she came from to her face.

"Some days I would just wake up frustrated and unhappy and have a really hard time going to school," Malik said. "I just had this constant feeling of isolation when I realized that most of these people were not going to be my genuine friends. I could just tell that I would never be truly welcome."

Malik quickly began to miss Saratoga High. Compared to Pakistan, where there were no rallies, football games or Homecoming dances, the Falcon experience seemed more appealing than ever to her.

"It's weird, the simple things that you start to miss," Malik said. "Other than the environment of [Saratoga], I missed my washing machine, Starbucks, In-N-Out, going for a walk, even the milk here. I know it's cliché, but you really don't know what you're missing until it's gone."

Living in Pakistan

During the year that Malik lived there, she saw many differences.

In Karachi, a city of around 9 million, beggars often crowd the streets.

"It's really sad," Malik said. "Some of the beggars even carry around babies for sympathy so that they can get more money or sell more things."

Malik later learned that some beggars would use drugs to sedate the infants so they would look as if they were sleeping. They hoped this would play on the sympathy of wealthier people.

Danger was also a reality. Although it never happened to her personally, Malik's aunts had been held at gunpoint and robbed many times. The robberies were rarely deadly, but always frightening, she said. As a foreigner, she had to be especially careful. Whenever she went to markets she would cover herself

up as to not draw attention. She also had to be careful about what she said and who she talked to.

"It worked in my favor that I look like the people in Pakistan, but I have an accent and I sound American when I speak," Malik said. "My parents were very cautious to make sure people outside of Karachi didn't know I was foreign."

She said Karachi isn't as dangerous as many other parts of Pakistan, but she still tried to be safe.

"A lot of the kids had family guards who escorted them places," Malik said.

"That's how they got to school and got home. Even so, when I went home, I

would always text my mom and she

would come to the front of the house

and walk me back inside."

The school that Malik attended held some of the country's wealthiest students, whose families were in the top 1 percent financially. For Malik, the stratified contrast between the poor and the rich in Pakistan was almost surreal. A number of students at her school were escorted to school in guarded cars to prevent them from being kidnapped or murdered.

Kidnapping are frequent in Pakistan, and I even remember hearing kids talk about them as if it were normal," Malik said.

On top of being escorted to school every morning, the students also lived lavish lifestyles, dressing in designer clothing and expensive brands.

Rich families living in such a poor country was something that Malik wasn't familiar with, but in that top 1 percent, it was a normal way of life.

Malik felt out of place among the cul-

turally different students. They saw her as "American."

"They have very big ideas of what American students, girls specifically, should be like," Malik said. "I don't quite know exactly how they expected me to act, but after the first few months, people grew distant from me."

Malik said that home life was also different, mainly in the way that her extended family treated their maids and servants. Servants in Pakistan, who were hired by wealthier families, helped out with everyday chores and even made meals for families.

The disrespect shown toward the servants, however, shocked Malik. Malik noticed that her extended family didn't see actions that Americans would normally shun as harsh or offensive.

In one instance, when Malik's aunt snapped at a servant to bring her tea, Malik was upset. When she confronted her aunt, her aunt was bewildered.

"The whole 'respect your elders' thing is a big deal there, so the fact that I called my mom's older sister out for her actions was not something she was expecting," she said. "I was forgiven, but I was also not in the wrong when it came to why I confronted her."

Reflections on her experience

After arriving back in America for her senior year, Malik is happier than ever in her home town.

"It's different to visit a country instead of living in it," Malik said. "I realized that after spending a year in Pakistan. Living somewhere else, even if only for a year, entails that you have a responsibility; home isn't always where the heart is." ♦

ally, I helped organize practice rounds for competitors so they could get some experience debating the topic before the tournament."

"The sheer

size of the

tournament

attracted

speakers

and debaters

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"My goal coming in was

FIELD TRIP

Biology students embark on Catalina excursion

by Becky Hoag
& Devin Zhao

The night sky filled with stars as the sun set over the horizon. Animals on Catalina Island were preparing to sleep, but for 26 marine biology and AP Biology students, it was time to go snorkel for military testing in World War II.

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One of the highlights of the trip was when senior Jordan Vogel tried to take a picture of the bison with his GoPro camera and realized that bison accelerate quickly when charging.

"I wasn't thinking much past making sure I don't get trampled," Vogel said. "When I got closer to it, I just started marveling how close I was to such a big creature. I guess he thought I was too close."

Junior Michael Fukuda was excited to go snorkeling for the first time.

"I enjoyed seeing all of the fish in their natural habitat because before I

had only seen them in tanks or in pictures," Fukuda said.

They received instruction on how to put on the wetsuits and then headed out in the water for a beginning snorkel.

For nighttime snorkeling, they were equipped with flashlights, but they did not need them for the main attraction: bioluminescent phytoplankton.

Students spent most of their time for the rest of the trip at the research facility learning about fish, sharks, algae, plankton, oceanography and invertebrates.

"I thought that the marine labs were very engaging and interesting," said senior Bianca Oliveri. "I really liked how they wouldn't just lecture, but we would always get to have hands-on experiments and experiences with the organisms we learned about."

Fukuda also enjoyed the labs.

"I thought the classes were taught in a very interactive way," Fukuda said. "Before, I knew literally next to nothing about the marine wildlife here, but now I can pull up random facts without even

thinking about it."

In addition, students engaged in team-building activities and entertainment, such as struggling to balance on a giant wooden board, scaling a two-story rock climbing wall and walking on metal wires in pairs.

On the second night, they enjoyed an astronomy hike under the stars where they learned stories about the constellations, then went back to lounge at a campfire and roast marshmallows by the shore.

Vogel said he would recommend the trip to anyone who likes the ocean or wants to have an adventure.

"It's a great experience that doesn't really come along that often," Vogel said. "When something like that does get offered, you've got to seize those opportunities and get out of the 'Saratoga bubble.'"

Oliveri said the trip opened her eyes to human influence on the environment.

"It was short, but in just those few days you have the most beautiful and impactful adventure," Oliveri said. "You really realize how much of an impact we have on the ecosystem and environment and it inspires you to change your habits and make a difference." ♦

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The students took a trip to Catalina Island from Jan. 16-18. Accompanying them were AP Biology teacher Cheryl Lenz, marine biology teacher Jill McCrystal, earth science teacher Lisa Cochrane and principal Paul Robinson.

During those three days, students stayed at Catalina Island Marine Institute (CIMI) at Toyon Bay, engaging in many different activities led by camp counselors.

Senior Sydney Torrens recalled her first experience on the island, where she asked a counselor about the presence of the island's unique Pacific bison.

"I asked the camp counselor if there were really any Pacific bison on the island because [my friends and I] had looked that up on Wikipedia," Torrens said. "He pointed to the side and said 'Look' and I looked. And there was this big old bison in the middle of the quad."

>> togatalks

What was the best part of the trip for you?



"My favorite part was the night snorkeling and seeing the bioluminescent organisms."

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"The sunrise hike. We sat at the top of this hill and the sun was coming up. It was really peaceful."

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EVENTS

School prepares for biennial Career Day in March

by Nupur Maheshwari
& Dorrie Tang

The school's biennial Career Day event will be held on March 23, providing students with a chance to learn about more than 70 different careers. The event is mandatory for all students.

Instead of a normal Monday schedule, class periods will be shortened and the day will be rearranged to include three 40-minute sessions of presentations between classes.

Students will attend their first two periods and the three speaker sessions before lunch, then have the rest of their classes after lunch.

According to guidance secretary Bonnie Sheikh, the main coordinator for the event, Career Day is "a great opportunity for kids to see what life could be beyond high school [and] college and to get first-hand accounts from the professionals in their particular areas — not [only] what they do, but also how they got [to where they are]."

Planning the event is a year-long process that starts at the beginning of the school year in August or September, said Sheikh. She gets help from a committee

made up of parent volunteers, mainly from the College and Career Center (CCC). Together, they look through the list of speakers from previous years and contact each to see if they are willing to come back.

For speakers who are unable to come back, Sheikh and her committee have to find other speakers for the spot.

Sheikh also has the help of PTSO volunteers, who provide the breakfast for speakers; as well as additional volunteers, who help to meet the speakers and take them to the classrooms.

On the students' side, Sheikh sends out a survey on Naviance asking for students' top three choices in careers to determine how much interest there is in each field.

"Getting all the kids to fill out the sur-

vey is probably my most difficult thing," Sheikh said. "I have to get them to fill out the survey because then I take all the information from Naviance and have to feed it into Aeries and schedule every kid, like running a little subschedule for one day for each kid."

Sheikh assigns students who fail to fill out the survey on time to topics that seem to be popular every year.

"I can't 100 percent guarantee that the scheduling will work out for all the kids, so if I have some conflict, I try to put them in what I see as an associated or close topic," Sheikh said.

Fields that more than 100 students have signed up for include: chef, biologist, computer scientist, FBI agent, psychologist, software developer and video game designer.

For topics for which less than 15 students have signed up, Sheikh believes "it's not worth the time of the speaker" and assigns the students to a related field.

New topics are added to Career Day if there is enough interest and a speaker is willing to present on the topic.

This year's Career Day will be the first to offer presentations about social media; a speaker from LinkedIn will talk about getting a career and searching for jobs using the social media site. Sheikh hopes that by hearing the speakers, students will see beyond their life in high school.

"It seems long and far for [students], but there is a big broad world out there, and there might be opportunities or things that [they] never thought of before," Sheikh said. "[It is rewarding if] someone can be sparked to find something they never thought about but it really strikes them."

She also hopes that the kids learn from hearing the personal stories of the speakers that "where you want to go and what you plan to do might not happen in life, [because] life is not always perfectly planned out." ♦

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NGUYEN >>

continued from pg. 1

was also, to me, immensely intelligent and a great writer, which made his high expectations and probing questions all the more stimulating."

In his absence, Caterina will fill in for all of Nguyen's classes. She is a graduate of UCLA and has been a lecturer at

San Jose State University, teaching writing to engineering students.

Many of Nguyen's students, having formed a strong attachment to Nguyen, are finding the adjustment difficult, but are open to experiencing a different teaching style.

"Ms. Caterina is trying her hardest in adjusting to this new job and has good intentions," said sophomore Emma Kovac. "We aren't used to her teaching style, but I'm sure we can all adapt." ♦

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ORGANIZATIONS

Indian Cultural Awareness Club prepares for 14th Bombay in the Bay performance

BY JadeBisht
& MayaPrasad

Since fall of last semester, Indian Cultural Awareness Club members have been in non-stop action as they prepare for Bombay in the Bay, which will take place in the McAfee Center on Feb. 13 and 14.

Among the array of performances are grade-level dances; two Indian-style dances, including classical and bhangra; an all-girls senior dance; an all-boys senior dance; and a performance from the school's competitive Indian fusion dance team, Toga Tamasha. The all-boys and all-girls senior dances are comprised of a select group of students who have participated in Bombay in the Bay for all four years.

Club officers are focused on finalizing each performance.

MOCK TRIAL

Falcons try to perfect roles before competition

BY CassandraKing

Approximately 400 students, all dressed in business attire, milled around the entrance to the Santa Clara County Office of Education. Some nervously paced back and forth, mumbling to themselves, while others confidently reviewed strategies with their team.

Twenty teams from schools around the Santa Clara County attended the Santa Clara County Mock Trial Invitational on Jan. 17. The invitational was practice for the more competitive Mock Trial tournaments in February.

In this year's case, the defendant, Evan Shem, is accused of stealing the painting "Treason" from his previous professor and replacing it with his own imitation of it. Complications grow as

two art experts voice contradicting ideas about which painting belongs to whom.

Each school competed against two schools from outside their county. The SHS team, which has 15 members, went up against Heritage High School and Northgate High School. The defense team beat Northgate High School's prosecution while the prosecution team failed in proving the defendant guilty against Heritage High School's defense.

"I think that our team did OK, but there's definitely room to improve," said freshman Katherine Zhou, who played a key witness in the case. "It really helped our team to see other teams' perspectives on the case and their tactics."

After competing, team members gained experience and got feedback from opposing teams. They also re-

ceived advice from two attorney judges, the opposing teams' coaches and co-coordinator Dr. Hugh Roberts.

"[The advice] definitely helped me understand how I was supposed to act as a witness and how I was supposed to speak," said junior Rhea Srivats, who experienced her first invitational that day.

Through the positive and negative feedback, the team discovered its own weaknesses as well. According to senior Michelle Luo, the Falcons' greatest shortcoming was unfamiliarity with the case.

In response to the team's poor fact pattern knowledge, Roberts quoted Lucy from Charlie Brown, saying, "Even if you're wrong, be wrong at the top of your voice."

Regardless, new members of the team

were excited after the invitational and are now pumped for actual competition in February.

"I honestly just love the logic and the work that goes into Mock Trial and I can really see that come out in a court day," Srivats said.

After months of preparation, the invitational was an opportunity for participants to see how far they had come since the beginning of the year.

As a whole, the team and its coaches were satisfied with their performance, and aim to work harder to improve for future competitions.

"They have potential, they just need to learn how to use it," Roberts said. "My expectations are that they will all continue to improve, learn a lot and have a good experience."

BAILEY >>

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and his biological sister Bertukan, 12, joined the Bailey family, which includes two other adopted children: Bereket, 11, also from Ethiopia, and Alex, 17, from Russia.

His adoptive parents are Howard Bailey, who helps sell businesses, and Tanya Kudar, admissions director for nursery through grade eight at Waldorf School of the Peninsula. Solomon described his dad as fairly laid-back, whereas his mom is somewhat stricter.

According to Solomon, prospective parents working with AAI have the opportunity to visit an orphanage in Ethiopia for a week before taking any children home. After the week is over, the parents return home while the children they intend to adopt are extensively tested for diseases.

Upon arriving at the more affluent Saratoga, Solomon was welcomed by members of his new family. He said that he and his father have become particularly close, and Solomon enjoys playing tennis and talking with him.

"Anything I would ask him, he would do it. He supports me," Solomon said. "I love soccer; I'm a soccer player, [so] any time that I have soccer, it doesn't matter



Bailey

what he will allow me to play. Even if I don't do [my] homework, he will still let me play."

Solomon said that his bonds with his adopted siblings are strong as well. He often plays basketball or soccer with his sisters, and he draws and plays video games with his brother, a person Solomon described as an artist with a particular knack for drawing cars.

Solomon said that for him, having an older brother is "really awesome."

"He lets me do anything," Solomon said. "He shares his stuff with me; he helps me with things. Like usually I have [soccer] practice at 6, and he will do my chores for me so I don't have to come home tired and have to do all that stuff. And when he leaves, I do his stuff, so we help each other."

Despite his family's welcoming attitude, Solomon initially struggled to adjust to life in America.

Although he was exposed to English because of the Americans who frequently visited his orphanage in Ethiopia, he still found the language difficult to catch on to.

"In the beginning, I couldn't talk, because I don't know how to talk," he said. "I don't want to mess up; I don't want people to think I'm not smart. So

now when I talk to someone, I'm not 100 percent sure that what I'm saying, if I'm saying it right or if I'm saying it wrong."

Solomon also noticed that the sense of community in Saratoga is vastly different from that in Ethiopia.

In Ethiopia, Solomon and his neighbors interacted on a daily basis through activities like playing on the streets in front of their houses. But since Solomon's current home is in a semi-rural area, this is no longer possible.

Initially, Solomon was slightly overwhelmed by all of the unfamiliar faces at SHS, especially since at Waldorf, there were only about 20 students in each grade.

"[In] the middle school, we were like family," he said. "Everybody knew everybody. I knew all the kids in the middle school and even the high school. It was a small school."

Though SHS is not nearly as tight-knit, Solomon said that teachers and students here have treated him well. He also knew a few students before moving schools because he plays soccer in Saratoga's American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO).

Ultimately, his life in Saratoga has been defined by his family. He can still recall his excitement when he met Alex for the first time.

"My brother, he wanted a brother," Solomon said, "just like I wanted a brother, because I'd never had a brother."

thing, like you can't use a computer," Solomon said. "So my dad said it would be better education for me to come here and learn."

In addition, according to Solomon, Waldorf's sports programs are not comparable with a public high school's. As an up-and-coming soccer player who is now on the school's varsity team, he felt that Saratoga High would give him more athletic opportunities.

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PROJECTS

Completed math mural takes hours of work

BY KevinChow
& DorrieTang

On it are five influential mathematicians — Euclid, Euler, Gauss, Leibniz and Mandelbrot. On the bottom left is a Falcon logo; on the right is a signal tower, representing the connections between math, our school and the community.

The process started with power-washing the wall and painting it with white primer. The volunteers then helped Zeng outline basic shapes over a projection of her design. Afterwards, they applied the larger blocks of color and worked their way to more and more detail. For the purple section, they first painted the purple background and then projected the design onto the wall again and used paint pens to add the white design on top.

Zeng spent almost all of her Thanksgiving break in the Math Quad, working more than 12 hours on most days.

"It took many days from 10:30 [a.m.] in the morning to [midnight] in the Math Quad to complete it," Zeng said. "I'm excited that it's finally coming to an end."

