



ENTERTAINMENT | 16

Racial diversity blossoms on screen.



FEATURES | 20

To rave or not to rave? A look into dance culture.



SPORTS | 25

Boys' tennis continues to lead their league.



Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage PAID Saratoga, CA Permit No. 41

THE saratogafalcon



Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA
An Independent School Publication

saratogafalcon.org

Friday >> April 3, 2015
Vol. 54, No. 10



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA



Top left clockwise: Senior Anne Witkowski, senior Blake Propach, senior Natalie Miller and junior Nina Nelson prepare for "The Mystery of Edwin Drood."

FALCON // LAUREN LOUIE

In the mood for Drood

LOOKING BEHIND-THE-SCENES OF THE SPRING MUSICAL



BY Vibha Seshadri & Simi Srivastava

Senior Emily Lowdermilk, a member of the tech crew, does her work off stage and rarely receives the applause reserved for actors in shows.

And that's the way she likes it. "I joined tech because I wanted to know more about behind-the-scenes work, and I had already been involved in the drama department all four years," Lowdermilk said. Being part of tech is ex-

tremely time consuming. As a student technician, she does not have one set role; rather, she has to invest time and work in anything related to behind-the-scenes work

>> **TECH** on pg. 7

FALCON // LAUREN LOUIE

LEADERSHIP

ASB targeted through anonymous hate posts on YikYak

BY Andrew Jiang & Ariel Liu

"Just got rejected from my safety! #ThanksASB"

The ASB has been receiving hate messages like this on YikYak, an anonymous social media app that allows users to

post and view "Yaks" within a 10-mile radius of their location. Although some posts relate to troubles the ASB has had with some commissions, others are completely unrelated except for a "#ThanksASB" at the end.

Much of the hate spewed on YikYak may come from commissioners who

were angry at ASB for various reasons.

For the Sadie Hawkins Dance on March 28, there was a miscommunication between ASB and Dance Commission. Originally, Dance Commission thought the Spring Fling Commission was planning the dance, but ASB thought Dance Commission was planning it.

Because of the miscommunication, Dance Commission only had two weeks to plan the dance. However, the head commissioner, senior Jennifer Kim, said that right now, the two groups are on good terms.

>> **ASB** on pg. 6

ADMISSIONS



MICHELLE CEN

Getting rescinded from college rare but possible

BY Helen Chen & Maya Ravichandran

After the woes of college applications are over and school acceptances begin rolling out, there is only one question on the minds of many second-semester seniors: What is the minimum amount of work required to avoid being rescinded?

Most universities reserve the right to rescind students, meaning that they can take back an admission. Even if the

student has already enrolled in the school, the college can still revoke admission if it doesn't believe the student has kept up with coursework.

According to guidance counselor Eileen Allen, the "worst case scenario" is to fail to earn a qualifying grade in a required course for admission such as English. A complete drop in a student's GPA would be the next level of concern.

"If you go from earning

>> **COLLEGE** on pg. 7

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

More tickets handed out to students near campus

BY Rachel Zhang

The first bell had just rung and traffic was already congesting at the intersection of Reid Lane and South Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road on a school day last November.

Junior Kevin Duong-Le and his twin sister Amanda Duong-Le walked cautiously outside of their parents' car, stepping onto the concrete slab that divides the flow of traffic on Saratoga-Sunnyvale. Peering right, they waited until the crosswalk parallel to the road signaled and jaywalked across the street.

Meeting them behind the line of Redwood trees near the portable classroom in the back parking lot was a sheriff's deputy, who in turn handed tickets with a fine of around \$100.

"I didn't think it was fair because I walked parallel with

the people crossing the road, so it was perfectly safe," Kevin said.

Over the past few months, students like the Duong-Lees have been the object of increased enforcement by deputies near campus before and after school, giving citations for offenses such as jaywalking, not wearing a helmet while biking and speeding.

According to Chad Garton, the school's new resource officer, the increase in traffic patrol is the result of complaints from students, staff, parents and the community in general.

"The more you speed around campus, the more cops there will be," said Garton. "If everyone slows down and drives responsibly, we will focus our efforts somewhere else."

>> **POLICE** on pg. 7

>> what's inside

R.I.P. CLUBS

Dwindling membership

Clubs struggle with maintaining active members throughout the second semester. **pg. 6**

ANGRY RANTS

100 words to vent

Falcon staffers let off steam over favorite pet peeves. **pg. 10**

ROLE MODELS

Future aspirations

Students talk about the people they most look up to. **pg. 13-14**

TAKE A HIKE

Outdoor exploring

Reporters review Bay Area hiking trails. **pg. 24**



School to compete in annual Physics Bowl

Students have the chance to participate in the first and only round of Physics Bowl sometime between April 1-17. Unlike other bowls, which consist of teams competing against each other by buzzing in and answering questions, Physics Bowl is a single multiple-choice test. The test has mathematical, conceptual and trivia questions.

No tryouts will be held; anyone who wants to participate in Physics Bowl can automatically take the test. The school will then enter the top five test scorers into the national competition. Winners will be announced in May.

Last year, the school placed fifth nationally in the division for students in a second-year physics class. Junior Kristine Zhang, who had not taken any school physics class at the time, tied for the highest score in the Western Region.

"I think it would be nice to make it to the top five of the school again," Zhang said. "As a school, I think we'll do better this year because we have six semi-finalists in Physics Olympiad."

— Maya Ravichandran and Carolyn Sun

Measure E: Remodeling to begin in June

The Measure E bond, a \$99 million bond for the Los Gatos Saratoga Unified High School District, will start making a noticeable impact on the school starting this summer. With large renovations planned, the school hopes to make a difference on campus in the next couple of years, especially for music students and athletes.

"The plans that have been completed are the plans for the music building," assistant principal Kevin Mount said. "They are still working out some of the details, but the architectural drawings are already done."

The school's main focus is to tear down the current H building and place a large building for the music department. According to Mount, the building will be approximately 20,000 square feet and will be close to the McAfee Center.

Starting in June, the preparation for the new building will start. Construction should take about a year and a half or two years, Mount said.

Other plans include turfing the upper soccer field and softball field.

This work will begin right after graduation.

Due to budget issues, the school will not be immediately installing lights on the upper field.

"They will get everything ready to install the lights, but we don't know if we have enough budget space to put the lights in right now," Mount said. "We may want to put in the lights later, but the plan is to have lights."

— Aditya Chaudhry and Jason Zhao

AIME takes mathletes to the next round

The American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME), held on March 19, further challenged qualifiers from the AMC 10/12. According to math teacher and Math Club adviser PJ Yim, 31 total students from SHS and Redwood Middle School were eligible for the AIME: 27 students through the AMC 10/12A and 28 through the 10/12B. Qualifying scores in either secured entrance to the AIME.

From there, students who have a high enough combined AMC 10/12 and AIME score will be able to take either the USAJMO or USAMO.