"I think that [the mural] adds a nice pop of color to the quad, making it [less] dreary [than] before," Huang said. "[The mural is] different since it's a student produced work and I think it shows how important and how prevalent math is in our school culture and society in general."

She said she completed the mural with the help of "a few math club people, some of [her] friends that [she] bugged to participate and a couple of people [she] didn't really know, who showed up to help due to math teacher PJ Yim's advertising." Volunteers included fresh-

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Zeng spent almost all of her Thanksgiving break in the Math Quad, working more than 12 hours on most days.

"It took many days from 10:30 [a.m.] in the morning to [midnight] in the Math Quad to complete it," Zeng said. "I'm excited that it's finally coming to an end."

"I think that [the mural] adds a nice pop of color to the quad, making it [less] dreary [than] before," Huang said. "[The mural is] different since it's a student produced work and I think it shows how important and how prevalent math is in our school culture and society in general."

She said she completed the mural with the help of "a few math club people, some of [her] friends that [she] bugged to participate and a couple of people [she] didn't really know, who showed up to help due to math teacher PJ Yim's advertising." Volunteers included fresh-

men Caitlyn Chen, Hannah Fan and Tiffany Huang, and juniors Lily Hu, Chris McMahon and Joyce Zhang.

The process started with power-washing the wall and painting it with white primer. The volunteers then helped Zeng outline basic shapes over a projection of her design. Afterwards, they applied the larger blocks of color and worked their way to more and more detail. For the purple section, they first painted the purple background and then projected the design onto the wall again and used paint pens to add the white design on top.

<p

UC tuition hikes deter and doom students

BY Lauren Louie
& Arman Vaziri

An education should be a right, not a privilege. But with the University of California's recent announcement of an annual 5 percent tuition increase over the next five years, higher education is rapidly turning into a nightmare of student debts.

Currently, tuition for students (\$12,192) is above the national average of \$9,100 a year by about \$3,000. And with the passing of this increase, tuition will be as high as \$15,560 in 2019 for undergraduate California students. For out-of-state students, tuition will cost from \$35,000 to \$45,000.

UC President Janet Napolitano, who took the position in late 2013, proposed the increase. According to Napolitano, chancellors are long overdue for a raise and are paid far less than those in other states.

The UCs are supposedly public universities. But with climbing tuitions, they remain available to a very narrow public: the privileged public. Not to mention the surplus of out-of-state students given they pay higher tuitions.

As expected, this was strongly opposed. Already the state supplies around \$2.8 billion of the university system's nearly \$7 billion operating budget. Gov. Jerry Brown generously offered to increase state funding by 4 percent,

Students need education to be an actual possibility, not an impossible dream.

around \$120 million each year, for the next two years, providing that the board freezes tuition. This is despite the 5 percent increase that has already been active in the last two years.

But Napolitano says that they would need more — around 9 percent annually — in order to provide for the "necessary" pay increases, admitted students, etc.

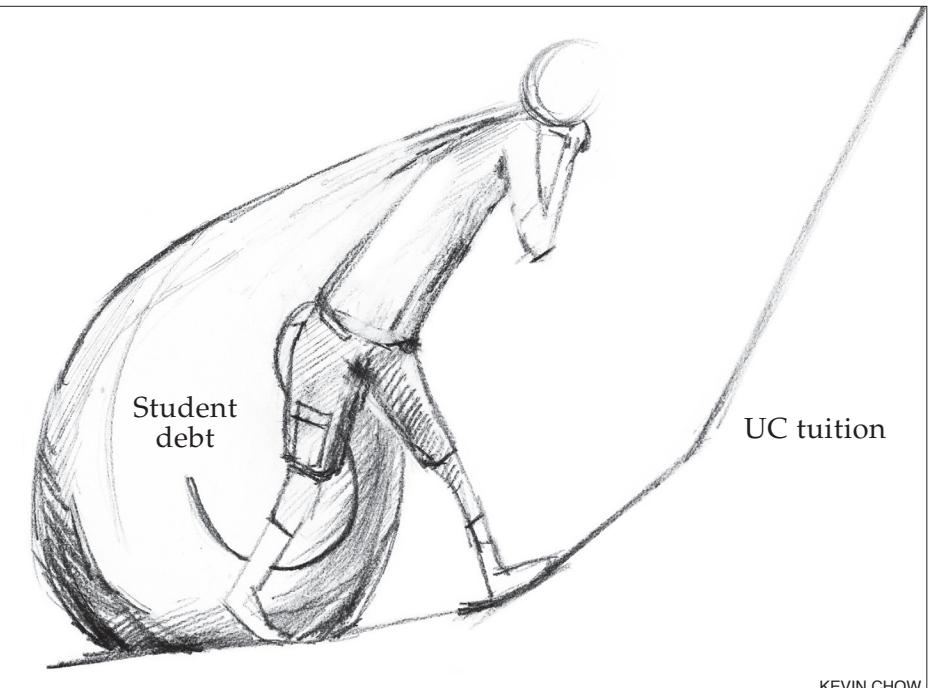
None of these reasons beg immediate attention. Chancellors are not living paycheck to paycheck. Some students don't even have time to pay off debts when school responsibilities don't leave time for a job.

No employee raise should come out of the pockets of struggling students. This injustice was vocalized through various protests, walkouts and occupations. From Berkeley to Irvine, students occupied, staged sit-ins and rallied. Regardless, their voices were ignored.

So while tuition increase is devastating already struggling students, chancellors are accepting pay increases. The looming student debts already deter applicants from quality education.

Education is promoted immensely in our communities, but impossible costs are deterring students from actually receiving this education. Graduates with student debt leave school with a burdening weight, instead of the liberated feel-

>> candidcaricatures



KEVIN CHOW

ing that should come with a degree.

If the University of California system truly wants to aid its students, additional instructors aren't needed right now. Increasing tuition, increasing paychecks, increasing the budget — none of this is worth decreasing the average student's quality of life. Students need education to be an actual possibility, not an impossible dream.

Whether it be from taxpayers' pocket or the students', education costs — that

is undeniable. But as of now, the balance of burden is resting heavily on the backs of 19 to 23 year olds. Their education can't even be fully embraced when they're worrying about money.

This isn't "the real world," it's an unjust world. Although it may not seem so, lowering tuition, and therefore providing an affordable education, benefits us all. Trust that education accessed by society as a whole will pay off in the future. ♦

Community college education deserves consideration

BY Becky Hoag

The first semester of senior year is notorious for being one of the most stressful times in a student's life, filled with numerous AP classes and a barrage of college applications. But most seniors get so caught up in the stress of applying to a four-year college that they don't even consider other options.

Community college is a case in point. Many people dismiss this idea because of the negative stigma around the education at these schools. Misconceptions include the idea that it is only for students of low income or low academic standing.

However, those who believe this are disregarding several other factors, like extended time for major decisions and the low cost of education.

There are other perks to attending community college, such as the easier

ride to many colleges in the future. By getting general education courses out of the way locally, students may have the opportunity to go to a plethora of top-tier colleges that might have not been in reach previously.

Furthermore, most UCs, including prestigious UCs like San Diego and UC Davis, guarantee community college transfers a spot at their school.

There's also no need for community college students to take the SAT or ACT for admittance. More money is saved, considering how much is spent for standardized testing preparation.

What's more, going to a community college is cheaper. While money might not seem like a big concern in a wealthy area, college costs can challenge even well-off families. Let's say a student decides to apply as an undetermined major to a private university. According to Col-

lege Board, they would have to pay, on average, \$30,000 per year at a four-year institution. What's the point of spending all that if you don't even know what you want to do? It's as if higher education has become a competition of who can get into the most prestigious university.

While students at universities pay outrageously high tuition, community college students in California only spend about \$5,000 per year, according to the organization that represents them.

Additionally, with so many seniors wanting to go to four-year colleges nowadays, many public universities are becoming flooded with applicants, making it much more difficult to ensure that students get the credits needed to graduate.

Fulfilling general education requirements at a community college allows students to bypass the rush and jump directly into classes specific to their ma-

jor. Furthermore, the class sizes tend to be more reasonable in a local community college than in universities.

One of the most appealing aspects about attending a community college is that it provides a transition between high school and college life. There's a sea of new peers, new teachers and new classes, and yet, there's no need to worry about paying to wash laundry, staying in a dorm or having a meal plan. While it's good experience to learn to live on your own in a four-year college, going to a two-year college first allows students to save up money for living independently later.

There can be a million paths to get to the same spot. Don't discount community college just because that isn't what everyone else is doing. Just do what's best for you, not what's the best looking to the outside world. ♦

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: SOCRATIC SEMINARS

Dear editors,

As a firm believer in the power of Socratic seminar, I was discouraged to read [Fiona] Sequira and [Kelly] Xiao's opinion piece in the Nov. 21 issue of The Falcon. I am saddened to read that an open format in which students have the power to drive the discussion has become something to be "endured." How ironic that such a format has led to feelings of restriction. Fortunately, my colleagues in the English Department and I have seen enough examples of seminars that build enduring understandings — and academic communities — that we will continue to hold them and to learn from them.

A Socratic seminar is a process, not a product. It may take "10 disjointed contributions" to arrive at meaning — and that ratio is not a failure. Speaking and

listening are skills that require development. While Socratic seminars may feel like a performance, your teachers know that they are a process, and we see ourselves as coaches working to prepare you for effective discourse in college and more importantly, beyond. We hope that by your senior year, individually and collectively, you have the skills in place to engage in discussion that "even Socrates would recognize and approve of."

It is a misconception that each time a student opens her mouth she earns points. It is also a misconception that these discussions are so high stakes that grades are on the line. While I understand that it could be comforting to believe that "points are awarded" simply for opening one's mouth, this situation is simply not the case. The rubric several English teachers use says nothing about number of contributions. In fact,

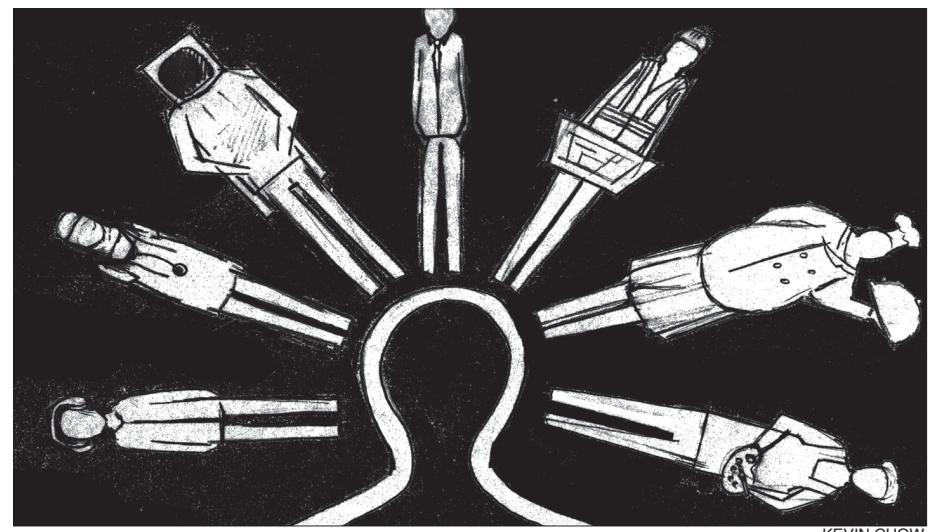
challenging students to have empathy for their classmates and trust in their teachers. For instance, for some participants, agreeing with an existing statement is a strong start. I call upon students to trust that their teacher is working behind the scenes with students who appear to be too reticent — as well as those who appear to dominate. Put it this way: If you can recognize when a classmate hasn't added to the discourse, chances are your teacher can, too.

I'm proud to work with educators who understand that our job description extends far beyond "observes and awards points." We will continue to provide opportunities and coaching. Socratic Seminars are yours. I urge you to make them something neither you nor Socrates would cringe at. ♦

—Suzanne Herzman, English teacher

Career Day beneficial to students; presenters need further guidance

>> candidcaricatures



KEVIN CHOW

There is an enormous world of opportunity outside of the "Saratoga Bubble." A huge number of colleges, hundreds of fields of study — and with that, a variety of career paths.

But with this array of opportunities come several difficult decisions. Engineering or Biochemistry? Architect or stockbroker? Career Day, a day when professionals from different fields come to present to aspiring students, is intended to help answer these questions.

And while Career Day can help provide students with new options and perspectives, it's not always as useful as it could be. A lack of student interest and dull presentations can render the day a waste of time.

But the truth is that you get what you put in. If students pick topics that they have no interest in, they will have wasted hours of a school day. However, if they put thought into picking careers and listen attentively, there is real value in the presentations.

At the same time, however, presenters should reciprocate students' interest by actually giving relevant and useful material about their field. The presenters are supposed to give a brief synopsis of their field, but have, on some occasions, instead explained their personal opinions on the field.

Two years ago, some students complained that instead of explaining the positive aspects of a field, a presenter focused instead on why students shouldn't enter the field. This action discouraged a significant number of

genuinely interested students.

Furthermore, some presenters with a lack of material try to stumble their way through a presentation, adding to the perception of time being wasted.

Although the school does give presenters some guidelines on what and how to present, perhaps even more guidance is needed.

Maybe the school could use the power of video to show presenters examples of what good presentations look and sound like. We have the feeling that some could do significantly better if they had specific models to copy.

In a good presentation, students generally want to receive relevant in-

formation in a concise manner. Also, anything that involves student participation helps students get hands-on experience of what the career entails. For instance, it's always a hit when a chef treats the students to culinary delights.

Additionally, it is important that students give the school accurate feedback on the presenters once Career Day is over. That way, good presenters will be invited back and weaker ones can be replaced.

Most of us don't really know what we will be doing in 10 or 20 years, but maybe a highly effective Career Day can help provide some clues about what we should be when we grow up. ♦

>> Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-chief
Megana Iyer
Amy Lin

Opinion Editor
Bruce Lou

Reporter
Arman Vaziri



The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 36-0 in support of guidelines for presenters.

More frat control needed

BY Maya Prasad
& Fiona Sequeira

garner public attention, they fail to provide viable solutions to the issues.

Recently, the fraternity Tau Kappa Epsilon in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has been accused of marking students with red and black Xs in order to put a certain date rape drug into their alcoholic drinks during parties. Administrators tend to let these parties slide because they view sexual violence on their campus as inevitable, and it would make no difference to regulate such parties. Colleges also tend to ignore rape acts in their campus because they don't want to tarnish the reputation of their school. By heightening

rules for fraternities, colleges may be able to reduce the number of assaults.

By having police or security guards posted outside of parties, it provides for more security to reduce drunk driving and other illegal

acts. Also, the fraternities should have students standing guard in front of the dorm rooms to reduce the chance of rapes occurring in common places.

The administration should also take a decisive stance when it comes to students breaking rules and sexual crimes within fraternities.

Instead of wishy-washy punishments, the school should be seeking jail time for offenders. Since most students attending college are not under the safety cushion of the juvenile system, the student should be given the punishment appropriate to their crimes as if they were 40-year-old adults.

In September, a senior at Columbia University began carrying her mattress around campus as an academic performance project and a protest against the Columbia administration, who dismissed a case against her alleged rapist who still attends the university. Too often, there have been protests that have ended in vain because while protests

ly what feminists are fighting for.

It is true that the portrayal of feminism by some women has been bent out of shape so badly that it is hardly recognizable. Many people — both men and women — are terrified of supporting the feminist movement because they don't want to be seen as "man-hating." Meninism is a reaction to this radical version of feminism.

This is exactly what is happening with the hashtag "meninism" on sites such as Twitter and Tumblr. As backlash to feminism, meninism has arisen as a "champion" for men's rights. Meninists degrade women, shaming them with posts like, "Ladies, the next time a guy has the guts to talk to [you], remember that he's not wearing makeup. Also remember what you look like without it."

Their audacity knows no bounds, and it is impossible to see how it could be construed as humor.

Lately, our society has taken steps to reduce the gaps between men and women. Actresses like Rebel Wilson and Melissa McCarthy have been praised for their acceptance of their plus-sized bodies, which is especially great because large men in the same industry, including Seth Rogen and Jonah Hill, have been popular for quite a while.

If these men are truly offended by the double standard, the proper course of action would be to work with feminists instead of against them.

If they are just posting things to attract some attention, though, then they really just need to grow up. Let's give our attention to movements that actually deserve it. ♦

January 30, 2015

Holistic review in college apps needed

BY Fiona Sequeira

When evaluating applicants, colleges should practice holistic review policy, which allows them to gain insight into the qualities that transcend academic statistics.

While empirical data such as GPA and standardized test scores are useful markers for academic achievement, they do not always portray the full scope of a student's qualities, which are better demonstrated through the level of their extracurriculars, jobs, creative talents and passions and essays.

While many colleges do consider these other aspects in the overall application package, a better balance needs to be attained, as far too much stress is placed first and foremost on the straight up numbers.

The result? Students are defined by a constricted point of view, which is more fit for robots than living, breathing human beings. The emphasis in applications ought to rest on the whole person, and how the individual can contribute to the school and world in meaningful ways.

UCs often solely look at grades and test scores to get students through the door, and it is only after they're in that the other aspects of their applications are considered. This approach neglects the other parts of a student that distinguish them from others.

Under the holistic admissions policy, a student with a lower GPA who swims or plays the French horn at a national or award-winning level may be admitted over a student with a high SAT who does not participate in any extracur-

riculars. By giving extracurriculars and other endeavors more weight than test scores in the admissions process, colleges are taking the time to get to know a student as an individual with distinct talents.

However, some students regard holistic applications with uneasiness because they are characterized by undefined subjectivity. That's where empirical data is effective: it's objective, clear cut, and even the playing field, unlike holistic review.

Additionally, students may even fraudulently mold themselves to embody "authenticity" by pursuing specific extracurriculars because they believe they will demonstrate qualities colleges like.

Holistic review may not be a fool-proof method, yet without it, the admissions process would be nowhere close to an accurate assessment of a potential applicant.

Yes, achievement in challenging courses is an important constituent of all college applications, and colleges need to be assured that the students they admit will succeed academically at their institution. However, holistic admissions do not neglect empirical data it just places other aspects of the application at the same level, or even above.

Colleges should practice the holistic review policy because students will be able to avoid judgment based solely on cold, emotionless numbers. Whether or not a student receives a thin envelope or a congratulatory acceptance from the college of his or her choice, the student should at least be assured that he or she was considered as a whole person. ♦

Parental intervention in college apps harmful

BY Lauren Louie
& Arman Vaziri

Completing college applications is a long and difficult process. Students often turn to counselors for help, sometimes for thousands of dollars. There's no denying that the extra help students are able to receive at SHS is an advantage and a privilege. But what about parental aid?

Involving parents in the college application process is dangerous. From biased and uncalled for essay edits to unlimited, constant access, parental involvement when applying to colleges is more harmful than helpful.

Counselors, whether or not they be

at school, are limited in their ability to directly help students with their applications. But there is no professional barrier between parents and their kids and therefore no barrier when it comes to the privacy of college applications. It's easier to say "no" to a counselor than it is to a parent.

Parents want so badly for their kids to be accepted into the college of their choice that they can be unintentionally relentless and ruthless in their involvement. That means working through holidays and enduring constant revisions

Parents' direct involvement is essentially falsifying information on the application.

and endless unwarranted advice.

None of this is to say that editing essays and looking over final versions of an application is overstepping boundaries. It's when editing essays turns into writing essays, and looking over applications turn into doing applications that lines are crossed and the application is no longer a reflection of the applicant in question.

Parents should have no direct involvement in their children's applications. They shouldn't write essays or fill out the forms. Nothing. It's not fair to the students who take chunks of time out of their schedules in order to work on applications and to the students who aren't able to receive this sort of boost from their parents. Parents' direct involvement is essentially falsifying information on the application. If cheating on tests is not allowed, why should this be?

College applications are the gateway to the next stage of life. It is absurd to think that students' futures should be interfered with by the meddling of overly concerned parents. So parents, limit yourselves. And students, don't be afraid to limit your parents. Understand the boundaries, but most of all, understand that this is your future — a future that you want to decide for yourself. ♦

Facebook: Tracking of user activity invades privacy

BY Deepthi Sampathkumar

My eyes scan through my Facebook newsfeed. Everything seems monotonous: numerous posed images, selfies and pictures of food.

My attention, however, is suddenly caught by something familiar: a Hollister advertisement. It's an image of a pink dress that seems oddly familiar. After staring at it for a few seconds, I realize that this was the dress that I had ordered online just minutes ago.

In the past few months, I have seen a recurring pattern in the advertisements placed on Facebook. Not only are they relevant to my searches, but they are exactly the items I've searched for.

Facebook and other such Internet sites' abilities to access items entered into the search engine are outright creepy. This attempt to make money

through advertisements too often feels like a breach of privacy. The advertisements displayed on each user's page are supposed to be relevant to what that person likes. But the site's ability to peek into our search engines raises further concerns. What else can these websites access?

The sites' ability to leak into one's browser history is upsetting. If there is personal information in one's browser history such as emails, personal messages, school documents and credit card numbers, it is unsettling that this information is accessible to complete strangers.

This is exemplified through the case of David Barksdale, a former 27-year-old

Google employee, who took advantage of his power and hacked into various teens' accounts. Giving these companies such liberty in retrieving personal information is a tremendous risk.

For example, Facebook is able to track common websites and what people search on those websites. They are able to regurgitate back onto our newsfeeds. With the pattern of websites visited and items searched up on those sites, Facebook is able to determine sensitive details, such as gender and address.

These privacy-invading abilities must be halted. We can ensure it by logging out of different social networking sites or clearing our history before searching for private matters. Although it's a pain, it is, as of now, the best way to save ourselves these small but dangerous invasions of our privacy. ♦

SAT security policies should be increased

BY Trevor Leung
& Neehar Thumathy

There was really no way to stop them because of the College Board's lack of enforcement of policies regarding cell phone usage.

Testing companies and proctors must understand that standardized tests affect a student's future — a student who has cheated on the SAT may find more success than one who has studied and put the effort into it, but has still gotten a lower score.

Sam Eshaghoff was one of these students.

Eshaghoff, from Long Island, New York, was charged with criminal impersonation and fraud in 2011.

Having scored well on the SAT himself, Eshaghoff was paid about \$2,500 by at least 15 students to take the SAT for them. His scheme was simple: Take the school's ID card template, insert his client's name and his own photo and then take the test impersonating them.

The College Board has policies regarding identification of test-takers, but they are not enforced stringently enough, as shown by Eshaghoff's scam. The College Board only requires a valid photo ID in order to ensure accessibility for all students. But because of this, people like Eshaghoff have been able to find a way around this rule — amazingly, Eshaghoff was even able to take the test for females.

Since then, dozens of cases of cheating on standardized tests have occurred. One of the most recent was on Nov. 8, when students in China and South Korea were cited for cheating on the SAT. These students hired others who had already taken the test in a different time zones to send test answers via text during the breaks.

>> THE bigidea

SAT security

What is the problem?

SAT companies and proctors need to check student's identities more closely to avoid cheating.

Possible solutions

Students should be required to bring a passport rather than any I.D., and cell phones should be taken by proctors.

>> togatalks

January 30, 2015

Bakery doesn't live up to reviews

BY Miles Albert
& Gitika Nalwa

was well-lit and seemed fairly clean, and offered free wifi after we paid for our order.

To its credit, the bakery is nestled in the heart of Cupertino, just off S. De Anza Blvd, fairly close to the high school, and therefore ideal for stopping by after school. Unfortunately, the short hours (the store closes at 8 p.m. on Friday nights) made us feel rather rushed. We were unable to enjoy, let alone finish, our meals.

Kee Wah Bakery turned out to be just all right. Perhaps we set our expectations too high for the small shop by comparing it to the more popular 85 degrees, or perhaps we went at a time when their better pastries were simply out of stock. Whatever the reason, we found the bakery, with its lack of foodstuffs and overpriced goods, to be unsatisfying, at best. Despite its gracious staff and welcoming atmosphere, Kee Wah Bakery leaves much to be desired, and we will be continuing our search for better bread elsewhere. ♦

Kee Wah Bakery



(OUT OF FIVE)

Where: 10370 South De Anza Boulevard
Cupertino
Open from: 9:00 am to 7:30 pm
Price range: Under \$10

"Japanese, because it is a really beautiful language."
junior Naveed Riazat

"Hindi, I want to be able to talk to my grandparents"
sophomore Samay Garg

Can you speak Spanish all day?

burrito connoisseur

Saya Sivaram and Amulya Vadlakonda

Hola?

That's it. That's pretty much the extent of our Spanish speaking abilities. Saya knows a few choice expletives and Amulya has a top-notch Shakira voice. Other than that, we're pretty much useless.

Of course, being in Spanish 4 Honors and Spanish 3 respectively means that we both have the theory of Spanish down to a science. If you give us a grammar handout, we can complete in perfectly in minutes. Having an actual conversation, however, is a completely different story.

Neither of us has managed to perfect the fluidity with which native Spanish speakers converse, and when put on the spot and asked to say a grammatically correct sentence, we generally tend to clam up.

In a moment of great mental weakness, we decided that it might be a good idea to challenge our linguistic talents and speak only Spanish for the duration of an entire Friday. Bonus points for speaking with a televisor (soap opera) voice.

These privacy-invading abilities must be halted. We can ensure it by logging out of different social networking sites or clearing our history before searching for private matters. Although it's a pain, it is, as of now, the best way to save ourselves these small but dangerous invasions of our privacy. ♦

never been so reluctant to finish a test.

The real party followed Chemistry when we exited the controlled environment of the classroom and were immediately bombarded by classmates.

"How did you do? What did you get for that one problem about that thing? What's number two? What version of the test did you have?"

"Espero que ... que ... uhuh..."

Shoot. We'd never quite appreciated the wonder that is charades until then.

It seemed like no matter what we were trying to say, we ended up miming the action instead, often looking like we were doing the Mexican Hat Dance. We don't even like that song.

This routine continued into lunch, where we performed a rain dance in the middle of the quad while trying to express our dislike of the day's weather. Amulya also accidentally told a friend that she was pregnant (embarazada), but it turns out she was just embarrassed.

Saya managed to avoid public humiliation (for the most part) and took it upon herself to learn several different pick up lines in Spanish. ("Soy una ladrona y estoy aquí para robar su corazón" or "I am a thief here to steal your heart"). She then proceeded to repeat them to all of the attractive guys in the vicinity. It didn't work out for her. By the end of the school day, we were tired, frustrated, and craving Chipotle, but we went home and studied for Trig anyway.

Sitting through a few years of Spanish classes may help you get Language credits but nothing can help you when you are put on the spot to speak fluently to a group of people in a foreign language except practice. At least we can say that we tried. Thank you and goodbye.

Or rather, Gracias y adiós. ♦

ASK SARA

Editor's Note: These questions were gathered and then answered to the best of "Sara Toga's" ability. If you would like to submit questions for upcoming issues, please ask them on ask.fiu/dearabbyshs.

Dear Sara, what should I do if I like two guys at once? One of them talks to me a lot, but it seems like he flirts with every girl, but the other is a good friend who doesn't really make the effort to talk to me a lot.

You won't know how they feel unless you talk to them. At the very worst, you'll get shot down, embarrassed beyond measure and transformed into a person too afraid to ever trust another — your friendship will die and you will have completely failed your life. But at least it's better than never knowing, right? (Hint: the answer is yes, despite common sense.)

Dear Sara, how do I get over my addiction to Trivia Crack? It's unhealthy.

There are 12 steps to overcome addiction. The first is realizing that you are powerless over your addiction and that your life has become unmanageable.

You are well on your way, my friend.

Dear Sara, Do you like waffles? Do you like pancakes? Do you like french toast?

Yeah, we like waffles! Yeah, we like pancakes! Yeah, we like french toast!

This would have been much better if it went in order, don't you think?

Dear Sara, in your opinion, do you think that this school has a healthy balance between fun and work?

It is absolutely no secret that Saratoga is an academically rigorous school, and there is inevitable stress that comes from such high standards of education. There are definitely times where I have personally felt incredibly overwhelmed, but I also have made some of the best memories of my life at this school. In my experience, I have been able to balance "fun and work." But it is true that it is hard to find that balance. You have to establish it for yourself. You have to know your breaking point, and you need to find a way stop yourself before you reach it. If you're looking for ways to relax, joining clubs or participating in school functions can be a great way to be involved at school and hang out with friends and classmates. It's not easy, but once you can find that balance, it's much easier to maintain it. And to be honest, it's not about cutting back on APs and Honors. If you're determined to work, then do it; just don't forget to have some fun from time to time.

Dear Sara, I don't know who to ask to prom. No matter who I consider, I am scared they will think I have true feelings for them, which is not the case. How can I solve this problem?

Simple. It's called communication. It solves everything.

Oh wait, I have a better solution. You don't have a date. You get me, and I get you. This is great.

Dear Sara, Talib Kweli has said that people should engage artists politically but that we shouldn't be disappointed if they "don't give you what you want" in their replies. Do you think artists should use their influence to bring awareness to more social and political issues besides talking about materialism?

An artist's job is to entertain us. As such, I don't believe they are under any obligation to bring awareness to any issues. That being said, there is never too much publicity for worthy causes, and if an artist chooses to advocate or bring awareness to the problems they believe are important, then kudos to them.

January 30, 2015

NEW YEAR

Nice guys finish last: Senior tries to be nicer

chairman
zhao

Devin Zhao



When I first made the New Year's resolution of being nicer, I didn't know what to expect. 2015 is my first year making a concrete resolution to follow, and as I learned from previous promises I have made to myself, nothing is longer term for me.

I've always found loopholes in my resolutions, and within one or two months, I knew I would return to my old habits. Call me a terrible promise maker, but I've always lacked the willingness to carry them out.

This resolution was different, though: as a second semester senior, I've finished all my college applications and standardized testing. With less care in schoolwork, I figured I would have less stress in my life, and it wouldn't be that

hard to be nicer to everyone, right?

Contrary to my wishful thinking, being nice was possibly one of the hardest things I've ever done. Schadenfreude, or deriving pleasure from other's miseries, has always been something I have done to prevent boredom. I know it sounds horrible, but everyone has their way of having fun, and that's how I entertain myself.

I never failed to point out inside jokes and people's less positive attributes, such as sleeping in class or consistently forgetting to read AP Lang readings, to derive my entertainment. As part of my resolution, I had to change that part of me.

My road to becoming nicer was excruciating; even the simplest actions took a lot of effort on my part. Every time I was with my friends, I bit back my teasing words to try to say something positive.

More often, I just changed the conversation to focus on the tasks we needed to finish in class rather than to make small talk.

I frequently reminded myself every one or two periods that I had a resolution to follow, but more often than not, I just forgot my resolution and give my mind full rein. Luckily, I would remember my goal in the next period, and I'm not obliged to stay clean with my mouth. ♦

resolution roundup

New Year's Resolution

The main goal:

To be nicer, and also to stick to this particular resolution longer than normal. Because Zhao has trouble sticking to resolutions, this proved to be a challenge.

How easy it was to keep:

Almost impossible. Not only are resolutions a weak point (since Devin always manages to find loopholes), but being nice generally isn't his forte.

When it was first broken:

One week. Unfortunately, a week, the temptation to tease someone or be mean was too strong, and Devin gave up on his resolution.

Juniors sleep on New Year's Resolution

double a
batteries



Anant Rajeev and Arjun Ramanathan

Sleeping before midnight on a school night is a concept that many high school students don't find very familiar. And that's exactly why, on Jan. 2, we decided to start our New Year's Resolution: going to bed every night before midnight.

Arjun's Resolution

All throughout first semester, I was used to procrastinating a great deal on my homework. As this challenge loomed ahead of me, I decided I needed to be more productive than I had been before, leading to some serious changes in my lifestyle and work ethic.

Usually, I wait to do work until just before the due date, but I knew this habit would have to change.

Immediately on the first day of second semester, I took lunch and tutorial time to do work, going immediately into a serious frame of mind as I completed homework due for the day after. This steady strategy resulted in a bedtime of anything earlier than 11:30, a personal accomplishment. The chal-

lenge also called for a serious cutback on my Facebook activity. Everything seemed to be going well the first week or so.

Sadly, my resolution died quicker than I thought it would. Since the SAT test was on Jan. 24, I had some extra prep work on my hands in addition to the enormity of homework usually assigned in school. As productive as I tried to be, the work finally caught up with me on the ninth day of my challenge.

It was at that time that I knew I would never be able to sleep early for such a long period of time. Thankfully, the resolution/challenge instilled a change in me. I learned to manage my time better, even if a midnight bedtime isn't always achievable.

We knew it wouldn't be easy, but even so, we wanted to maintain this healthy sleep schedule.

In the NFL, it's a little bit hard to get work done.

I had finished the last remnants of work at 12:27 a.m. and I couldn't believe that it took such little time for me to lose out on a New Year's resolution.

So I employed another New Year's resolution: Stop making New Year's resolutions, because every time I seem to make one, I get disappointed early on. But I'd have to say that this New Year's resolution was the most shockingly ambitious of them all because trying to maintain a consistent sleep time during junior year is something

there was something I was forgetting: the SAT.

Even with it coming up, my teachers decide to assign double the amount of homework at the end of the first week of second semester, and with my soccer matches, I was pushing my time up to 11:45.

However, on the Sunday night before the second week of the semester, the workload got to be too much and my goal crumbled. Let me just say in my defense that when there are Divisional Playoffs happening

in the NFL, it's a little bit hard to get work done.

And my goal crumbled. Let me just say in my defense that when there are Divisional Playoffs happening in the NFL, it's a little bit hard to get work done.

How easy it was to keep:
Because junior year is notorious for boatloads of work, both Arjun and Anant found it hard to balance school work and their impending SATs.

When it was first broken:
Arjun broke his resolution on the ninth day of his challenge, and Anant failed on the Sunday before the second week of Semester Two.



GRAPHICS BY ROTEM SHAKED

NEW YOU

Sophomores deprive themselves of sweets

task.