On the AMC 10A, a curve from the standard 120 passing score lowered the qualification to 106.5, and on the 12A, the standard shifted from 100 points to 99. The AMC 10/12B, however, had no curve.

Sophomore William Hu qualified for the AIME for the first time this year with a 114 on the AMC 10A. The 3-hour, 15 question AIME contest, however, posed new difficulties for test takers.

Sophomore Keshav Narayan, who has qualified for the AIME every year since seventh grade, and qualified for USAJMO as a freshman, felt that this year's test was more difficult than the previous one.

"Unlike the AMC, the AIME isn't multiple-choice, so it's easier to make mistakes," Narayan said.

— Karissa Dong

>> picturethis



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA

SPEED DEMONS >> Juniors Rishi Veerapaneni and Meera Rachamalla ran five miles on March 28 to raise money for Smile Train, an organization committed to providing surgeries for cleft palates.

MILES FOR SMILES

Club raises funds for surgeries

by Vibha Seshadri

Adults, children and students alike congregated at the SHS track to run/walk and raise money for Smile Train on March 28 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. The organization is committed to providing surgeries for children with cleft palates.

Approximately 50 people came to the run, which raised approximately \$9,000 for the organization, enough money to fund surgeries for 36 children.

Junior Ankitha Sarvesh, president of the Miles for Smiles club, started planning the event in November.

She decided to have a run as a way to promote exercise as well as raise funds for Smile Train.

"I'm so happy and proud of all the people that came out this morning, and I also think that it went well in terms of money," Sarvesh said.

In the Sports Plaza, Sarvesh set up a table and board for participants to sign in and donate to

the cause. She also had Cuties, water, Nothing Bundt Cakes, Smile Train wristbands, pedometers, informational pamphlets, Smile Train shirts and water for the runners.

Smile Train helped sponsor the run by giving Sarvesh resources such as the pedometers, shirts and pamphlets.

Nothing Bundt Cakes also helped sponsor the run by providing Sarvesh with free sample size pieces of their cakes.

Runners either ran or walked around the track with their friends to music blasting from the speakers at the top of the bleachers.

The ambience of the track was energizing and those who participated were motivated to run for the cause Sarvesh was promoting.

"I really enjoyed this break from school because I could hang out and catch up with my friends," junior Meera Rachamalla said. "It was also just so rewarding because I was able to run five miles and help children in need." ♦

"It was also just so rewarding because I was able to run five miles and help children in need."
junior Meera Rachamalla

A CAPPELLA

Oxford team to perform at McAfee

by Vibha Seshadri

Oxford University Out of the Blue (OOTB), an all-male a cappella team at Oxford, will be performing in the McAfee on April 3 at 7 p.m. and conducting a workshop earlier at 5 p.m. Students who partake in the workshop will get the chance to perform in a joint number with the prestigious a cappella group.

As part of their U.S. West Coast tour for 2015, the a cappella team reached out to the Saratoga Music Program and inquired about whether they could perform and conduct a workshop.

"It seemed like a perfect new opportunity to allow the student body and community to add some different music to their spring," choir director Andrew Ford said.

OOTB has performed at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium in Hong Kong and at private events for Tommy Hilfger and British Airways. This year alone, the group has released two music videos that have garnered more than 8 million views.

In addition to their interest in performing, OOTB likes to take its music into schools as a way of instilling a passion for singing in students and furthering students' ability to connect with any audience.

"I tell my choir students all the time, whenever we present music, we are to perform and

entertain," Ford said. "Our job as musicians is to communicate the emotion behind the music, not just sing the score or play the instrument."

Ford hopes that the students who participate in the workshop and perform with OOTB understand that "a cappella music is simply an extension of the choral repertoire." In addition, Ford hopes that his students understand that they do not have to major in music to enjoy it.

In fact, the majority of the members of the a cappella group are not majoring in music. For example, some are majoring in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE), and others in English, Law, Italian or German. However, each member still invests an immense amount of time and energy into his or her passion for music.

"Music directors the world over send the same clear message to our students as they graduate: Do what you love, but never stop singing or playing music," Ford said. "It is something you can do your whole life. You don't have to have a degree in music to enjoy it."

Furthermore, Ford believes that the performance and workshop closely parallels the philosophy of "teaching music through performance."

"I hope that my choir students and any student who attends the concert or participates the workshop will be inspired to be a true performer in every aspect of their life," Ford said. ♦

ATHLETICS

March Madness teams make way to finals

by Emily Chen & AmiNachiappan

Senior Neel Kattumadam, a member of the March Madness basketball team PM, ran down the court with his heart beating and legs pumping. His team remained nervous as the game neared its end, and the close score of 15-14 left no room for error. A misstep by a defender allowed Kattumadam, the team's point guard who runs the team's offense and controls the ball, to take the winning shot that advanced them to the quarterfinals.

"It was pretty exhilarating," Kattumadam said. "They were a really good team so it was nice to know that even though we were undermated, we could still figure out a way to win."

ASB has been hosting a March Madness basketball tournament that has pitted 16 teams against each other during tutorials and lunches. The teams each have four players, where no more than two of them can be on the school basketball team.

On March 19, the teams in the quarterfinals were announced. All eight

teams — the Mavericks, Splash, Warriors, Spurs, PM, Lakers, AM and Golden Oreos — felt full of confidence and adrenaline. The prizes for the team that wins the tournament are four Golden State Warriors tickets.

The game between the Warriors and Spurs as well as the game between the Mavericks and Splash were on March 20. The Mavericks won with a score of 14-11, and the Warriors beat the Spurs 18-15.

AM matched up against the Golden Oreos and PM took on the Lakers on March 27. AM lost to the Golden Oreo's 15-8, while the Lakers beat PM in a shut-out game 15-0.

In the semi-finals, the Warriors defeated the Mavericks 16-14 on March 27, and the Golden Oreo's beat the Lakers 17-15 on March 30.

Due to printing deadlines the championship game between the Warriors and Golden Oreo's, set for April 13 during tutorial, could not be covered.

The tournament is run by campus supervisor Mark Hernandez and Kattumadam, who is ASB Board Representative. "Mr. Hernandez has been helping me



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA

Senior Alvin Kim dribbles around Shreyes Baleball at the quarterfinals on March 27.

a lot to get everything done, so I haven't had to worry about finding teachers to supervise because he is always there," Kattumadam said.

In future March Madness tournaments, Kattumadam mentions a possibility of making it co-ed and pitting a

staff team against the winning team to compete for the Warriors tickets.

Overall, Kattumadam feels that this tournament has been successful and enjoys watching the average 50-to-60-person crowd "watching these teams duke it out in the tournament." ♦

ACADEMICS

Full block may open Los Gatos classes to students

by Stefanie Ting & Tiffany Zheng

Though the final details of a new schedule that will begin in 2016-17 will be worked out in coming months, the district is hopeful of having both Los Gatos and Saratoga High on similar schedules which will ultimately allow students to take classes on the other campus.