Despite my resolve, I slipped up again later that week. I felt so guilty that I redoubled my efforts. With that determination in mind, as well as constant distractions that pulled me away from my guilty pleasure, I managed a whole week sticking to my resolution,

bringing me to the first week of school after break.

Nearing the end of January, the need to eat

sugar slowly dissipated. It took several weird, one-sided mental debates with myself, but finally I was able to turn down numerous offers to take home fruitcake leftovers from family friends and continue eating my carrot sticks and apple slices, happy that I no longer have to fight myself about it.

Cassi's Resolution

The first day after I made the resolution to refrain from sugar, I had a hard time tearing myself away from the plate of pumpkin pie leftover from Thanksgiving (we started our New Year's Resolutions in early December).

During the first week, my little brother was pestering me, and in my peeved and jittery state, I almost resorted to stuffing my face with cookies, catching myself as I lifted the chocolatey goodness to my mouth. Scolding myself, I decided right then and there to put more effort into this Herculean

simple forgot, but if I'm being honest with myself: It was just my lack of willpower. I wrestled with my conscience for approximately five minutes before I gave in. Who can't resist a warm chocolate chip cookie?

When I signed up for this task, I was confident in my abilities to keep any

resolution we came up with. However, when Amelia announced the idea of cutting out sweets, I grew dubious.

Christmas came and went but my eating habits stayed

the same. I was still gorging on cookies, frozen yogurt and other sweets. It wasn't until New Year's that I earnestly began my resolution. During the first three days of January, I kept to it, refusing to be defeated.

On the fourth day, my mother came up with the brilliant idea of baking brownies. I woke to the tantalizing aroma of Ghirardelli brownies and immediately found myself walking to the kitchen. I stared at the brownies with my resolution itching at the back of my mind. One bite, I thought to myself and successfully resisted the urge to take another.

Throughout the rest of the week, I was firm in the continuation of my resolution and came out satisfied with my results. It went smoothly and I persevered, even though my friends tried to tempt me with Kit Kats and, of course, cookies. Although I failed to live up to my resolution for the first couple of weeks, that I eventually was able to distract myself and stay away from sweets is something I am proud of. My habits have become better because of this resolution, but sweets will always be a big part of my life. Chocolate chip cookies, here I come. ♦

resolution roundup

New Year's Resolution

The main goal:

To go as long as possible without eating sweets or any food with sugar. With the holidays ending, the resolution would be even more hard to keep.

How easy it was to keep:

Not very easy, especially after the holiday season.

When was it broken:

Amelia she caved within the first week, whereas Cassi ate (two) cookies 10 minutes after she made her resolution.

Reporters pledge to opt for more stylish options

sweata
sistas



Fiona Sequeira and Summer Smith

FALCON // DEEPTHI SAMPATHKUMAR

shirt for more than a week. However, once I wore a sweatshirt once, I continued to try and stick with the resolution. But as work and the weather began to take a toll on me, sweatshirts began to become more popular once again. In January, there was little hope remaining. The cold days and lack of desire to get up had taken its toll and required the comfort of a sweatshirt.

"What's the point?" I asked myself. Attire at school is important even though you miss out on compliments from your friends and don't wear a majority of the clothes in your closet. But regardless, I think we'll both try again next year.

Fiona's Resolution

With busy school schedules (especially during junior year), I know how it feels to wake up in the morning, and in a sleep-deprived state, resort to throwing on a sweatshirt and sweats. So when the Lifestyle editors proposed a New Year's Resolution challenge, I was determined to prove that I could sport the other clothes in my wardrobe just as effortlessly. At first, I thought leaving sweatshirts out of my fashion ensemble would be an easy feat. No sweatshirts? No sweat! Not so fast.

Staring at the row of sweatshirts in my closet in the morning during the week before first-semester finals, the resolution lingered in my mind. With the added stress of finals and the freezing temperature, there was absolutely no way I would be able to avoid the cozy comfort of a sweat-

shirt for a warm sweatshirt. Figuring out a way to stay warm without a sweatshirt became more of a time commitment, and with all of the stress of school, the challenge became a struggle.

Once the challenge had been broken, I tried to stick with it whenever I could. My family and friends were impressed when I wore the other winter clothes in my closet rather than just that first row of sweatshirts, and that motivated me to persevere.

While the resolution has inspired me to wear sweatshirts to school less frequently, I just can't write them off for good, and they will remain a cherished part of my 2015 wardrobe. ♦

resolution roundup

New Year's Resolution

The main goal:

To go as long as possible with wearing stylish clothes instead of the easy to throw on hoodie and sweats.

How easy it was to keep:

Extremely hard, thanks to finals week.

When it was broken:

Summer gave up in January due to a lack of hope, and Fiona gave up on the Monday of finals week when she woke up sleep-deprived and turned to a sweatshirt instead of a more fashionable option.

January 30, 2015

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay pt. 1

THE ODDS WERE IN THE FAVOR OF THE MOVIE

BY MAYA PRASAD

"I wish I could freeze this moment, right here, right now, and live it forever," whispered Peeta Mellark, love-interest of protagonist Katniss Everdeen. I raised my left arm, held three fingers up and whispered back, "Me too, Peeta. Me too."

After I watched the third movie of the Hunger Games series, "Mockingjay Part 1," released on Nov. 21, I was so stunned at its brilliance that my parents had to drag me out of AMC 14 before I snuck into another theater for a second round.

With the added pressure of living up to Suzanne Collins's award-winning series, the movie did extremely well in terms of matching the book's story line. All the important scenes were included, which satisfied the die-hard fans of the book series, and made for a very wholesome plotline for those who haven't read the book.

What left me in awe every time I replayed the trailer is the acting skill of the cast. Every scene exuded so much power and emotion that I was transported immediately into their chaotic, dystopian universe.

Though I don't cry much, I found myself sobbing over multiple scenes like when Katniss, the main character, returned to District 12.

Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson, Liam Hemsworth and Julianne Moore played their roles with conviction and intuition. Throughout the movie, the audience could be heard gasping and cheering because the acting made them feel like they were in Panem.

We all know that Lawrence's acting and personality have made her a favorite, but her singing talent is much less known.

The song "The Hanging Tree" is sung in such a way that it brings a rustic, alternative feel to the tuneless text that appeared in the novel. The most amazing part of the song is that Law-

rence showing an incredible amount of emotion while she was singing, which is very difficult to do.

Although many do not like the abrupt ending of the movie, I thought that it added to the suspense and effectively made the audience wish for more.

The dramatic music and fear shown on Katniss's face as she reached out for Peeta made me hope for more. Not only was this an intense moment, but it was a smart move on the director's part to end the movie here, since it ensures viewer's return for the last movie.

Overall, I urge all the Hunger Games readers to see "Mockingjay Part 1" immediately. Even though it was a fantastic movie, the plot might be too intricate for those who have not read the series. For example, my aunt, who has never touched the books or watched any of the other movies, asked me a number of times during the course of the movie, "Who is Katniss Everdeen?"

Next November, when "Mockingjay: Part 2" debuts, you will find me decked out in Hunger Games apparel, pushing and shoving people aside in line while yelling, "Fire is catching! And if we burn, you burn with us!" ♦

FIRST PART OF TRILOGY FAILS TO CATCH FIRE

BY CAITLIN JU

When the first half of "Mockingjay" premiered on Nov. 21, I was honestly excited. I had been surprisingly impressed by the previous movie in the trilogy, "Catching Fire" and was met with more than two hours of what I can best describe as "Katniss getting very emotional after visiting places."

Besides the obvious lack of action and excitement with the exception of one scene, a few aspects of the movie did not match the tone of the book. Katniss's friend Gale, played by Liam Hemsworth, seemed more distant than he should have been.

Many of the characters, especially President Coin, the leader of the long-lost District 13, were poorly developed. In addition, an essential character Enobar, one of the last seven victors left alive at the end of the book, was extinguished altogether, and replaced by Effie, Katniss's escort who now joins her in District 13.

To add on to the aforementioned, one major acting performance fell flat of expectations. Lawrence had several emotional, challenging — and disappointing — scenes in the movie. Failing to attain the level of despair and fervor needed to embody Katniss, Lawrence's overall performance did not reflect her usually witty and impressive acting performances.

Most of all, the ending felt like one major awkwardly abrupt cut. The directors should have ended the story earlier and with a different, more appropriate scene. In retrospect, the last book should not have been split into two movies. The plot was just not nearly well developed enough to move the movie adequately along to interest viewers, and the last half of the book would have brought the necessary action to please the audience.

I have never been a "super fan" of "The Hunger Games" trilogy, which tells of a dystopian society that has children fight to the death in an annual competition called the Hunger Games. One of these participants is Katniss Everdeen, who is played by acclaimed actress Jennifer Lawrence.

Still, I consider myself adequately knowledgeable in that I have read all the books, watched the past two movies, and find myself looking on Hunger

Games wiki more than I should.

But my interest in the series dwindled as I watched this movie. Instead of experiencing the same quality of "Catching Fire," I was met with more than two hours of what I can best describe as "Katniss getting very emotional after visiting places."

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Despite the disappointment from Part 1, I'll be expecting a lot more from "Mockingjay: Part 2" when it debuts Nov. 20. Maybe the fire will finally catch again. ♦

Fans await medley from Katy Perry at Super Bowl

BY FIONA SEQUEIRA & NEEHAR THUMATY

Like a dark horse, Katy Perry came out of nowhere to seal a gig at the biggest performance slot in American pop culture: the Super Bowl XLIX halftime show, which will be watched by at least 115 million people.

Leading artists Rihanna and Coldplay were also in contention for thecoveted job, but the pop diva will be the star the crowd is roaring for on Feb. 1 at the University of Phoenix Stadium.

Perry's name wasn't just picked out of a hat; the NFL's selection was calculated.

Perry's last two albums have hit No. 1 on Billboard's U.S. charts, and her multi-platinum "Teenage Dream" matched the record.

Michael Jackson set with "Bad" for most songs from a single album to hit No. 1 with five, rendering her the only female artist to achieve this honor.

Despite such high recognition, some still believe that Perry is not talented enough, arguing that her voice is far too autotuned.

"The first time I heard her voice on the radio, I thought it was made by a computer," said sophomore Anthony Barthell.

Although Perry's vocal game may be

With such a wide array of music, the possibilities are endless.

Viewers seek an action-packed, entertaining 15 minutes, filled with creative characters and costumes, such as a galactic-themed sequined alien or leopard-print suit,

along with epic high-flying stunts, decorations such as palm trees or cotton candy clouds and an inspired set design.

With such a wide array of music, the possibilities are endless, and surprises are where Perry is clutch.

Through amazing theatrics and songs infused with high-energy, fans expect nothing less than the best from Perry. They eagerly await not only the football game, but also the half-time production where Perry will seize the stage with a bang. ♦

THE

saratogafalcon

January 30, 2015

ENTERTAINMENT >> 17

Reporters encourage addictive drug: Trivia Crack

BY JADE BISHIT, ANDREW JIANG & SHERRILYN LING

another when necessary.

One time, Andrew and Sherrilyn were in the midst of a lopsided match in the Journalism Room. Andrew, seated comfortably on the couch with a 4-1 lead, was boasting of his superior ability in the game to fellow staff members, claiming that "\$hermone" was no match for him.

With Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and other beloved social media apps already consuming our generation's lives, the new insanely addictive app called Trivia Crack has officially swept teens (and teachers — cough cough, Mr. Abe) across the nation, destroying free time and friendships.

As of now, we three are not on the best terms with each other.

Trivia Crack is a game in which players answer user-created questions from six categories — geography, science, history, sports, art and entertainment. After every three correctly answered questions, players have a chance to win a "character" piece from the six categories.

Players can also choose to challenge their opponents to steal one of their pieces at the risk of losing one of their own. The first to six pieces win. Players can compete against both friends and strangers.

Although it started out as a fun game,

we three have gotten so competitive that our tight-knit friendships have started to loosen. World War 3 has sprung loose in the Journalism Room, as we hide in opposite corners, shooting glares at one

phone screen. "We started a huge thread when [senior] Jane Park posted [in the Falcon Facebook group] offering someone to write the story that Jade, Andrew and Sherrilyn unrightfully stole from me. I should be writing this story — not being interviewed for it."

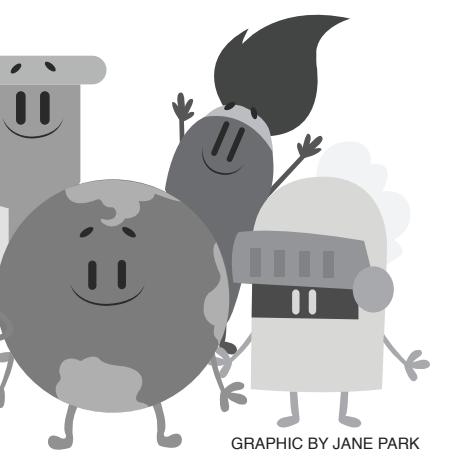
"I've never loved and hated Jade as much at the same time," Lin said. "She is my best friend and worst enemy. But all that matters is that I beat her. In the game, of course."

Yes, we are sucked into this black hole of trivial competition and are pushing each other off the ladder towards freedom. But fret not; I, Jade, will conquer all. Sherrilyn and Andrew are asleep as I finish this story, therefore I can finish with my own personal note: Watch out you two, because you'll be eating my six pieces' dust soon enough. ♦

scream in frustration for incorrectly answering numerous questions in a row during break, senior Amy Lin found herself downloading the app out of curiosity — only to realize this would be the worst decision in her life.

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"An addictive game that ruins friendships."

"Never have I hated sports more."

"Destroys brain faster than Miley Cyrus."

>> togatalks

Describe Trivia Crack in six words or less.

junior Arjun Ramanathan

junior Rotem Shaked

senior Devin Zhao

Senior finds passion beyond movements in dancing

BY RACHEL HULL & MICHELLE LEUNG

tally tiring and competitive.

"It kind of affects you mentally because you're just staring at yourself in the mirror the whole time you're dancing," she said, "and so you're constantly looking at yourself, and you're constantly trying to be perfect."

As she grew older, however, this desire to be perfect dissolved as she discovered a "whole different world" of dancing, with meaning beyond the movements.

At The Dance Company, Seagraves is part of the Teen Elite Contemporary, Jazz and Hip Hop teams. These teams attend a plethora of competitions throughout the year, including Kids Artistic Revue (KAR), StarBound and Showbiz.

Last summer, the Teen Elite Contemporary Team she is in won the StarBound Nationals in Las Vegas as a senior group, which Seagraves said is "the most difficult category to get judged in."

Seagraves also teaches younger students at The Dance Company for two hours every Monday and Thursday. She said that sometimes it can be "a struggle" because the girls she teaches have known her so long and initially did not take her seriously. As time has passed, however, they have gotten more used to seeing her as a mentor rather than a friend.

Despite its challenges, Seagraves ultimately finds that teaching is a reward in itself.

"I love it," Seagraves said. "It's like the best thing ever. I don't even think of it as a job, really, because it's so much fun."



Senior Madison Seagraves does a solo performance at a national dance competition.

Seagraves must balance her time with The Dance Company and her time with the school's dance team, which she started last year with current senior Joy Tang. After school dance team practices, which often take up to three-and-a-half hours, Seagraves heads straight to her studio, where she dances until as late as 9:30 p.m.

Seagraves and the school dance team compete in competitions run by the United Spirit Association (USA), held at local high schools such as Homestead, Bella Vista and Monta Vista. The team plans on going to Nationals in Anaheim in March.

Seagraves and the school dance team compete in competitions run by the United Spirit Association (USA), held at local high schools such as Homestead, Bella Vista and Monta Vista. The team plans on going to Nationals in Anaheim in March.

"We're both different, but we work well together, and when one of us is not there, it's kind of like part of our team is missing," Tang said. "Without her, I don't think our team would be the same."

Through all the late practices, taxing competitions and difficult classes, Seagraves never forgets why she loves dancing.

She plans to either major in dance or join a dance team in college.

"Whenever I'm sad or depressed about something stupid, I literally just go to the studio, and I just dance, and I feel so much better," Seagraves said. "I think it's just really cool that you can tell a story through your movement in dance."

January 30, 2015

Saratoga fosters Indian cultural roots

BY Jade Bisht, Anant Rajeev,
& Arjun Ramanathan

Being Indian is kind of strange. There are so many moments in which we feel happy to be Indian, yet also a number of moments in which we're glad to be raised as Americans. However, the former is more frequent than the latter.

As Indians, we are proud to say that our culture (or our parents', anyway) is represented well locally. The Saratoga community makes sure to represent the Indian community in full force through various events and traditions, all culminating into the pride we feel as a culture.

Bombay in the Bay

Some attribute this Indian emergence to the rise of the Indian Cultural Awareness Club and its annual show, "Bombay in the Bay." The show features acts from each class, as well as various Indian styles of dancing, singing and instrumentals. Students of all ethnicities have developed an interest in the show; the senior class alone will display almost 100 performers this year, a record breaking number in the club's history.

The show now takes place in February, with acts beginning practices as early as December or November. Choreographers work hard to produce fusion mixes, mingling Indian music with contemporary styles of music fit for choreographed dancing.