Robinson said one reason the schedule is being postponed until the 2016-17 year is to figure out how it might affect course selection for students.

The Los Gatos course catalogue boasts significantly more classes than the one for Saratoga because Los Gatos has a larger student population compared to Saratoga.

When Robinson was a principal of a school in the San Diego area, he saw the popularity of Career Technical class, such as Video Productions, Engineering or Auto Shop. The classes were almost always something offered at the end of the day.

The classes at Los Gatos that may possibly be available to SHS students could be the Career Technical classes not offered at Saratoga. Such classes include Woodworking, Aerospace Engineering and Introduction to Fashion Style Merchandising.

According to Robinson, most classes that would be shared between schools would be focused on electives instead of AP courses due to health and practical restrictions. Robinson said that both schools have about the same AP offerings, so he sees no outright need to offer classes of the AP rigor.

"What we want to manage for our students is keeping them academically challenged and healthy," Robinson said. "Having been in high academic schools that shared students back and forth, I don't foresee [taking AP courses] as a situation."

Additionally, the electives chosen to take off campus must be compatible with students' schedules. For example, Robinson would not approve of a schedule where a student is taking period 1 at SHS, period 3 at LGHS and then must drive back for period 5 at SHS. He would approve of schedules that allow for enough time for a safe commute between schools.

"Because transportation is needed, we would also limit it to students that drive with parent permission and other safety waivers in place," Robinson said. "So we would limit possible exchanges

for periods 1, 2, 7 or 8."

According to Robinson, most class exchanges would be based on where students can fill in. He predicts that scheduling would be a challenge that would have to be worked out between students and their counselors.

"Say, for example, a student likes fashion design, and Los Gatos offers a fashion design elective," Robinson said. "It would have to fit into your schedule. That's the one sticky point. Does it happen a lot? No, but it opens up the opportunity."

Since it might be inconvenient for students to take classes at Los Gatos, Robinson expects there to only be a limited few students who would choose to utilize this option when altering their schedules.

"I don't expect there to be more than five or six students a year that would do it," Robinson said. "We already have a lot of opportunities for students right here. Most everyone wants to take classes at their own school."

There will be a district-wide committee consisting of parents, students, teachers and administrators from both Los Gatos and Saratoga who will come up with an appropriate recommenda-



Robinson

EVENTS

Malala Yousafzai to speak at San Jose event center

by Michelle Cen

Malala Yousafzai, a 17-year-old Nobel Prize laureate and women's rights advocate, will be speaking at a lecture series event hosted by best-selling novelist Khaled Hosseini at the San Jose State Event Center on June 26.

During the event, Malala will deliver a message of peace, courage and unity against tyranny.

After her speech, there will be an sit-down question and answer session moderated by Hosseini, author of "The Kite Runner" and "A Thousand Splendid Suns," who is one of Malala's favorite contemporary writers.

"It sounds like an incredible opportunity. Many kids who just want

Unique Lives & Experiences women's lecture series, in which famous speakers share their personal stories.

Malala, born in Pakistan, became a worldwide figure when she advocated for the education of girls by blogging and giving speeches. When Malala was 15, she was shot at point-blank range

by a Taliban gunman for her advocacy of education for girls. Malala recovered

"It's relevant because so much of 'Kite Runner' occurs in the Bay Area."
teacher Amy Keys

and continues advocating for universal education and wrote a best-selling autobiography, "I Am Malala," about her experiences.

Ticket sales for the event for the general public began on March 21. Tickets are available on Ticketmaster and range from \$20 to \$220. Those who purchase the VIP Package will attend a reception with hors d'oeuvres, meet and greet with Malala and take a photo with her.

"I think the event is incredible and I am ecstatic. Malala's resilience and bravery is so incredible. She embodies the quote, 'What doesn't kill you makes you stronger,'" said senior Supriya Khandekar, who plans on attending the event. ♦

ALUMNUS

Grad's 2nd startup aims to aid in college process

By Helen Chen & SpringMa

Last fall, 2014 graduate and current University of Chicago freshman Jason Li attended a conference at the school called 3DS, short for 3 Day Startup with classmate Raymond Han and Columbia freshman Matthew Pregasen. While taking hands-on courses about entrepreneurial skills such as Ideation, Team Formation and Customer Discovery, the three met and immediately began a valuable partnership.

There, the three realized the potential of putting a college-oriented spin on Airbnb, a popular online startup that links travellers with local hosts who offer their homes for rent.

Li and his partners imagined a service for prospective college students (prosps) to connect with undergraduate student hosts, giving them valuable information in the college decision process.

Thus, the three founded UProsper. Li and his partners launched early access for the new startup on March 14.

The services of the startup allow prosps and undergrads to schedule meetings at local coffee shops, sit in on a college class or even meet over video chat. Through personal interactions with an undergraduate with similar interests, prosps gain a more accurate

representation of the school's culture and lifestyle.

Early-access applicants will be the first to "test the waters" and experience the full-service launch in April. UProsper currently offers services at 10 campuses across the nation including UChicago, Harvard and UC Berkeley to students and hosts who sign up on its website.

In comparison to UProsper's online competitors such as College Confidential and Niche, Li believes none "provide real insight to college life and culture" or "specific tailored information" that UProsper offers. Li said UProsper makes sure that "college decisions [aren't] based on guesses, but rather genuine interaction."

"College isn't all about the prestige," Li said. "It's about the dining hall food, fourth meal, study breaks, bar night on Wednesday, icings; the real inside stuff. It's about what you make of it and what opportunities are there for you — academics and extracurriculars."

Although Li said he is equipped with more knowledge from working on the electronics-recycling company iReTron, a startup he began in high school and received funding for on ABC's "Shark Tank," creating UProsper has been a completely different experience.

Li said he is kept accountable through the openness of the group. Despite the partners'

rigorous academics, separate extracurriculars and differences in location, the three maintain constant communication through a Facebook chat called "WeProsper" and a shared accessible storage for code.

"There are no politics between us three, and no sugar-coating," Li said. "People say you can't mix business with friends, but I think the two people I'm working on this project with right now are some of the best friends I've had."

Unlike working primarily on his own for iReTron, Li said working with Han and Pregasen allows them to "play to each others' strengths."

Through working on UProsper's website design with Han who drafted "mockups," Li was forced out of his comfort zone when he took a web development course online. After learning the basics, however, Li is grateful for the time he spent on the subject, because the new skills allow him to fix errors and edit content on the website.

Although Li's exposure to coding has allowed him to "speak more confidently about [UProsper's] technical side of development," Pregasen is in charge of revamping the website. Li oversees the marketing, outreach and funding side of business, applying his previous experience from iReTron.