"Being a choreographer is super stressful but super fun because the process of making your ideas come to life and working with your friends and peers is really rewarding and in-

volves a lot of creativity," senior choreographer Meghna Chakraborty said. "I usually just listen to the music while thinking about the dancers and audience and the ideas just come to me. The toughest part is making the picture in my head become a reality."

Although Bombay in the Bay started as a show put together by predominantly Indian performers, more students from all races have been signing up to take part. Since the performance is open to anyone who chooses to participate, many students who are

It is clear that Indian influence is a force on our community, affecting many students in various ways

have garnered a considerable amount of interest from students of various cultures, with upwards of 80 signups for the senior class' dance. Although only around 40 people ended up performing on Oct. 25, 2014, everyone involved enjoyed taking part.

Exposure to such songs and movies change the views of Indian American students, giving them an insight into their parents' native cultures. Some students say that learning about such things provides them with a bridge into the immersion of tradition and knowledge of their parents and ancestors.

One popular form of cultural expression is traditional Indian dance; in addition to being featured in the cultural section of the Bombay in the Bay performance, many students choose to take on dance classes which are established with enriched cultural backgrounds.

"I started learning dance when I was young because my mom suggested the idea of a lasting cultural hobby for me," Maheshwari said, "it was an amazing experience that I will always remember."

Most cultural dancers culminate their learning experiences in a performance known as an arangetram, a three-hour performance representing the graduation of a dance student to the next level of dance. This performance can take place at any age, though most performers are in their teenage years.

The crowd is usually pleased by the mix of different cultures associated with the song mix and the dance present in the Indian performance, another highlight of Saratoga's Indian Culture Takeover.

Pop culture
Growing up in an Indian household, most Indian American students are exposed to a great deal of traditional music and movies, giving them a taste of the styles and format of entertainment that their parents grew up with. This includes upbeat songs integrated into

movies, most of which are about a stereotypical criminal justice story.

Exposure to such songs and movies change the views of Indian American students, giving them an insight into their parents' native cultures. Some students say that learning about such things provides them with a bridge into the immersion of tradition and knowledge of their parents and ancestors.

Homecoming dance

Beyond Bombay in the Bay, cultural Indian dances can also be found plentifully in quad days during Homecoming. Although much more informal than the annual Bombay in the Bay, these dances still find a large number of participants and are highly anticipated by the rest of the school.

"Since our racial and cultural diversity is so strong at this school, I think people get really passionate about having ethnic dances," junior Luke Salin said.

The Homecoming Indian dances

Anticipation rises with 'Star Wars Ep. VII' trailer

BY Rotem Shaked

Star Wars fans and movie fanatics alike are quivering in anticipation of the first installment of the series to release in a decade, which is slotted for Dec. 18, 2015.

The new episode, the first in a trilogy



GRAPHIC BY ROTEM SHAKED

spawned by Disney's acquisition of Lucasfilm and its subsequent decision to revive the franchise, will apparently go under the name "Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens," and has raised both praise and criticism from longtime fans of the series.

Directed and co-written by famed director JJ Abrams, a long-standing fan of the series, the movie should be a deviation from what fans have come to expect from George Lucas and the rest of the old staff, yet a nostalgic return to the world that many felt was soiled by Lucas's prequels.

Speaking of the prequels, much of the controversy surrounding Disney's decision to start the series again stems from the harsh criticisms launched at the most recent three movies, which ran in theaters from 1999 to 2005 and upset more than a handful of the fanatics.

Abrams even initially rejected the offer to direct the film, citing the personal attacks that George Lucas faced after even slightly deviating from the formula of the original trilogy, which many claim were made as a desperate

attempt to appeal to the market and introduce easily sellable characters like Jar-Jar Binks (a character almost universally hated, but thought to have been included to sell action figures).

Despite fans' doubts about the merits of the new movies, even the single short trailer that was released (comprising of quick shots and cuts and not really showing much of the story or characters) generated positive reactions that reached the front page of many popular sites like Reddit.

Some of the primary visuals in the trailer were likely meant to evoke nostalgia in adults who were

familiar with the series as children such as the swooping sequences of the iconic Millennium Falcon flying past the viewer,

while others introduce concepts new to the series, such as a crossguard-hilted lightsaber and glimpses of some new characters (including a shadowy sith figure which one can only assume to be a main antagonist of the movie).

While some are less than enthusiastic about these additions, going as far as to question the feasibility of a crossguard on a lightsaber in a universe which has talking slugs and casual telepathy, others are hoping that the changes will help introduce a new generation of children to the vibrant space-opera, and help open doors for future iterations of similar movies. ♦

take a different angle. The international a cappella competition that is shown in the trailer looks to be promising, especially with the addition of new foreign characters. We expect to see a lot of drama between rival groups, and we can't wait to see the music from all over the world.

We haven't stopped watching the trailer; our ears perk up every time we hear the first few notes of the iconic song "When I'm Gone," by Anna Kendrick. And we're sure that the songs in the sequel will be just as brilliant.

The original "Pitch Perfect," released in 2012, caused quite a stir among teens with its stunning characters, captivating plot and a capella songs. The movie tells the story of Anna Kendrick, who plays aspiring DJ Beca, a freshman at Barden University, who reluctantly joins an all-girls a cappella group called the Barden Bellas. Although they got off to a rocky start, Beca eventually brought the team of misfits together, showing them what it truly means to be a team by connecting them through their shared love for music.

With a new style of singing, the Bellas take on their goal of wanting to beat their rivals, the Treblemakers, an all-male-group a cappella group, in the National Championship of Collegiate A Cappella. And with the "no fraternizing with the enemy" rule, there are inevitable forbidden romances that we are eagerly awaiting in the second movie (ahem, Beca and Jesse).

We all saw the girls as awkward new-comers struggling to fit in, and it was an absolute joy to watch them find themselves and their group of friends. They all became a family in the first movie, so plot-wise, we hope that the directors

reclaimed the dwarf stronghold Erebor, now occupied by the dragon Smaug. It is an ageless novel for children, but Jackson's adaptations of it went from acceptable to woefully unrecognizable.

Part 1 of the trilogy, "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey," was not wholly a disaster. Nostalgic chuckles arose from Tolkien fans at several points, especially during the riddles scene with Gollum.

The mistake came when Jackson also chose to stretch the Hobbit into three movies; see, the Hobbit is not a dense adventure series comparable to Frodo's journey to Mount Doom, as LOTR is. Because it's a short 300-page novel, "The Hobbit" is a poor choice to be stretched into three two-hour movies.

Starting from "Part Two: The Desolation of Smaug" (Desolation of Tolkien would be a more apt title), the quality plummeted. Almost none of Tolkien's literary touch was present.

Worsening the matter, a smorgasbord of fabrication ensued. For example, Tauriel, a fabricated elf character, fuels a ludicrous love triangle involving a dwarf and another elf.

"The Hobbit" tells of the journey of Bilbo Baggins and a company of dwarves

Furthermore, Jackson's insertion of material may have been necessary to

bulk up his trilogy, but he is not very good at it. A friend once commented, "I've read better fanfiction than this."

I prayed and prayed that "The Hobbit: Desolation of Smaug" (Desolation of Tolkien would be a more apt title), the quality plummeted. Almost none of Tolkien's literary touch was present.

When assessing the Hobbit trilogy as a whole, it is hard to begin. As the movies progressed, the overall quality seemed less like Tolkien's eloquence and more like the cheap spawn of typical action movies.

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"The Hobbit" tells of the journey of Bilbo Baggins and a company of dwarves

January 30, 2015

'Five Nights at Freddy's 2' is terrifyingly well made

BY Atirath Kosireddy

Best of all, those pesky doors that the last guard used to keep the animatronics out are gone, so I got more close encounters with Freddy and his friends.

Fortunately, I was given an empty Freddy Fazbear helmet to fool the animatronics, so I got to play a game of peekaboo with my new friends. It would act as a disguise if one of my "friends" snuck in. But Foxy and the puppet knew better; they could see past the helmet.

Foxy was relatively easy to deal with, since all I had to do was shine my flashlight at him. However, the puppet took up quite a bit of my focus.

To keep the

puppet at bay, I had to keep remotely winding a jukebox on my monitor. There is a certain sense of panic I felt as I tended to the jukebox with my eyes glued to the monitor while multiple animatronics on my left, right and front could be staring into my soul.

I would repeatedly put my monitor down to find Chica, Freddy or a faceless Bonnie that horrifyingly resembled the Terminator right in front of my desk. To make things more creepy, the red lights shining from w h e r e B o n - nie's eyes were sup-

posed to be would blink.

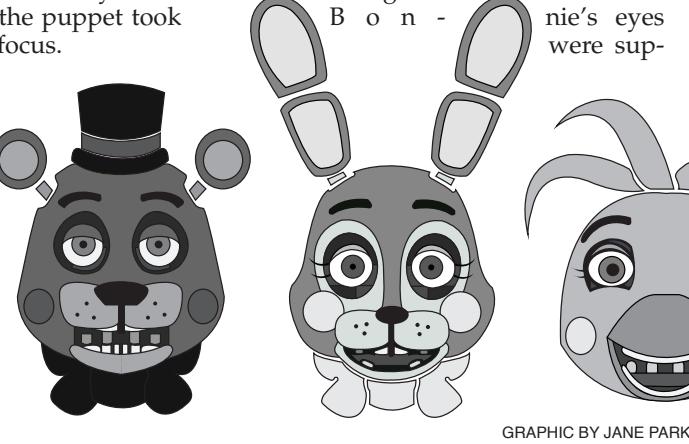
At that point, I would only have a split second to react.

My heart would pound right as I placed my helmet on. The lights in the office would flicker and I could either be safe or I could be killed for being too late, which I would find out when my helmet was lifted off to find an animatronic reaching for me.

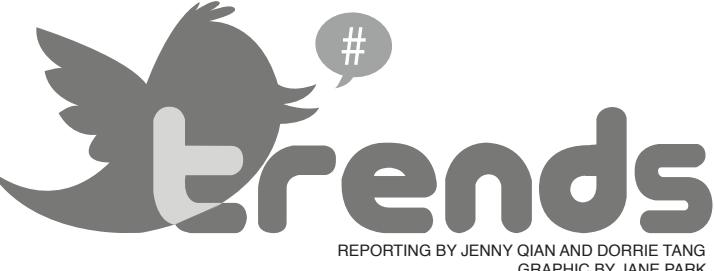
If I have any constructive criticism to offer Scott Cawthon, the developer, it would be the incorporation of a survival game mode. This mode would require the player to survive as long as possible.

Cawthon has kept the core of what made the prequel so great: simplicity, urgency, cameras and jump scares. At the same time, he has added more urgency, increased the need for fast reflexes and scarier animatronics.

If you ever want some of that family friendly fun found at Chucky Cheese's (without the "family" and "friendly" parts), get on Steam and download a copy of "Five Nights at Freddy's 2" right now. ♦



GRAPHIC BY JANE PARK



REPORTING BY JENNY QIAN AND DORRIE TANG

GRAPHIC BY JANE PARK

Among the daily changing trends on Twitter, the following hashtags were among the ones that were recently popular. Although each hashtag was used for a different purpose and situation, all described world events that had occurred which affected not only adults, but students as well. Whether the popular trends depict remembrance such as #JeSuisCharlie, or giving us a laugh with posts with a #ThanksMichelleObama, they keep us informed about happenings around the world

#FF

Originally started in 2009, the #FF (Follow Friday) hashtag has once again been gaining momentum since the beginning of 2015. It represents an international Twitter event that happens each week where users recommend other users to follow. Twitter users add the hashtag, @ the name of the person or people they are recommending and sometimes a reason for the recommendation to their message.

The hashtag's aim is to show appreciation to followers while trying to gain more followers for their own page, increasing their social media network.

#Best Memories of 2014

As 2014 came to close and the new year, 2015 began, Twitter users used this hashtag to share their favorite memories of the year with their family and friends.

#Alex From Target

In November 2014, 16-year-old Target worker Alex Lee became an overnight sensation after a girl posted a picture of him on Twitter with the caption "YOOOOOOO" and #AlexFromTarget. Soon afterwards, he was also invited to be on Ellen DeGeneres's show. However, he was soon exposed to the negative consequences of sudden fame — hateful private messages and death threats.

#Thanks Michelle Obama

In 2012, first lady Michelle Obama tried to promote healthier school meals by encouraging more fruits, vegetables, whole grain and less sodium. Although schools have begun to change the standards of school lunches, many are still behind. Starting around the end of November 2014, unsatisfied students posted pictures depicting unsavory school lunches tagged with the hashtag #ThanksMichelleObama on Twitter, as a sarcastic thanks to the first lady's efforts.

'The Hobbit: Battle of Five Armies' fails to impress

kelly jelly bean

Kelly Xiao

"Will you follow me one last time?"

This is the question Thorin lays on his dwarves in "The Hobbit: Desolation of Smaug." Even faithful, the dwarves decide to fight alongside Thorin once more.

Tolkien's fans choose otherwise.

When in 2012 Peter Jackson announced his intention to film "The Hobbit," by JRR Tolkien, expectations were high. Jackson was the same director who had filmed the Oscar-winning Lord of the Rings trilogy (lovingly dubbed "LOTR" by fans). In the end, though, those expectations were too high.

Although most movie sequels tend to be more disappointing because of elevated expectations, we are optimistic that the second movie will not be a letdown despite the change in movie directors. "Pitch Perfect," directed by Jason Moore, has a good foundation in the first movie. Elizabeth Banks, director for the sequel, acted in and produced the first film, which raises our hope that with all this experience, there will be a lot of continuity between the two movies.

We all saw the girls as awkward new-comers struggling to fit in, and it was an absolute joy to watch them find themselves and their group of friends. They all became a family in the first movie, so plot-wise, we hope that the directors

reclaimed the dwarf stronghold Erebor, now occupied by the dragon Smaug. It is an ageless novel for children, but Jackson's adaptations of it went from acceptable to woefully unrecognizable.

Part 1 of the trilogy, "The Hobbit: Desolation of Smaug" (Desolation of Tolkien would be a more apt title), the quality plummeted. Almost none of Tolkien's literary touch was present.

Starting from "Part Two: Desolation of Smaug" (Desolation of Tolkien would be a more apt title), the quality plummeted. Almost none of Tolkien's literary touch was present.

When assessing the Hobbit trilogy as a whole, it is hard to begin. I'll start with the script. From "The Desolation of Smaug" onwards, the character dialogue began to sound less like Tolkien's eloquence and more like the cheap spawn of typical action movies.

Worsening the matter, a smorgasbord of fabrication ensued. For example, Tauriel, a fabricated elf character, fuels a ludicrous love triangle involving a dwarf and another elf.

And the music. In "LOTR," the soundtrack is a masterpiece to itself. Who can forget the haunting violin

melody of Rohan and ominous Mordor theme? By comparison, the music of the Hobbit trilogy is insignificant, a poor imitation. I'll admit, "Misty Mountains Cold" has its charms, but I recall no consistently notable music.

I suppose the Hobbit movies are not terrible; they are decent action movies in their own right, just not representative of Tolkien's work and nowhere near the level of the Lord of the Rings trilogy. As a matter of personal opinion, I find that one movie with a faithful script and memorable music would have better represented "The Hobbit."

Jackson's new change in filming style is a sad reflection of how society's film, even book, standards have changed; few of the movies being produced right now could become classics. Many are not worth purchasing or rewatching. I doubt people will be holding Hobbit movie marathons as they do for "LOTR." The sense of loss after finishing the Hobbit trilogy is crushing. One is reminded of the elves in the "LOTR," when they all begin sailing to the Undying Lands in Valinor because "the age of elves is over."

Well, it would seem that the Age of Tolkien is over too. ♦

January 30, 2015

In the shadow of a Princetonian

SOPHOMORES REFLECT ON LEGACIES OF COLLEGE-GOING BROTHERS

BY Kevin Chow
& Jenny Qian

We've known our older siblings from the very day we were born, and since then we've been ruled by their benevolent dictatorships; essentially, we've had "third parents" since day one.

It's been fun, but it's also been terrible.

This is the story of two Princeton geniuses who graced our plebeian lives.

Kevin's story

"Introduce yourself with your name and one interesting fact about yourself."

A jumble of names and introductions snaked across the classroom, until it was my turn. I ignored my pounding heart and the one-liners fighting frantically inside of my brain, and I stood up.

"Hi," I said.

"My name is Kevin Chow."

A long silence. I watched juniors and seniors, veteran Falcon staff writers who had either known or worked with my brother when he was the Opinion editor, exchange looks.

"Isn't that Nick Chow's brother?"

Someone started clapping — then the whole class was clapping. There were yells of approval from several onlookers: "Prince Chow! Prince Chow!" I waded in the sea of applause, beholding my brother's legacy.

That was my first day of school.

In that moment, Nick more than figuratively defined me, and there's a backstory behind that.

My brother is a responsible person. Responsible to the point that he finds it necessary to be responsible for my actions. He's the type of person who starts college apps during the summer of junior year and finishes them just as December begins.

Also, he is smart. Sort of.

To sum it up, my brother is the ideal third parent.

People at school refer to Nick as "Prince Chow," mostly be-



Courtesy of KEVIN CHOW

cause he got into Princeton last year. But the way I see it, it's also because he wields authority effectively, a skill finely honed by my existence.

My brother's influence shows up in my personality, which I'd say is unnaturally subservient. Living with my brother required that I establish a compensated symbiotic relationship in order to survive.

It's been fun, but it's also been terrible.

This is the story of two Princeton geniuses who graced our plebeian lives.

Jenny's story

If you know my brother, Hansen Qian, a 2012 SHS graduate, you'd also know that we are complete opposites.

Even though we joined the same sports teams and tutoring classes when we were little, our differences in personalities and interests grew as we did. While my brother was constantly away at math and science competitions, I spent much of my time inside a gym, playing in basketball tournaments.

Sophomore Jenny Qian snaps a selfie with her brother, Hansen.

They hoped that like my brother, I would be able to find something I enjoyed and was good at enough to pursue.

Even my brother could tell that I was seriously struggling, but as he was trying to survive college himself and was on the other side of the country, he could not do much to help me. The most he could do was offer me words of motivation.

After my freshman year ended, I felt trapped; my world was just one class after another, a monotonous routine that was suffocating me slowly. I needed a break. So, unlike my friends, who were beginning SAT prep and taking summer courses, I decided to go to Seoul, South Korea, as an exchange student.

Now at Princeton and majoring in computer science, my brother has left an enormous legacy. My parents and their posse of Chinese friends and relatives all expect me to exhibit the same self-prodigy Hansen possesses. I'm even expected to attend a university of the same caliber as Princeton. But I'll be honest: the word "Princeton" intimidates me, as it is always followed by a barrage of questions about my own plans for the future.

What's more, while Hansen was able to carve his own path, my future was planned out for me the minute I stepped onto the SHS campus. My parents had my entire life charted out for the next four years based on what my brother had done in high school. I would take all the classes my brother took, get involved in clubs like he did, become a National Merit Scholar and be prepared to dominate in the Siemens competition my junior year, a surefire method to guarantee the same success he had.

The plan seemed all right, but it wasn't until I actually started to prepare for these activities that I realized I had no passion or motivation to continue them. To make matters worse, I was struggling in all the classes that my brother had breezed through. I was constantly worried and had no idea how I could fulfill the expectations for me held by the people who knew my brother. I already had a hard time getting decent grades in my Algebra 2 Honors class, let alone competing in math competitions. For a while, I told myself that I wasn't trying hard enough and that I had to force myself to like it in order to succeed. But there was still no progress in my interests.

My parents tried everything to help me out, from signing me up for tutoring to sending me to different programs to help define my interests. ♦

**But I'll be honest:
the word "Princeton"
intimidates me.**

It took me a while to realize that I no longer had three parents, and at that thought, I transcended into individuality.

College has changed our dynamic. Now he's forced to see that I have a life to stumble through on my own. But most importantly, now I'm finally learning to be self-sufficient.

Maybe some time in the future I'll accidentally mess up, choose a course I'll come to regret, forget to take an SAT Subject Test when I should have, all because Nick will not be there to watch over me.

But now I have a chance to take away that second name of mine — Nick Chow's brother — and try my luck at some independence. Then, maybe some day, I'll have a better interesting fact on the first day of school. ♦



Courtesy of JENNY QIAN

January 30, 2015

It runs in the family: Youngest Dozier influenced by brothers' passion for sports

BY Rachel Hull
& Michelle Leung

Three Doziers walked the halls of Saratoga High before freshman Quinn Dozier ever did. 2008 alum Trent, 2010 alum Bryce and 2013 alum Kyle traveled the well-worn path through Saratoga High before their younger brother Quinn.

Spanish teacher Gina Rodriguez, who taught Trent and Kyle when they attended the school, said that when Quinn first walked into her class, his red hair and classic Dozier freckles transported her back a few years.

"I was very excited," Rodriguez said. "It's a nice family. They're very nice people. The parents are very supportive of them, and the three of the four brothers that I know are just great kids."

Said Mrs. Dozier: "The things that I love most about having four boys are probably the things I hate most about having four boys — they are always loud, they eat a lot and most of their stories and jokes are at the expense of their parents. I wouldn't trade it for anything. We also love how supportive they are of each other."

Quinn also plays basketball and baseball in addition to football, and he and his brothers enjoy watching Giants, Warriors and 49ers games together. He finds his brothers' past experience with football in particular to be helpful. Football is his favorite sport because of the team's camaraderie gained through shared challenges like knowing "how hard we

◆

characteristics like Trent's appreciation of drama and plays and Bryce's enjoyment of movies differentiate each brother. Quinn said he is especially close with Kyle, since he is closest to Quinn in age and helps him "through a lot of things," like sports and school, but all four Dozier brothers share a strong bond.

Particularly noteworthy is their shared passion for sports. During family gatherings like Thanksgiving, the Doziers spend their time together playing sports like wiffle ball and football, a family legacy. When the Doziers all reunite, it can get "really hectic," but Quinn enjoys the excitement.

"It can get a little crazy when we're all at home," Quinn said, "but it was really weird especially when they went to college because it got a lot quieter and a lot more normal."

Said Mrs. Dozier: "The things that I love most about having four boys are probably the things I hate most about having four boys — they are always loud, they eat a lot and most of their stories and jokes are at the expense of their parents. I wouldn't trade it for anything. We also love how supportive they are of each other."

Quinn also plays basketball and baseball in addition to football, and he and his brothers enjoy watching Giants, Warriors and 49ers games together. He finds his brothers' past experience with football in particular to be helpful. Football is his favorite sport because of the team's camaraderie gained through shared challenges like knowing "how hard we

worked to get here, so we all understand what each other has gone through, so it brings us together and makes us closer than other parents do."

"We all played football, and so they really helped prep for what it was going to be like," Quinn said. "They would tell me that I had to work out a lot and eat healthy; if I eat bad it's only going to make [my playing] worse."

In fact, according to Kyle, who now plays baseball at Loyola Marymount, their shared interest in athletics is something that strengthens their relationship.

"We are all pretty similar," Kyle said. "We all enjoy sports and that brings us together."

According to Quinn, his brothers set

high standards for him during the time they spent at Saratoga — standards that result in some formidable expectations for Quinn athletically.

"Some people expect a lot out of me athletically because my brothers did a lot of really impressive things here," he said, "but most people — since they're so much older than me — don't know them, so it doesn't really affect me."

Quinn said, however, that he never feels the need to set himself apart from his brothers.

"I like being mentioned with my brothers because they did a lot of great things here," Quinn said, "and I also want to contribute to great things here."



Courtesy of QUINN DOZIER

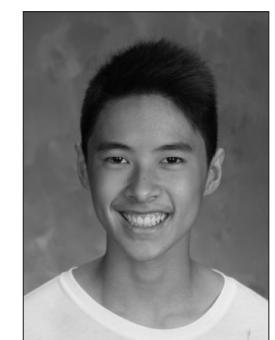
The Descendants: Students reflect on heritage



Natalie Lemire



Charlemagne



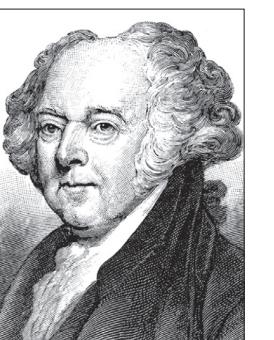
Jason Kao



Liu Bei



Caroline Oliver



John Adams

"For years I was convinced that the 'Princess Diaries' scenario would happen to me. I was always waiting for a phone call that said I had to step up and rule an island somewhere, and I always bragged about being a princess, of course."

"It hasn't affected my life, but it's interesting. I found out because my dad's mom's ... family has a record, a really old book, that my dad's grandpa made. It detailed all the family stuff. It's in Taiwan now."

Heads up! Former student comes back to high school as a substitute teacher

BY **GITAKA NALWA**
& **KELLY XIAO**

Substitute teacher Tom Head, once called "Tom" in varying tones of sternness, is carpooling to work on a Monday morning. His mother glances at him through the corner of her eye and smiles. English teacher Cathy Head's son is going to school.

Except, he is "Cathy's son" no more. He is "Mr. Head," the substitute teacher. The "chill" one, a 22-year-old who seems to understand student struggles more than anyone else on campus.

After graduating from SHS in 2010, Head attended UC Davis, where he majored in psychology. It wasn't until his third year in college that he decided he wanted to become a teacher.

"I started considering ways of combining my love of helping people and being kind of a social worker with actually earning money," Head said. "I realized that teaching was my true calling and that perhaps I should revisit that idea."

Head's first teaching inspiration may be traced back to Cathy Head, the current AP Literature teacher who has taught at the school for 26 years.

"Probably the closest [person] to a mentor would be my mother," Head said. "I have year round access to ask her questions about her experience as a teacher in California and as a teacher [in New Jersey]."

Head was even able to witness his mother's teaching style first hand, hav-

ing taken her AP Literature class during his senior year.

"It was just a very comfortable atmosphere," Head said. "My mother and I get along very well, which hopefully eased the rest of the class into a more comfortable state."

Head used this experience to hone his own teaching style and now creates an exceptionally relaxing atmosphere in the classroom. There is almost no pressure to feign overdone enthusiasm for a subject, no need to put on a facade. Under Head's guidance, honesty comes without consequences.

"[My mom's teaching] influenced my own philosophy when it comes to being true to yourself," Head said. "[Try to be] professional, but don't try to be someone you're not. Students who've had me as a sub know I am far from serious and I can joke around for a bit; if I try to be a straight-edged sub, it would be clearly a false front."

Students appreciate his efforts, and some, like junior Saman Mohan call him "one of the best substitutes [they] have had."

"Because he is an alumnus, he is very relatable and humorous," Mohan said. "[It's] definitely a pleasant surprise whenever I have him as a sub. He gets respect from students because they enjoy talking to him, and he is still a really effective sub."

Although Head was not an English major, he aims to attend San Jose State University for an English teaching credential. He says he might pursue other



Courtesy of THOMAS HEAD

Substitute Thomas Head poses with his mother, Ms. Cathy Head, the AP Literature teacher.

teaching credentials later, but he is content with English for now.

"I am comfortable talking to students about literature and their own writing," Head said. "It just seems like a good fit for me. Whenever I have subbed for English classes, it [felt] right."

Ironically, as a teacher, Head is now learning more than ever.

Studying has extended outside of school, but even so, Head's attitude toward this is more of welcome than resentment.

"I believe that it should be everyone's lifelong goal to continue to educate themselves in whatever form that may be," Head said. "Mine takes the place both of formal learning, of studying textbooks and such, as well as personal growth."

Head's trademark happy-go-lucky personality sets him apart from even the most experienced teachers.

Whereas teachers and students find difficulty mingling due to the difference in positions, Head paradoxically combines friendship and authority.

To students, Head only has a message of gratitude:

"Teaching at Saratoga is a pleasure every day and a lot of that is [your] response to me. Thanks for being so positive. I love it." ♦

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No fear, all clear: Reporters ask teachers about hot-button issues

If you read the Falcon regularly, you know it has a lot of opinions from students and not many from teachers. In an effort to correct this imbalance, Falcon staffers decided to host a discussion with three teachers: AP and regular Physics teacher Kirk Davis, AP Environmental Science teacher Kristen Thomson and English teacher Amy Keys. Reporters picked questions out of a bowl and then asked them to the teachers, and from there, the discussion ensued. What follows are some of the interesting responses the followed these provocative questions.

Falcon: Do you as teachers have favorites?

Davis: Well, as students, do you guys have favorite teachers? You probably do. At the end of the day, we are all people and we all have emotions and there are some people we relate to better (...) But I've never known a teacher who has said, 'I like so and so better, so I'll give them two extra points.'



Falcon: What is the ideal student?

Davis: You know, I had this kid once, maybe about five years ago, who came to me and asked for a letter of recommendation. I said, 'Of course!' but the thing was, this kid was a real disaster. So I sat there, trying to think of what to write, and then I write, 'This student is a glass half full.' This student had so much spirit and energy, even if the test scores weren't that good. There are very few people who are good all around. Almost every single person has something about them that is just amazing, and the best part about being a teacher is finding that 'ideal' part of the student.

Keys: The ideal student is the one who is open to recognizing and challenging his or her own preconceptions, to work with others, to try things that may be confusing or awkward and to open themselves to new understandings of the world and of themselves. The ideal student is motivated to work hard by curiosity, compassion and joy in watching himself and herself and those around him or grow in understanding and creativity.



Teachers Amy Keys, Kirk Davis and Kristen Thomson discuss topics with Falcon reporters during the student-teacher fishbowl seminar.

Falcon: How do you decide if a student is just in the class for the grade or if he or she is actually interested?

Davis: It's not mutually exclusive that a person who is focused on the grade is not interested in learning ... I'll spend as much time as I can with grade grubbers as with kids who are genuinely interested. If they want to pester me about grades, I'll shut that discussion down, but I will still answer any questions they have.

Thomson: We all realize that you can't love every single class. As a student, I struggled with history. I like to change the conversation from 'Why is the grade so important' to 'Let's figure out the best way of learning so you can get the grade you want.'

Falcon: Yeah, that's a good one. Was teaching your first choice of careers?

Thomson: I think, unlike other countries, we don't put teaching first, and it resonates with you guys because you don't go off to college thinking, "Oh, I'm going to be a teacher." But I think a lot of us felt this type of calling and we knew this was the place we wanted to be. I do think about the money thing, but I think that the teachers that you have enjoy coming here. We invest so much in you students. You're like our kids!

Davis: You know, the kids here are in an arms race, and that can be stressful. I think it's important to know that regardless of what college you go to, you will be making connections to other people that will last for years to come. That being said, I do think that of course it is a good idea to aim for the best college you can.

Thomson: In my opinion, it's better to be the top of a regular, decent school than being mashed in the middle at a super prestigious Ivy League school. That

thought I was going to become a doctor. But what I was doing in college wasn't what I liked, and I was so stressed out and unhappy. I had a teaching job over the summer in San Francisco where I graded and created my own lesson plans, and I absolutely loved it.

Davis: I felt there was a need for more math and science teachers, particularly for girls ... Teaching wasn't actually my first job. I actually started teaching when I was 50, and professionally I had finished a medical job and when I was done, I thought about being a teacher. I started by working as a substitute for a bit. It was weird transitioning from the adult world to the student world, and I got a kick out of it; it was so fun. Later, after substituting at Saratoga for a while, I was asked to teach physics. It was funny because although I had an engineering degree by training, I hadn't studied physics in around 30 years! Still, I started teaching physics. I didn't even get the credential my first year because I wasn't sure if I'd like teaching, but I really loved it. It's not worth doing something if you don't enjoy it.

Keys: I set out initially to be an actress, dramaturg or director. Then I decided I loved language, linguistics and literature, and I majored in German language and literature at Northwestern. Graduating from Northwestern with a degree in German, I of course went to Indonesia, where I started teaching English as a Foreign Language, and discovered that I loved teaching!

Falcon: What is your view on all-nighters?

Keys: Absurdly counterproductive. There is nothing you are going to learn in the night before that will stick with you, and the increase in cortisol levels caused by that stress is going to make you physically ill, and you are going to forget things and lose skills that you have already mastered due to your sleep deprivation. Bad idea all around.

Falcon: Lastly, what do you think about trying to improve some of the stress that Saratoga kids deal with?

Davis: There's been a lot of talk about lessening the course load, but honestly, I don't think that's going to happen. I do think a lot of the pressure comes from parents, which isn't healthy, and I think a way to lower stress is to find someone to talk to, especially an adult other than your parents or even your teachers.

Keys: If it's an option for you, don't take the hardest class of everything just to take the hardest class of everything! Focus on what you love. If you're a Robotics wizard, or even a Robotics neophyte, by all means do that.

Note: The reporters who participated in this discussion were Kevin Chow, Lauren Louie, Melissa Magner and Dorrie Tang. ♦

FALCON FOCUS: THOMAS HUNT

Former SHS student now a Thiel Fellow

BY JENNY QIAN

For many students, leaving high school to pursue a project that could change the world is not a common path to take, but it is one former student Thomas Hunt decided upon for himself.

After completing his freshman year at Saratoga in 2012, Hunt left high school to focus on cancer research through the Thiel Fellowship. He would be a senior now, but has been at the Fellowship ever since sophomore year.

Created by Peter Thiel, the former CEO of PayPal, in 2010, the Thiel Foundation gives 20 people under 20 years old \$100,000 annually in funding, mentors to guide them and over two years to work on a project of their choice that will potentially change the world.

Fellows keep up with their high school curriculum through online classes. Hunt is trying to find cures for cancer by learning about types of Telomere Maintenance Mechanism (TMM), which are special strands of DNA found at the ends of chromosomes, and are used by cancer cells as they divide uncontrollably.

"I am really interested in using automation, a technique that removes human error in lab and decreases the time needed to perform lab procedures," said Hunt. "This allows the researcher to focus more on data analysis."

After his grandfather was diagnosed with a rare form of blood cancer, Hunt realized that he wanted to find a way to help prevent the suffering that cancer causes other victims and their loved ones.