According to Li, many of the site's features, including its



Alumnus Jason Li presents iReTron on ABC's "Shark Tank" in 2014.

minimalistic design, were inspired by the team's "simple affinity to try new things." Upon opening UProsper's website, uprospier.com, a user sees a sign up survey backed by a video, featuring college students showing prosps around.

"The video background and gradient on the landing page were just fun things we tried," Li said. "It's part of why I love entrepreneurship and startups. You have nothing to lose, and no one will tell you whether or not you can do what you want."

In the future, Li and his partners aspire to expand UProsper and make it "the most accessible and most widely used application" for college applicants. Despite the team's constantly

growing variety of ideas, Li said they will always ensure that "student benefit comes before [their] own profits."

The company's main source of revenue has come from a 12 percent operation fee from each transaction. As UProsper expands, the partners want to coordinate a hub of parents and students, in order to build marketing channels through the social network side of business.

As Li and his partners anticipate the launch of their full service, they will add more new features to their website and plan for the future of UProsper.

"This is no more than a sneak peek," Li said. "The real fun comes later when we launch full service." ♦

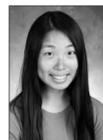
EVENTS

MESH organizes fourth concert

By Gwynevere Hunger

After four months of planning by Music Education at Saratoga High (MESH) student leaders, the fourth annual Benefit Concert was held on March 13 in the McAfee Performing Arts Center.

The concert followed a theme of "Wish Upon a Song" and showcased MESH high school volunteers performing with Redwood Middle School and local elementary school music students in small chamber ensembles.



He

The concert raised money for Music Team SF, an organization that provides music education to low-income students in the Bay Area. More than \$1,500 in donations were made to the organization.

Fifty MESH volunteer leaders from the high school directed and organized the concert for more than 80 elementary school and middle school participants.

"There was a lot of planning leading up to the concert, because the MESH leadership team had to organize all of the participants into different skill-level based groups," junior Alice He said.

Each performance piece was chosen by both the experienced MESH leaders and the group members themselves. Most pieces were easy arrangements that the middle schoolers were already working on. For junior leader Danny Gao and his MESH group, the musical per-

formance pieces ranged from popular movie soundtracks, such as "Star Wars" and "Harry Potter," to classical pieces such as Canon in D.

"The MESH leadership team chose this year's theme after a lot of brainstorming," He said. "Leaders tried to make the theme for the concert relevant to the music played, and something fun that students would appreciate."

Since 2011, the year MESH was created, collaboration between the high school, middle school and elementary school musical students has increased.

This program first began with roughly 10 leaders and about 30 performers at the first concert.

Two times a week, volunteer leaders from the high school traveled to the middle and elementary schools to teach students their music. The leaders took students out of their own rehearsals to help improve their skills and to work on performance musical pieces. Practices started in the beginning of the school year and lasted until the benefit concert.

Leaders and participants say they had a meaningful experience in this program.

"Helping out younger children has been really rewarding," He said. "All of the younger music students look up to you, and it gives you an experience of teaching skills in an instrument that you are proficient at." ♦

DANCE

Team competes, places at USA Nationals in Anaheim

By Eileen Toh



Courtesy of KAITLYN LANDEZA

"And the second place winners of the X-Small Lyrical Dance category is ..." the announcer over the loudspeaker began. The eight girls huddled together with their coach Kaitlyn Landeza, clasping their hands together in anticipation.

"The Saratoga High School Dance Team!" the announcer finished.

The overjoyed girls cheered, hugged each other and ran up to the stage to receive their trophies. All of their hard work since August had led them to this moment.

On March 19-21, the dance team competed at USA Nationals in Anaheim, which brought together approximately 60 teams from all over California. The girls competed in X-Small Dance (lyrical) and Small Dance (jazz) in the Open Division after scoring an average of 84.9 or lower at regional competitions, and X-Small Hip-Hop in the Championship Division after scoring an average of 85 or above. Senior captains Madison Seagraves and Joy Tang also performed solos.

At the end of the competition, the dancers placed second out of six teams in their lyrical category, eighth out of 16 in the jazz category and 11th out of 12 for their Hip Hop performance.

"I am so proud of them; nothing will ever replace this feeling," Landeza said. "[It was so rewarding to] see their dances come to life when they

walked out onto the dance floor."

According to Tang, the girls were nervous coming into their first Nationals.

While competitions in Northern California were already tough, many of the competing teams were from performing arts high schools or dance crews solely focused on hip hop and had connections within the dance industry. Despite this, the girls were determined to make their first Nationals memorable.

"I felt like we performed each dance at Nationals better than we've ever done them before," Tang said. "We felt good [after our performances] since we did our best and left it all out on the dance floor."

Every week leading up to Nationals, the girls changed and improved parts of their routines after considering the judges' feedback from regional competitions. Tang was most worried about their lyrical routine because Landeza changed the entire dance from when the team performed it at the girls' first competition at Homestead High School.

"Placing second with our lyrical dance was probably the most rewarding considering how hard we worked on it," Tang said.

After all of their hard work, the dance team went to Disneyland to celebrate the end of their successful second season. Landeza and the girls hope for even more success next year.

"I was pretty tough on them, and they had some difficult practices, but they pushed through," Landeza said. "This year has been nothing but rewarding in many ways. They have so much to be proud of individually and as a team." ♦

SPEECH AND DEBATE

Students prepare for both state and national tournaments

By Nidhi Jain & Sweeya Raj

Seniors Anjali Manghnani and Deepti Kannan qualified to the national speech and debate tournament during the national qualifying tournament at Bellarmine High School on March 20-22.

Manghnani qualified in original oratory, an event in which she delivered a 10-minute original speech on empathy. Kannan qualified in Lincoln Douglas debate, one-on-one debate about values and morals regarding the topic of food security. The national tournament will take place in June in Dallas.

In addition, four students qualified to the state championships, which will be held on April 17-19 in Murrieta, Calif. Seniors Sudeep Raj and Michael Ong qualified in parliamentary debate, and senior Supriya Khandekar and freshman Varun Viswanath qualified in oratorical interpretation during the state qualifying tournament, which was held at Leland from Feb. 27 to March 1.

As one of the only two Saratoga students who qualified for the national tournament, Manghnani feels ecstatic about her achievement.

"Qualifying to nationals was surreal," Manghnani said. "This has been my dream since freshman year and I had no idea it would actually come true."

In addition to the qualifiers, Khandekar and junior Ashvita Ramesh placed

fourth and sixth respectively in original oratory. Sophomore Mitali Shanbhag and junior Jui Malwankar made it to the semifinals in original oratory and extemporaneous speaking.

National qualifying competitors had to place in the top three in their event at the tournament. Out of the approximately 21 schools that attended, Saratoga placed first in cumulative points for the tournament.

Saratoga also placed fifth in CFL stakes for the entire year.