Meeting with many other Thiel Fellows from the first class of 2011, Hunt felt greatly inspired.

"Their spectacular stories of self-education, combined with my growing interest in cancer research was a great motivation to leave school to pursue a career in biotech," he said.

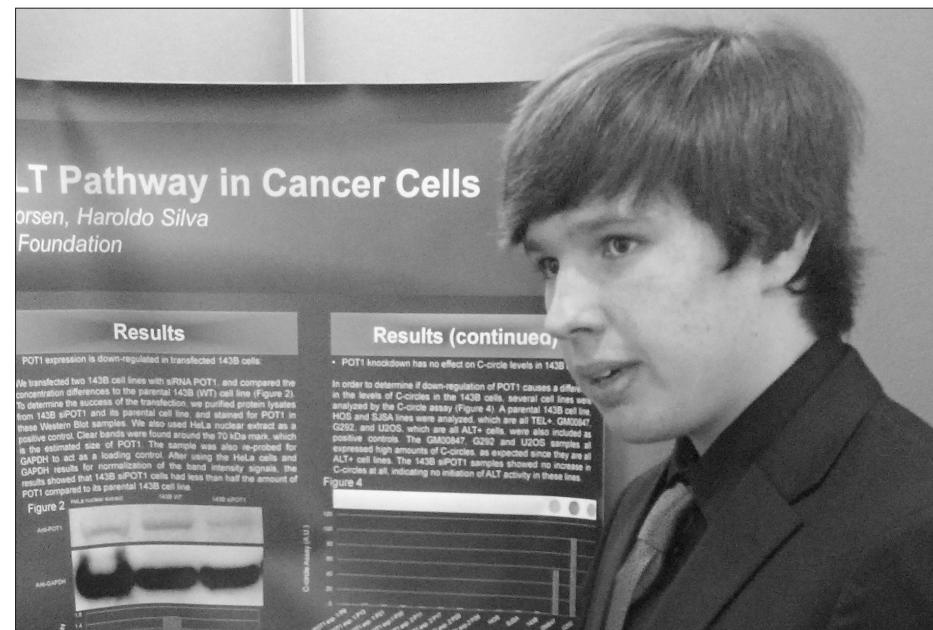
From there, he made the decision to apply for the fellowship. Hunt said the application was extensive.

He first submitted an application for his project, and then went to a number of interviews before his final presentation in San Francisco. At the end of the process, the selection committee took a month to narrow the applicants down to the 20 finalists.

Hunt was notified through a video call and was selected as a 2014 fellow, leaving Saratoga High in 2012.

"My mother was initially skeptical and concerned for my overall education," Hunt said. "However, after when I outlined a plan for learning by taking courses at the local college as well as online learning such as Khan Academy, she felt more at ease."

Leaving high school and not being able to see his friends was a difficult decision, but he has made many new friends and is pleased to have the opportunity to be at the front line of ground-



Courtesy of THOMAS HUNT

Senior Thomas Hunt describes his research involving telomeres used by cancer cells.

breaking technology.

Hunt is in the process of moving to San Francisco to live in group houses provided for the Fellows and students in the Bay Area.

On weekends, he comes back to Saratoga to visit family and friends.

Senior Ethan Ngai, who has remained in contact with Hunt, wasn't surprised by his friend's decision to leave school for research.

"He was always a really science [fo-

cused] kid," Ngai said. "[He] always had the bomb booth at the science fair and [was] really into biology."

Even though cancer research is difficult, Hunt remains just as motivated as he was when he first applied to be a Thiel Fellow.

"It is common to make a small error and ruin an entire experiment," said Hunt. "However, there is no greater joy than a successful experiment that moves my research forward." ♦

FALCON FOCUS: MATT VICTORIA

Junior graduates from teen police academy

BY MAYA PRASAD
& SAYA SIVARAM

Since childhood, junior Matthew Victoria has always wanted to make a difference.

His love of community and fascination with the field of law enforcement led him to form a goal of one day joining the police force and helping to save lives.

As a stepping stone to help him achieve this goal, Victoria joined an after school program that would help to propel him towards achieving his goal.

Victoria graduated on Dec. 12 from a course at the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Teen Police Academy after undergoing eight weeks of training.



Victoria

FALCON FOCUS: EMILY JACOBS

Student sells baked goods at local Farmers' Market

BY BECKY HOAG

Already at the Los Gatos Farmers' Market at 7:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings, junior Emily Jacobs begins to set up her booth. She hangs up her sign in the back, which says "Indulgent Bites" in an artistic font, and begins to set out rows of mini crème brûlées, caramels and macarons on delicate cake holders lining the front.

From crêpes to orchids to persimmons, the Los Gatos Farmers' Market features many stands at the corner of Montebello and West Main Street every Sunday. One of the booths that has appeared since last April for every other weekend is Jacobs' Indulgent Bites.

The business began because Jacobs wanted to try her hand at something new. "I always liked making crème brûlée for my family and I thought they would be pretty easy to sell," Jacobs said. "And then I had all of these extra egg whites

[from crème brûlées] and so I made macarons."

Jacobs likes variety in her booth and is constantly adding new desserts, like caramels and pies, and most individual items range in price from \$2 to \$5. She also frequently switches up the flavors of the macarons and has thus far experimented with raspberry, chocolate, lemon, key lime, peppermint and pumpkin spice.

"I just keep my business constantly changing," Jacobs said.

An enticing feature about Indulgent Bites is that all of Jacobs' products are gluten-free. She originally liked the restriction because it made her company unique and more appealing, but she sometimes finds it difficult to stay with that mold.

"Crème brûlée and macarons were already gluten-free and [everything] is gluten-free now, so just I wrote it on the sign," Jacobs said. "And everyone was like 'Oh my gosh, you're gluten-free,' so

apply to be law enforcement officers. The program also gave Victoria insight into the requirements for the law enforcement field.

Courses were also taught in a classroom, spanning everything from drug and DUI arrest procedures to water rescues and SWAT team procedure. However, his favorite activity was riding alongside an officer who was on shift and getting first-hand experience.

"I highly recommend this program to anyone, even if you are not interested in law enforcement," Victoria said. "It is still a great thing to be a part of and enjoy." ♦

the weekends," Jacobs said. "If I move [out of the state], I would need to get all new permits and get into the markets. It would basically be like starting over and it would be too expensive to do in college by myself."

But until Jacobs's graduation, Indulgent Bites can be found in Farmers' Markets in Willow Glen on Saturdays, Cupertino on Sundays and Los Gatos every other Sunday.

Jacobs said it can get difficult because of its distance and price, but it is a necessity.

She also had to procure business licenses and baking certificates in order to sell at the farmers markets. This was also an expensive endeavor, costing roughly \$3,000, not including the cost of getting booth space. But Jacobs has been paying this off since she turns a good profit.

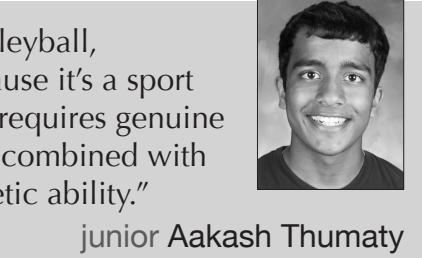
Jacobs is not sure where the business will go after she graduates from SHS.

"If I go to college in California, I could hypothetically do [my business] over

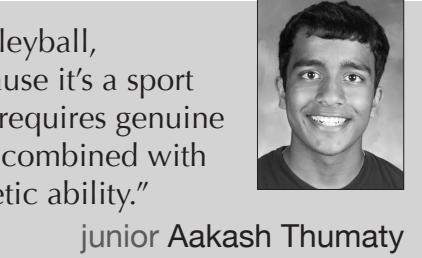
"I always liked making crème brûlée for my family and I thought they would be pretty easy to sell," Jacobs said. "And then I had all of these extra egg whites

"Volleyball, because it's a sport that requires genuine skill combined with athletic ability."

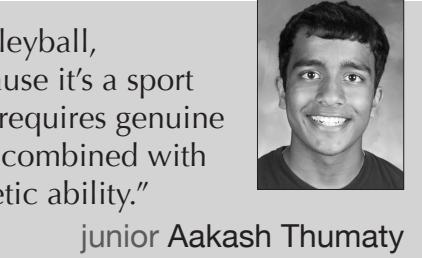
junior Aakash Thumathy



junior Aakash Thumathy



sophomore Jessy Liu



junior Yena Jeong

sports >>

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THE
saratogafalcon

January 30, 2015

Junior ponders longtime experience in soccer

money
maker

Anant Rajeev

Why do I love soccer?

It takes a lot to answer that question. It's been part of my life since I was 5, but I was inspired to pursue "the beautiful game" after I watched the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany.

After two AYSO seasons and a myopic view of the expanses of Bay Area soccer, I joined my first club team: De Anza Force 97 Black. Little did I know, I would be sticking with this team for the rest of my childhood.

Our team struggled for the first four years, consistently finishing close to the bottom in the league. I had constant doubts about us. We lost and gained several players, but there still remained six original players by 2012, when our team started to turn in the right direction.

We were able to ensure a consistent team for a couple seasons and my soccer career was taking a turn for the better. We finally found our stride and placed high in our leagues and State Cup groups.

But lo and behold, we learned from the team manager that the team we were supposed to play had forfeited the match because of a lack of players and had essentially handed the championship to us.

We held on to a 1-1 draw and won the league championship, a feat we had been working toward since I was a 10-year-old boy.

However, the league title wasn't the only thing I took away from my experi-

p.m. in Danville and we would take on a team from Mustang Soccer Club to compete for the top spot.

Tensions rose early on and the intensity kept increasing. Fights between players broke out as each team was pressing to score the vital goal.

The first half ended 0-0, and the next 45 minutes of the game were set to be possibly the biggest in my soccer career thus far.

The breakthrough came late in the second half by our right winger who volleyed home a corner kick to make the game 1-0. The sidelines erupted into cheers and the team gathered in the center to celebrate the goal that could put the title in our hands.

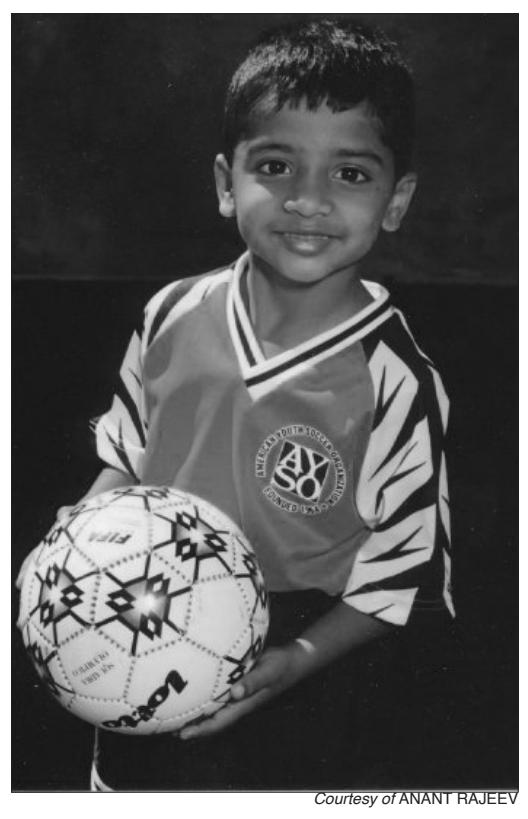
However, five minutes later, our defender scored an own goal. But if we held this result, we would be champions.

It took two goal-line clearances, several point blank saves, and many sacrificed body parts to keep the ball out of our net.

We adjusted our defense to accommodate seven defenders to assure the result.

We held on to a 1-1 draw and won the league championship, a feat we had been working toward since I was a 10-year-old boy.

However, the league title wasn't the only thing I took away from my experi-



Courtesy of ANANT RAJEEV

ence in soccer thus far. I cherished most the sense of successful camaraderie that came with the success. And that's why this sport was, is, and always will be my favorite. ♦

Reporter finds sports media passion at Sharks game

thrillin'



Allison Lin

As a junior, I have reached the point where it is time to start narrowing down my interests. Playing for the tennis team while writing for the Falcon, as well as being a fan of several sports teams has directed my attention to sports journalism. Knowing that many high school journalists would like exposure to the industry, the San Jose Sharks' Foundation hosts an annual "High School Writer's Day" to give students like me some firsthand hand experience on the job.

Next we met Kevin Kurz, Sharks beat writer and insider for Comcast SportsNet. When asked about his approach to forming relationships with players, he said he keeps it professional, as he sometimes has to ask tough questions, such as "why were you pulled from the lineup?"

Wrapping up the interviews, we went to watch the game. When the elevator doors parted, my mouth dropped open. We were at the highest level of the stadium where the media work during the games, and we were about to walk across the arena's catwalk.

As we ventured through an "employees only" door to the exclusive VIP and staff floor, I was excited to see the array of displays and photo frames.

On the first stretch was a photograph of every player who has been signed by the Sharks, arranged by the total number of games played. First in line was Saratoga resident Patrick Marleau, whom I

happened to have seen twice at Safeway.

We made our way to a room full of professional journalists chatting at dining tables. Feeling out-of-place, the four of us walked in slowly, and all eyes turned to watch us enter the press dining room. Though dinner and dessert tasted delicious, we were all eager to move on to the next agenda item.

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For those who are not familiar with the catwalk, it is essentially a 3-foot wide path that extends across the entire width of the stadium right under the ceiling.

Eyes were on us as we made our way past the big-time reporters. I was so nervous for the catwalk that I barely recognized Randy Hahn, my favorite sports

player. As a long-time Sharks fan, I paid close attention to the game below. The Panthers scored a goal in the first 30 seconds, which made the crowd unsettled.

However, when centerman Logan Couture made a goal for the Sharks in the second period, the entire arena erupted. I had to stop myself from jumping out of my chair in exhilaration when

I suddenly remembered I wasn't a fan in a jersey, but a journalist who must maintain professionalism while on the job.

After each period, a copy of statistics was delivered to the press box. The game was tied 2-2 at the end of the overtime period. We made our way down to the ice to watch the shootout up close. My heart sank after Panthers' Nick Bjugstad snuck in the last goal against Antti Niemi, winning the game. Realizing that I would be interviewing a player who had suffered a heartbreaking loss, I knew I had to alter my questions.

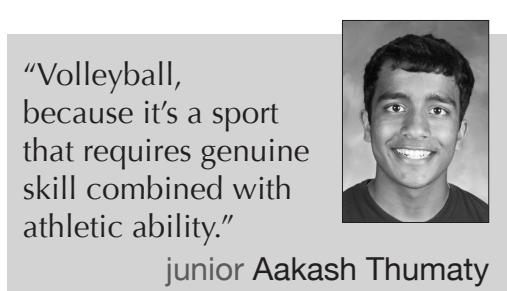
Standing outside of the locker room, I spoke with right wing Barclay Goodrow. I asked him how it felt to be back at home ice, to which he responded with appreciation for the supportive fans.

Concluding the night, the four of us laughed at the enjoyable moments and parted ways. As the only girl, I was relieved to have had enough knowledge to talk about a variety of sports.

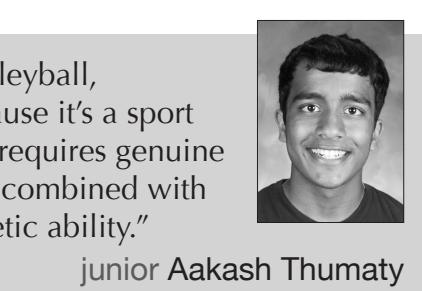
Driving away from the SAP Center, I could not stop smiling. Even though the Sharks lost the game in the shootout, I now had a new perspective of hockey and a first-hand experience at the life of a sports journalist. Exposed to the dedication and toil that these journalists put into their jobs, my passion for sports media increased. I can be sure I will have a better answer the next time someone asks me, "What might you want to be when you grow up?" ♦

>>togatalks

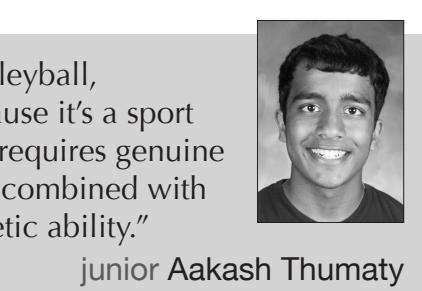
What's your favorite sport and why?



junior Aakash Thumathy



sophomore Jessy Liu



junior Yena Jeong



BUMPED TO THE BENCH

BY KellyXiao

Dedication can only do so much when the body betrays an athlete.

Senior Nidhi Vellanki understands this concept particularly well, having been left with a string of concussions and a torn ACL from playing basketball and field hockey.

Vellanki's first concussion occurred during her freshman year while playing in field hockey. The SHS team was playing a game against St. Francis High School when Vellanki got hit. It wasn't by accident.

The SHS team was playing a game against St. Francis High School when Vellanki got hit. It wasn't by accident.

her therapy sessions short by one month in order to return in time for the next field hockey season in the fall. She went on to continue playing as one of her team's much needed defenders, support brace and all.

Unfortunately, the shortened therapy prevented the ACL's full recovery, even keeping Vellanki from continuing in basketball after freshman year. Even now she experiences symptoms from the injured ACL.

"Technically I can run without [the support brace] so sometimes when we're doing warm up laps or running the mile for conditioning I don't wear it," Vellanki said. "But if I land funny then the weird popping noise happens ... it's just really scary because sometimes I think when I don't wear the brace, I could tear my ACL again."

Still, she finds it hard to accept the idea of quitting altogether, as Vellanki's dream to play field hockey at

curred during the worst possible time: junior year. Vellanki ranks it as one of her worst concussions, both physically and mentally.

"I had four [AP classes] and I missed a month of school," she said. "It was really hard to make up after that."

Only one semester later, Vellanki was once again struck in the face with a field hockey ball.

After that fourth concussion, Vellanki knew that playing at the college level just wasn't a tangible goal anymore.

"A lot of the coaches took back their offers," Vellanki said. "They were like 'It's really bad to play through [so many concussions]; it's like brain damage.'"

The truth is, Vellanki's case is unusual for field hockey. The sheer number of her injuries has earned the attention of others.

In fact,

when Vellanki was being pulled out of class for the interview, her teacher joked about her getting yet another concussion.

she has been playing a variety of sports since the age of five.

Even her family members are heavily involved; Vellanki's father, having played club cricket during high school and college, continues to participate in athletic events such as 100-mile bike rides, and her older sister, SHS alumna Neha Vellanki, currently plays field hockey for Wellesley college. Vellanki and her sister often play field hockey together as a bonding activity when they are together.

At the very least, Vellanki says she still plans to play for the field hockey Summer League.

"Everyone's telling me 'No, stop playing it, but it's just hard [to stop playing field hockey],' Vellanki said. "I was really disappointed when my neurologist said I couldn't continue playing field hockey after high school, but I didn't let that get me down."

"Getting injured has been hard because I've never been able to complete a full [sports] season."

senior Nidhi Vellanki

the college level.

Before her third concussion in junior year, she was being recruited by coaches from universities such as Smith, Oberlin and Wellesley. She was also receiving emails from coaches at the University of Michigan, Princeton University, Dartmouth College and Cornell University.

"The third one definitely ruined [my chances of being recruited]," Vellanki said. "I was going to go to a national field hockey tournament where I was going to be scouted by coaches, but because I got the concussion around the time of the tournament I couldn't go."

Furthermore, the third concussion, which Vellanki received during a field hockey game against Los Gatos, oc-

urred during the worst possible time: junior year. Vellanki ranks it as one of her worst concussions, both physically and mentally.

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Whiplash threatens lacrosse player's abilities

saya nara



Saya Sivaram

I've always considered myself the ultimate benchwarmer — my lack of hand-eye coordination seems to guarantee it. Still, it has never deterred me from playing my favorite sport: lacrosse.

The fast-paced nature of the game, coupled with the precision and elegance required to play, was what attracted me to it. What's more, the wonderful spirit required to form a cohesive team was all the more incentive to play.

Although my lack of athleticism doesn't make me seem like a prime candidate for sports teams, I had never considered the idea that I might not actually be able to play at all. As I was about to found out, injuries made that possibility very real.

It was a normal November morning on the day of the accident, back in 2013.

I was reluctant to wake up and I took a longer, hotter shower than necessary. I had a waffle for breakfast and my mom ushered me into her sedan at exactly 7:23 in the morning.

We were on Highway 9 when a car rammed into the back of ours. My mom managed to brace herself on the steering wheel, but my neck snapped forward and then back, leading me to whack my head on the side of the seat.

My mom rushed me to the emergency room, afraid that I was seriously hurt. Doctors ushered me in and out of x-rays and forced me into a powder blue hospital gown. Finally, I found out that I was concussed, I had whiplash and there were contusions on the back of my skull. And the worst part: I had to wear a neck brace.

Despite all of these repercussions, I refuse to give up the opportunity to play this sport. Lacrosse season starts in a week, and I'll be out on the field with the rest of my team, pain be damned. ♦

While I managed to get through the season with only minor injuries, it perpetuated my neck problems.

It was devastating to hear this prognosis. I had planned much of my next semester around lacrosse season, and a of a sudden, I wasn't sure how my year would go.

Once my neck-brace came off, I suffered from various neck problems. I had almost constant soreness in my neck

attending all of my classes, but then it dawned on me. I couldn't play sports without being able to move my neck.

My future in lacrosse was questionable, at best.

I went to physical therapists and orthopedic doctors. They tried all sorts of things, from realigning my spine to giving me deep tissue massages. All of them told me that the muscle strain that the whiplash had caused coupled with the fact that I had very fragile tendons made it unlikely that I would ever play sports again.

Now, instead of sporadic bouts of pain, my neck is almost constantly stiff and sore. There are days when I can't even turn my head.

Worse, even, is that through some sort of medical mystery, these neck issues have caused me to contract crippling migraines.

The solution to these problems: acupuncture and medication. Now I have to spend 90 minutes a week with needles poking out of the back of my neck and ears. I attend regular chiropractic sessions in which a doctor bends my neck in ways that aren't natural.

Despite all of these repercussions, I refuse to give up the opportunity to play this sport. Lacrosse season starts in a week, and I'll be out on the field with the rest of my team, pain be damned. ♦

At first, all I was worried about was the mortification that I would face after

the summer.

Their main goal for this season is to

win the El Camino League this year, so that they can join the upper De Anza League next year.

"We really have to bring energy every single day," Eschen said. "If we do that, we can be really good."

Inability to score leaves team low in standings

BY AnantRajeev

season, and when scoring chances appear, the team hasn't always cashed in.

Freshman Tim Kobara believes that the team lacks the ability to make on-field decisions clearly and quickly.

"The only way to improve that is to invest more effort and energy into trainings and matches," Kobara said.

The Falcons were able to turn their season in the right direction with a win visiting the Lynbrook Vikings on Jan. 15 but hit another bump in the season with a 1-0 home loss against the Milpitas Trojans on Jan. 22. The Falcons have big, winnable games coming up in the second half of the season against Lynbrook, Cupertino, Milpitas and Wilcox.

Through the enhanced training sessions and gaining players such as senior midfielder Kushol Bhattacharjee and freshman midfielder Adam Fayad back from injury, the team has been regaining their form after starting the league season with a 5-3 loss to Gunn, a 1-0 loss to Cupertino, Milpitas and Wilcox.

The Milpitas matchup resulted in eight yellow cards and two red cards total in a hotly contested affair that was decided by a late Milpitas goal.

Strong defensive lines have kept the Falcons' forwards in check during the

second half of the season out there this season," junior defender Abhiram Yellamilli said. "But we have talent and heart and that fuels this team."

The team will take on the second half of the season, eyeing a CCS Playoff spot, more wins and possible promotion back into the De Anza Division for next year.

GIRLS' SOCCER

Falcons flock together for a successful season

BY FionaSequeira & ArmanVaziri

field, which junior forward Kimberly Chen finished for the second goal.

The Falcons defeated rival Los Gatos 3-0 on Jan. 8 at home, despite Los Gatos missing some of its top players. Junior midfielder Fiona Sequeira scored two goals and had one assist, and senior center-back Anisha Nagarajan had a header goal. Berardo recorded four saves for the shutout.

As of Jan. 26, the Falcons held a 2-1-2 record in the De Anza division.

In their first game at Homestead on Jan. 6, the Falcons finished with a 2-2 draw after the Mustangs tied the game in the last 10 minutes with a free kick.

Sophomore midfielder Daphne Liu assisted senior midfielder Ciara Bowen for the first goal. Junior goalkeeper Isa Berardo threw a long pass down the

really give it our all."

In their third game at Palo Alto on Jan. 13, the Falcons suffered a crushing 5-0 defeat. Chen attributed the loss to being second to tackles and not distributing or attacking as well as the team could have.

Maxwell acknowledged the team's potential for improvement, but didn't let the result team morale.

"We won't let a high like beating Los Gatos or a low like losing to Palo Alto define our season," he said.

Maxwell holds intense training sessions four times a week with plyometric drills, skills, fitness drills and posses-

sion or small-sided games to improve the team tactically. At every practice, he holds team meetings to remind everyone of the squad's goal: making it to CCS.

The team rallied back together on Jan. 15 at home for a 2-0 win over Los Altos, with goals from Chen and Liu.

At Santa Clara on Jan. 22, the team tied 1-1 with a goal from Chen assisted by a pass from sophomore midfielder Hannah Leonard. Senior co-captain Amy Shepherd suffered an ankle sprain in the first half that will sideline her for at least two weeks, causing the team to adjust the starting lineup.

The Falcons continue league play this season with a match against Palo Alto at home on Feb. 3. ♦

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Chemistry on and off court reveals potential

BY JennyQian

Altos on Jan. 9. The Falcons were able to get over their nervousness and win the game successfully.

"As a [co]-captain, [I] want to create a positive environment and make everyone feel comfortable and confident," said Davey. "Our chemistry on and off court contributes to our overall hard work on the court together. I think our team definitely has a lot of potential to show during our games."

"Break! Break!" yells junior point-guard Nicole Prowse as she dribbles up the court. The whole gym echoes as all the players on and off court echo the play name.

Each is a code name for a play drawn up by coach Mike Davey. Davey's playbook is deep and extensive because of the talented and smart roster he has this year.

The team has been practicing harder than ever to compete in the highly competitive De Anza league.

Despite the variety of plays taught, the girls have been successful in remembering each one, adding to their offensive firepower. Leading scorers include senior post Mikayla Davis and senior guards Samie Davey and Sara Parden.

"[Davis] is an essential player," said Parden. "She is a great [co]-captain and example of how to work hard and give 100 percent."

After finishing pre-season with a 10-2 record and winning the Monta Vista tournament in December, the Falcons have high hopes of dominating league and win in the really close games."

The Falcons played against rival Los Gatos on Jan. 21.

The score was close throughout the entire game, and the Falcons held the lead for the first three quarters of the game. However, in the fourth quarter, Los Gatos rallied and won with a score 45-42.

"Although we lost, I think we played with all of our effort," Parden said. "It was definitely a fun and exciting game and I know that as a team, we'll get better as we play more games."

To improve, the Falcons are trying out new plays and getting better at their defensive rotation, something they have been working on since

the summer.

Their main goal for this season is to win the El Camino League this year, so that they can join the upper De Anza League next year.

"We really have to bring energy every single day," Eschen said. "If we do that, we can be really good."

The Falcons will get their rematch against the Pioneers at Cupertino High School today and aim to dominate the court. ♦

We really have to bring energy every single day. If we do that, we can be really good.

According to senior point guard Michael Cole, who leads the team in scor-

ing with about 20 points per game, every day is just a new opportunity for the team to learn. The team aims to get better with each practice and each game, whether they win

>> snapshots



FALCON // LAUREN LOUIE



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA



Courtesy of NOW & FOREVER STUDIOS



FALCON // LAUREN LOUIE

Joy Tang (12) performs with the dance team during Electives Night on Jan. 26.

Saya Sivaram (10) and Zach Grob-Lipkis (10) participate in the "Honestly Now" rehearsal on Jan. 15.

Tejas Siripurapu (12) drums with the winter percussion at Electives Night on Jan. 26.

Jason Tsai (12) presses opposing wrestler at the competition in Milpitas on Jan. 15. Check saratogafalcon.org for further wrestling coverage.

Sophomore celebrates the magic of pencils



Maya Prasad

Buying a fresh pack of pencils from OfficeMax can be described as one of the most magical moments life offers. Every time I complete my homework, I take a second to notice the amazing powers of the often under-appreciated pencil.

The most magnificent power the pencil beholds is its ability to erase anything that has been previously written. If a mistake has been made, no problem! With a simple flip of the pencil, the eraser on the other side will take care of the issue in no time.

Unlike a pencil, where mistakes can be covered up to make a perfect assign-

ment, the pen is a dangerous object that shows others how many mistakes have been made. Since pens do not have the ability to erase, the owner has to scribble over it or white it out, showcasing the embarrassing errors to teachers.

It is commonly known that when students are in a classroom, they tend to doodle on the side of their papers. Since the darkness of the pencil can be controlled with varying amounts of pressure, the owner can create different shades to make more realistic drawings on the margins of their essays.

The pencil also stands to be the stepping stone for children in elementary school when they first learn how to write. When kids sit in their seats eager

to learn, teachers hand them the breathtaking pencil to teach them how to spell their names.

Although teachers should get much of the credit for teaching children to be literate, students should realize that their pencil is the one that helped them grow and learn.

Unfortunately, many people undermine the reputation of the pencil by saying that a pen is the better option since it doesn't break every two minutes.

But on the contrary, pens tend to lose ink very quickly, almost always when I need it, and there have been countless occasions where all my pens have run out of ink, and I was left with no writing

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utensil in my moment of dire need.

A possible solution to the conundrum of lead breakage is to buy pencils that need 0.9 lead. This type of lead is so thick that it is nearly impossible to break unless someone decides to bang it on the desk.

It kills two birds with one stone because it writes as dark as a pen would, making it easier for others to read. With a pack of 0.9 lead in hand, the pencil is sure to be a cheaper and more effective option than a pen.

Because of its multi-functional properties, the pencil continues to be proven as the better option in comparison to the demonic, unforgiving pen.

So the next time you find yourself in front of the mailbox scrambling to search for your Hogwarts letter and finding nothing once again, just buy any pack of pencils to immediately make your day better. ♦

Pens: Forever and ever on (ball) point



Jade Bisht

It's dead silent; students viciously scribbling away at some in-class essay, hands cramped but minds cranking at the speed of light. Words are flowing beautifully into well-connected transitions and breathtaking conclusions, eyebrows furrowed with intellectual stimulation, when — WHAT IS THAT NOISE? — all heads whip over to the growling sound of an angry, chomping pencil sharpener destroying the serenity of silence: all because of a pencil.

Pencils are high maintenance and bothersome. Of course, most writing utensils are — they stand in the tall shadow of life's greatest gift: pens.

Nothing is more satisfying than the inky imprints that a pen leaves as it glides across paper, leaving trails of lovely curves and smooth swirls behind. It's aesthetically appealing and, when the right pen meets the right thickness of paper, a spark of hope ignites in the beautiful connection.

Pens provide a tastefully satisfying appearance while also being environmentally friendly. Pens can easily be refilled through purchasing ink refills at

local stores. Can you refill a pencil? Hah, good one.

Think about it: Pencils are made of wood. Wood comes from trees. Pencils kill trees.

When you use a pencil, you're killing a tree.

Some may argue that mistakes left in ink are ugly, even when covered in white out. But nobody's perfect; why try to mask mistakes? Teachers usually prefer students cross out mistakes with one, alluring line, rather than using white-out. Pencils, on the other hand, leave brown, disgusting attempts at erasing errors, thus leaving what looks like the remnants of a tornado on a page.

Ah, there are too many reasons to look down on pencils; their short life spans, weak stems (all too many days in elementary school did I find broken pencils at the bottom of my backpack), constantly breaking tips and too much more. But maybe the biggest pet peeve of them all is having to tote around a mini pencil sharpener. And when you lose those, all hell breaks loose.

Do you need to sharpen a pen? Nah, just gotta let the pen do its thing.

To put the horrid lifestyle of using pencils in a relatable perspective: I, a

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leftie, have to constantly deal with dragging pencil and hand over lines of text when writing in-class essays and the consequential aftermath of lead stains on the side of my hand. Yet, when I have a pen, the ink dries neatly at the speed of light and I find myself happy with a nicely written essay and clean hands. Thank you, pens, for not making me wash my hands after every essay.

Pens provide the comfort of a built-in, squishy grip to ease the pain of writing for extended periods of times. But pencils? No. If a grip is preferred on pencils, then those have to be purchased, adding an additional price onto the already waste of money that pencils are.

Pens are just ideal in any situation. Writing a check? Pen's got you. Crafting a birthday card? Pen will make that thing more eloquent. Signing the Declaration of Independence? Pens basically gave our country freedom.

There's not much to argue: Pens are significantly more impressive than pencils, markers and all other inferior writing tools. You can't argue with the writing tool that's been around through thick and thin, for better or worse, in sickness and in health. Got Pen? I do. ♦

>> topten

WAYS TO ENJOY THE SUPER BOWL

10 Cheer for Seattle. At least if they win, we can claim the NFC West is the hardest division in the league.

9 Record the game. So you can pay close attention to the commercials!

8 Wish Key & Peele's players were the ones actually playing. On the 49ers.

7 Look forward to Marshawn Lynch's post game interview. Which word (singular) will he use this time?

6 Listen to Adele Dazeem sing the National Anthem. My bad, Idina Menzel.

5 Invite yourself over to your "friends," place for the food. Whoa sorry; the game.

4 Congratulate the Seahawks' 12th player. The referees.

3 Go-Daddy Ads. Good family bonding while cringing.

2 Doritos Game. Eat a bag for every tear you shed because Brady isn't the 49ers' quarterback.

1 Watch the 49ers win the Super Bowl. And then turn off the Xbox.

>> Anant Rajeev & Summer Smith