"[Students] have all their coaches to thank for making it this far," Manghnani said. "They've been [our] mentors."

Each school gets to send its four best competitors in each event to the Coast Forensics League national qualifying tournament for our district. In debate events, participants are eliminated once they lose two rounds, and the tournament continues until there are three teams left standing.

Senior Rohith Krishna, junior Shrey

Desai and freshman Austin Wang competed in Lincoln Douglas. Freshman Kyle Wang and junior Jayee Malwankar competed in extemporaneous speaking. Freshmen Divya Kallabandi and Arun Ramakrishna as well as Ong and Raj competed in public forum debate.

Not all the events were represented at the tournament; the varsity public forum teams had prior commitments, and few extemporaneous speech competitors attended.

In order to qualify for the state tournament in original oratory, meaning that if an eligible finalist is unable to participate in the state tournament, they will be considered as replacements. Malwankar is an alternate for international extemporaneous speaking.

Currently, students are preparing for the state tournament as well as the national tournament.

The state tournament is a competition between the top seven or eight competitors in each event from the 11 leagues in California.

"I've been practicing hard for states," Viswanath said. "The competition is tough, so I need to make sure everything [in my speech] is crisp and clean." ♦



Nationals has been my dream since freshman year and I had no idea it would actually come true.

senior Anjali Manghnani

COURSES
141 courses offered each year

UNDERCLASSMEN
667 / 683

UPPERCLASSMEN
70+ CLUBS ON CAMPUS

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE
26

TILES
2000 in the Falcon mosaic

FACULTY
73

AP CLASSES
18

LIBRARY RESOURCES
16 DATABASES
147 BOOKS

STUDENTS / FACULTY
18.5

BACK 1 PORTABLE WINGS 9

Best public high school by Business Insider NO. 23

There's more to Saratoga High School than numbers, but in case you're counting... 2014-2015

SOURCES: MS. JAMIESON, MR. HEYMAN AND MR. SAFINE. GRAPHIC BY HELEN CHEN

SAT, PSAT/NMSQT & ACT PREP*

HIGHER SCORES MEAN MORE COLLEGE CHOICES.

Proven success since 1977 • Test-taking strategies and skill building • Flexible scheduling

CHOOSE THE PROGRAM THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU!

PREMIER PROGRAM
• Complete assessment using a full-length SAT, PSAT/NMSQT or ACT
• One-to-one tutoring designed around a student's strengths and weaknesses
• Ongoing consultations help parents and students track progress

28-HOUR PROGRAM
• Comprehensive one-to-one tutoring for a boost in all key subject areas of the SAT, PSAT/NMSQT or ACT

10-HOUR PROGRAM
• Concentrated one-to-one tutoring focuses on one subject area of the SAT, PSAT/NMSQT or ACT

Huntington Your Tutoring Solution

CALL 1 800 CAN LEARN®

SAVE When you call before 11/15/2014

ACADEMIC SKILLS
K-12
Reading • Writing • Study Skills
Math • Phonics • Spelling • Vocabulary

SUBJECT TUTORING
MIDDLE SCHOOL-COLLEGE
Pre-algebra • Algebra • Geometry
Trigonometry • Pre-calculus
Calculus • Earth Science
Biology • Chemistry • Physics

EXAM PREP
SAT • PSAT/NMSQT • ACT • Advanced Placement (AP)
HSPT • ISEE • SSAT • GED • ASVAB

HuntingtonHelps.com
*one used out of Premier Program only

Cupertino
7335 Bollinger Road, #A
(408) 996-2900

©2013 Huntington Bank, LLC. All rights reserved. "SAT" and "Advanced Placement (AP)" are registered trademarks of the College Board. "PSAT/NMSQT" is a registered trademark of the College Board and the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. ACT is a registered trademark of ACT, Inc. None of these entities were involved in the production of, and do not endorse, this program. *Offer valid for Academic Evaluation or Tutoring, non students only. Not valid with any other offer.

CULINARY CLUB

Members cook up exciting experiences

by Emily Chen & Katherine Sun

Clustered around a kitchen counter, the 15 or so students soaked ladyfingers — long, oval sponge cakes — in coffee and watched as the pastries soften into mush. They then began to combine the ladyfingers into a single cake layer, mixing it in coffee powder to make a cream. The budding chefs were gathered in senior Kyle Yuen's home for a culinary night and just successfully created tiramisu.

With its 20 members, the Culinary Club meets every Friday in adviser Suzanne Herzman's room 004 to hold cooking demonstrations, plan sessions for culinary nights and listen to guest speakers.

During cooking demonstrations, one or two members bring the ingredients and equipment needed to create a dish and show other members how to make the food at the meeting. As they prepare the food, they discuss the ingredients and steps to producing the finished product. Once the dish is ready, the rest of the group samples and evaluates it.

These dishes can range from bruschetta to homemade mango ice cream. They are generally simple and doable because the lunch period does not offer enough time to complete a complex recipe, but Yuen, the club's vice president, believes this is an advantage to the members.

"It gives members more reason to cook, since most people don't have the time to cook large, elaborate meals," Yuen said.

An added bonus of simpler foods is

that members gather culinary knowledge to take to college. The more basic a recipe, the easier it is for day-to-day use.

"If you don't want to eat take out all day [in college], you should definitely learn how to cook," Yuen said. "And that's why we're doing all of these simple recipes: to prepare you."

The club also hosts culinary nights, which occur around three to four times each semester at a club officer's house. Club members are invited to get together one night over the weekend and cook an average of six dishes.

Often the meal features a themed menu with food that members vote on in the meeting beforehand; then, members either bring ingredients or pitch in around \$5. Themes are based on a certain culture or country's food, and the club selects appetizers, entrees and desserts based on that theme.

"During culinary nights we have a lot more freedom to create whatever we want," Yuen said. "Just organizing alone and having all the food come out correctly, not burnt, is pretty rewarding in itself."

According to the club's president, senior Corey Wong, the most popular themes so far have been Japanese and Italian culinary nights. He feels that these events help expose students to new foods.

"It gives us an opportunity to see different variations of food, rather than just eating hamburgers and pizza all the time," Wong said.

Besides cooking demos and culinary nights, Culinary Club is trying to schedule guest speakers to come to meetings.

On March 6, the club scheduled its



Oak & Rye chef and guest speaker Shelve Rifkins demonstrates cooking techniques to senior club member Ian Bautista during a club meeting in the school cafeteria on March 6.

first guest speaker with the help of a club member, senior Ian Bautista, who works at the restaurant Oak & Rye with chef Shelve Rifkins. Rifkins came to the club's meeting during lunch, which was held in the cafeteria that day.

She discussed her experience of attending culinary school and the techniques she learned there. Then, she showed members how to cook an Italian pasta dish with tomato sauce and bacon oil in the cafeteria kitchen.

Yuen said hearing from Rifkins about the depth that chefs go into with cooking particularly stood out to him.

"She talked about the stress in the kitchen, and I find that pretty interesting because normally when you do casual cooking, you're not stressed out. You're doing it for fun," Yuen said.

Though Yuen does not plan on pursuing a career in the culinary arts, he wants to continue cooking as a hobby, as he has done since his childhood.

"I've always helped around the kitchen as a child during big dinners over the holidays," he said. "I love eating and making food, as well as teaching techniques that can improve the quality and plating of it."

As for other members, Yuen hopes to spark a long-term interest in cooking. He believes that anyone who wants to learn how to cook should join the club.

"Cooking is definitely an art form — we're just teaching it," Yuen said. "We hope to achieve finer skills in the culinary world, generate interest in food and spread the love of it. Hopefully, it'll impact people later on in life." ♦

ASB >>

continued from pg. 1

Another aspect of the drama with ASB on YikYak involved an issue with Rally Commission.

At the beginning of this year, ASB cut the budget for Rally Commission from \$1,000 to \$500. According to Kim, by the second rally, the Rally Commission had already exceeded its budget. Consequently, in January, the Rally Commission asked for more money. ASB decided to compromise and agreed to match the sum of money that Rally Commission could fundraise. Rally made \$199 at last month's Club Rush.

This year, ASB has played a bigger role in commissions in an effort to make them more effective. They, along with Leadership, have instituted certain new events, such as Movie Night and the carnival during January's Speak Up for Change week in an attempt to boost school spirit.

According to clubs commissioner senior Sherrilyn Ling, Movie Night was "a huge success and made a lot of money for the Dance Commission."

At the same time, Leadership and ASB have faced criticism for because some say they spent too much money on the carnival. Kim said ASB knew they would lose money from the carnival, but the price was worth it because "[the

carnival] benefits the entire school and people had a lot of fun."

"We thought that the carnival would be a fun thing to do to get the whole school together and have a day where everyone could get rid of their stress and have fun together as a school," Kim said. "For the people who actually attended, we got a lot of positive feedback."

According to Ling, many people don't know or appreciate what ASB does. "I feel like most people think we don't do anything other than meet a few times a week," she said. "When I first joined ASB, I realized that we are constantly looking at previous years' mistakes and trying to figure out how we can improve."

Still, Ling recognizes that in trying to make changes to better the school, ASB can still make mistakes. She said that ASB takes responsibility for their slip-ups and mistakes, but feels that students often place unnecessary blame on ASB for everything they dislike about the school.

Likewise, Kim said that ASB is ultimately trying to do what they think is best for the school.

"[People] might not agree with our opinions on what's best for the school, but we give a lot of thought to what people would want," Kim said. "It might not be what everyone wants, but we sincerely believe we're doing what we can." ♦

TECH >>

continued from pg. 1

whether it's lighting, sound design or set building.

The tech crew of nine has begun its preparations approximately one month before the musical, creating and painting sets and blocking the lighting. Usually, they work on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout seventh period until 6:30. During the weeks closer to the show, however, tech calls can go as late as 10 or 11 p.m. every day until the show date.

When starting production for a mainstage musical like "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," which plays April 24, 25, 26, and May 1 and 2, tech begins work in the tech shop. This room, tucked away in the band quad, houses all of the power tools and building supplies that are needed to produce sets. Sets consist of mainly wooden structures made from using tools such as circular saws, pneumatic staple guns, drills and drivers.

After the initial structures and set pieces are built, the crew moves into the McAfee Center for the last three weeks

of the production process. This process is called "load in" and involves moving not only the built pieces, but also all of the tools from the shop needed to complete the set as well as extra materials that the crew may need later. Load in normally takes up a full Sunday.

All the work with power tools is guided by Adrian Stapleton, the McAfee's manager.

"[Stapleton] teaches us everything from scratch like building, painting, lighting, sound," senior crew member Anne Witkowski said. "He gives us opportunities to lead projects on our own and contribute ideas to the set."

For "Drood," the tech crew will be creating box seats on stage for the audience members to watch the performance from. Tech will be building the seats out of wooden platforms and placing them on stage left and stage right.

Each box the crew builds will fit approximately three people and allow them to view the show from a new perspective. Just like every other seat, people can buy tickets to sit in the boxes on stage.

Until rehearsals begin in the McAfee, the cast and crew work separately. The cast practices in the Thermond Drama Center while the crew does its work in

are deputies keeping high schoolers like himself safe.

"I probably wouldn't have realized that I should be slowing down, as it becomes a slippery slope when you begin to break the speed limit by pushing the speed limit a little more each time and seeing that you don't get caught," said Ingle.

Students like junior Janani Velchamy question the necessity of increased pa-

"A police officer jumped out of a bush and told me that my car had to be turned off to use my phone."



junior Janani Velchamy

trials, especially after her recent experience.

It was a Tuesday morning and Velchamy decided to take a different route to school.

She soon got lost while navigating through the notoriously confusing Golden Triangle neighborhood near the school.

Kepp-her engine on, she stopped at the side of Scotland Drive to search for directions on her phone. While looking at

the map, Velchamy was surprised to see a deputy approaching her car.

"A police officer jumped out of a bush and told me that my car had to be turned off to use my phone, so I received a ticket," Velchamy said.

The deputy wrote Velchamy a ticket for using her phone. At first Velchamy was confused why she received a citation, since she was not driving and using her phone at the same time.

Despite the downsides of receiving tickets, Ingle thinks students are ultimately safer with more deputies around.

"The system of constant cops isn't perfect, but the alternate would be far worse," Ingle said. ♦

MEMBERSHIP

Clubs struggle to keep student interest

by Emily Chen & Ami Nachiappan

Senior Alex Yeh, co-president of Web Design Club, stood on top of his Club Day table on Sept. 26, waving and shouting in effort to recruit as many members as possible.

Holding posters that featured portfolios of creative websites and bold, hand-drawn logos of HTML, CSS, and JS — languages that the club often uses to create websites — Yeh and his fellow members were eager to see new members join their club. He was thrilled to have 50 new members sign up for his club.

Fast forward to six months, and only eight active members remain. The excitement Yeh felt last fall has faded.

"We gained only a couple members [this year] in addition to the members who have stuck with the club the years before," he said.

Since the beginning of the school year, 17 of the 28 clubs surveyed by the Falcon have experienced a decrease in membership.

Many clubs have had trouble sparking an interest and recruiting club members, though the recent Club Rush helped raise money.

According to sophomore Jane Oberhauser, some students sometimes don't sign up for clubs because they would rather spend their lunch doing other activities such as completing homework or hanging out with friends.

Since the beginning of the year, 17 of the 28 clubs surveyed by the Falcon have seen a decrease in membership.

nonexistent. This year, three have been cut by ASB so far due to lack of advisers and overall participation.

Sophomore June Kim, co-president of California Scholarship Federation (CSF), a club that focuses on promoting community service, feels her club has struggled to gain commitment from members.

"Most people signed up for our club for the food or the slight interest they had," she said.

This semester, CSF co-presidents sophomores June and Ally Kim plan on incorporating bonding activities into meetings and working on service projects for the Saratoga community. One proposed idea is a school-wide

easter egg hunt.

According to Ally, the CSF club has been revived from last semester due to "a lack of spirit and determination among officers and members altogether [because of] busy [schedules]."

Fewer numbers of people started attending meetings, and that led to an eventual end to meetings, Ally said.

In order to gain more members, CSF wants to organize activities that spark interest and shift the club focus to enjoying community service.

"I want CSF to be able to lead change in campus, and seeing the past of CSF, I thought that with only a little boost of motivation, we would be able to actively participate in bettering our own community," Ally said.

Even with a lack of active members, officers still hope that new students will join the club. Some clubs like FBLA keep the same Facebook and email list from Club Day just to keep their potential member base updated on activities they can come to.

The decline in club activity results from students' desire to try a little bit of everything, according to FBLA co-president Alex Kim.

"Students have trouble finding what they are passionate about so they join clubs to see what they are interested in," he said. "By second semester, each student finds the clubs that match their interests."

Or, as many club leaders have discovered, none at all. ♦

POLICE >>

continued from pg. 1

The signs of the increase in deputies have been reflected in the dozens of traffic citations.

Senior Samir Ingle received one of these traffic tickets for speeding on Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road in February.

Returning to school after grabbing some lunch off campus, Ingle was already running late to class. He began to speed, driving 57 mph in a 45 mph designated area. Stopped by a police officer, Ingle received a ticket, a fine of \$100 and a requirement to attend traffic school.

Although he had to pay a hefty price, Ingle is ultimately grateful that there

COLLEGE >>

continued from pg. 1

straight As to suddenly earning straight Cs and a D, [colleges can] say that you didn't really hold up your end of the bargain," Allen said.

Even so, rescinding usually doesn't occur for every little grade slip or minor indiscretion. However, each college deals with its academic and conduct policies differently. While a few Cs only mean academic probation for the first semester for one college, another might revoke a student's admission altogether.

When students find themselves in a questionable situation, Allen said that it is best to disclose it to admission officers as soon as possible.

"It varies what [colleges] will disclose to you, but I think it's in the best interest to be very open with the schools you've been accepted to," Allen said.

According to a study by the National Association for College Admission Counseling, colleges say final grades are the reason for revoking admission 68.7 percent of the time. If it is too late to change a low grade, contacting the college to inform them of it can go a long way; some colleges will let it slide.

In addition, Allen said she has yet to see a student be rescinded as a result of

dropping a class. Guidance counselor Monique Young said there are also ways to fix bad grades "depending on when a student receives them."

"Some colleges are more flexible and might be more lenient to let [students] do summer work," Young said. "There are also a lot of colleges that [will rescind you] if you don't have what you need by their deadlines."

According to assistant principal Brian Safine, Saratoga High seniors have been rescinded in the past. Most occur due to low grades or logistical issues such as not submitting a final transcript.

In a typical year, three to four cases would be considered a large number.

Of course, Safine added, "The ideal number is zero." Another almost sure way to be rescinded is to break the law. This includes illegal actions or suspensions for drug- or alcohol-related infractions. Colleges will also reconsider admissions for plagiarism, cheating or any other disciplinary action.

Most colleges will send a warning letter before rescinding a student. A warning letter is a good indication that a senior needs to put more effort into grades and extracurricular work.

With all the hard work spent on getting into college, a little more effort can go a long way so as to not get rescinded.

"Just know that every acceptance is conditional," Allen warned. ♦



Senior tech members Faisal Albannai and Emily Lowdermilk build the set for the musical.

the scene shop. On the day of the actual show, however, communication between the cast and crew is vital. The crew keeps headsets to communicate between backstage and the booth and helps the cast make quick changes as well as notify them of any last minute changes.

For example, if a microphone on stage stops working, the cast and crew must work together to figure out which actors will share mics with each other to avoid any mishaps on stage.

For "Drood," especially, the cast and crew must be in constant communication during the show since the ending

of the show will change with every performance based on the audience's vote of the direction of the plot. The cast and crew must ensure that everyone in the show knows which ending is being performed so the cues, lighting and songs are correct.

"My goal as a director — just to make it more exciting — is to communicate all of this information in a way that won't be obvious to the audience," director Sarah Thermond said. "The students so far are really excited about the idea of using stealth to make sure that all of the cast and crew are on the same page." ♦

of the show will change with every performance based on the audience's vote of the direction of the plot. The cast and crew must ensure that everyone in the show knows which ending is being performed so the cues, lighting and songs are correct.

"My goal as a director — just to make it more exciting — is to communicate all of this information in a way that won't be obvious to the audience," director Sarah Thermond said. "The students so far are really excited about the idea of using stealth to make sure that all of the cast and crew are on the same page." ♦

of the show will change with every performance based on the audience's vote of the direction of the plot. The cast and crew must ensure that everyone in the show knows which ending is being performed so the cues, lighting and songs are correct.

Improve Your English Tutoring Services

Critical Reading, AP English, SAT Writing



Contact us today for a free trial lesson:

408-738-8384

freetrial@improveyouenglish.com
www.improveyouenglish.com



ShareWorld Learning Center



3/22 Sunday 1:30pm
@ShareWorld

Starts 3/7

SAT + ACT INTENSIVE CLASS

STEP BY STEP COUNSELING

Offer Assistance with extra-curricular & summer activity planning

FREE Seminar

New Trends in College Admissions

Starts 6/15

SUMMER PRE-STUDY PROGRAM

It's time to Show Colleges What You're Made of!

408.446.1956 **www.shareworld.org**
21601 Stevens Creek Blvd., Cupertino, CA 95014

FALCON FOCUS: ROHIT RAO

Senior does sleep research at NASA

By SweeyaRaj & JihauYu

Scrolling through his inbox in the spring of his junior year, senior Rohit Rao searched for a response from any of the professors he emailed asking for a science-related internship.

Frustrated by his inability to obtain an internship with a professor in the subjects that he was interested in, Rao took a break and started watching YouTube videos, stumbling across a TedTalk about the importance of sleep.

The topic of the Ted-Talk sparked his interest, and Rao contacted the speaker.

Rao was then surprised to find out that the speaker had not only read his email, but connected him with an adviser that got Rao a job at the NASA AMES research lab in Mountain View. (Rao declined to give the name of the TedTalks speaker.) Rao started working at the NASA AMES research lab in September and has been going to the lab three to four times a week.

Rao said that the paid internship involves working in a cognitive science lab that is focused on the effects of sleep loss on the cognitive function.

"[Cognitive function] is the field that holds important implications for [everyone] from pilots to college students," Rao said. "But we mostly focus on pilots' sleep patterns to make sure they aren't sleep deprived on the job."

The lab keeps track of the pilot's sleep through actiwatch that monitor data, such as the amount of sleep and what time the pilots bring pilots in for a reflex test.

Rao also helps format the data, so that it can be graphed and made into a model.

Despite wanting to major in business, Rao said that he plans to continue working at the center this summer until he leaves for college, and that he may continue in the summers in between years of college.

"I'm trying to explore my options later in life and this was a good experience," Rao said ♦



Rao

DANCES

ASB, commissions avert cancellation of Sadies

By EileenToh

The Sadie Hawkins Dance was canceled last year for lack of interest of ticket sales, but this year, the school was able to host a dance with enough attendance.

Since February, Spring Fling Commission, Dance Commission and ASB worked together to ensure the success of this year's Sadies on March 28. They coordinated a school-wide asking competition and planned to include a number of incentives for more attendance. Despite their efforts, however, they struggled to sell 100 tickets, the minimum number that they had to sell in order for Sadies to be held.

"It was really terrifying to think that Sadies would be canceled twice in a row," said ASB treasurer Aakash Thumaty. "I was hoping that our publicity would boost Sadies ticket sales, but I guess not."

Senior Jade Bisht thinks the decrease in attendance at dances is a result of the "face-to-face" anti-freaking policy.

When Sadies was canceled last year, 37 percent of

responders said in a poll the Falcon conducted that they stopped attending school dances because of the ban on the controversial dance style.

"People wanted to show their defiance to the policy, but they didn't realize that the dances are so much more fun than presumed," Bisht said.

Sophomore Jacqueline Han believes that the date of Sadies was one of the main reasons ticket sales lagged. Since the day of the dance is close to this year's Junior Prom, few upper-classesmen intended on going.

"This year's Sadies is pretty well publicized compared to last year's," Han said. "I think we have lots of people who would ask others, but they would rather save it for prom."

Despite this, ASB was able to sell at least 140 tickets for the Saturday night dance.

At the dance, Spring Fling Commission had student photographers take professional pictures. The photos can be printed off ASB's Facebook

page for no additional charge.

"A lot of nearby schools had professional pictures taken in front of a backdrop at Sadies, but we had never done so," Spring Fling commissioner senior Katelynn Moriarty said. "We just wanted to see how it went for us by having student photographers for this year's dance."

To play off of the blackout theme, Spring Fling Commission distributed glow-sticks and set up a facepaint area and a table full of finger-foods, which included a white chocolate fountain.

Due to student complaints about the music and the DJ at past school dances, Spring Fling and Dance Commission shared music survey in each of the classes' Facebook groups, so students can give song suggestions for the DJ.

With these new additions to Sadies, the Spring Fling Commission's work with ASB and Dance Commission paid off and resulted in a dance that successfully kicked off Spring Fling Week. ♦



Thumaty



Racism mainstream, possible to address

By MichelleCen & KarissaDong

After watching the January release "American Sniper," media users shared their discriminatory views of Arabs and Muslims.

Twitter user @harshnewyorker stated the conviction of many: "Nice to see a movie where the Arabs are portrayed for who they really are — vermin scum intent on destroying us."

The Academy Award-winning Iraq war movie merely reinforced the American public's bigoted perception of Muslims.

It's disgraceful that the movie adaptation of such a racially-charged novel became an acclaimed sensation. To begin with, both unprivileged and privileged groups need to acknowledge racism's lasting impact, which has nearly incapacitated many ethnic groups excluded by the Western Christendom.

Members of privileged groups — in Saratoga, mostly whites and Asian peoples — often choose not to engage in discussions about culture and ethnicity. Whether people believe that ignoring

race will solve racism, or that society has already achieved equality, this color-blind view is willful ignorance.

Communities must be open to talk about race and religion. But such conversation should never degenerate into an "exchange of prejudices."

"Saratoga is a pretty well-to-do town, so if you come from a wealthy family you happen to be a lot more educated and more tolerant of people," said senior Shahnoor Jafri, a practicing Muslim who wears a hijab, a scarf that covers her head and neck said.

Despite her positive views of the community, Jafri also recalls an incident in this area wherein she feels that racist attitudes were involved. While pulling out of a parking lot at Target, Jafri almost

collided with another driver. The driver, instead of letting the incident go, sped up right in front of Jafri and blocked her car. He got out, banged on the hood of Jafri's car, swore and made obscene gestures at her.

"I got a little bit emotional because I didn't know how to deal with [the incident]," Jafri said. "I didn't cry because it was scary; I cried because I knew that if I didn't wear the hijab and wasn't Middle-Eastern brown, it wouldn't have happened."

senior Shahnoor Jafri

If I didn't wear the hijab and wasn't Middle-Eastern brown, it wouldn't have happened."

Jafri continued that if she were "blonde-haired and blue-eyed," her aggressor would not have been nearly as belligerent.

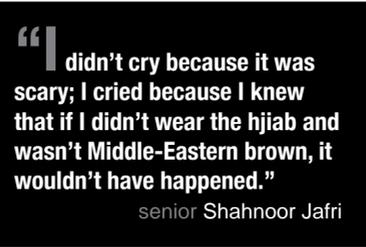
Saratoga and its surrounding communities are extraordinarily privileged

at least, was able to bring the school together in a way that spending two hours in class would not have accomplished.

It's inevitable that there may be conflicts between ASB and commissions.

However, trashing ASB on social media is not the right solution. If commissioners are angry about ASB, they should be mature enough to communicate these concerns to the ASB officers themselves. Personal attacks on specific ASB officers also should be argued in person, not anonymously from behind the comfort of one's smartphone. ♦

Perhaps they really did spend too much money on the carnival during Speak Up for Change Week, but students really need to let that go and keep the dialogue civil. The carnival,



senior Shahnoor Jafri

>> togetalks

Were you aware of bigotry in Saratoga?

"Yes. It's definitely there, but it's not too obvious. There's certainly room for improvement."



senior Anisha Nagarajan

"Yes, but having been to other schools, Saratoga is already pretty good with integration."



junior Naveed Riazat

"Not really. I've never noticed truly race-based discrimination at Saratoga."



sophomore Sarah Jin

#tspawestgate
f i t
Westgate Mall
1600 Saratoga Ave, Ste 103, San Jose, CA 95129
www.tspaSanJose.com



NEED HELP WITH TUITION?

We are now offering Federal Financial Aid to students that qualify, to help with tuition and living expenses.

Let us help your dreams come true. Call our Admissions Advisor at 408.579.9111 x117

Come for a visit and see what TSPA has to offer. Schedule a tour and receive a complimentary service.

All services performed by supervised students. For more information about our graduation rates, the median loan debt of students who completed the program and other important information visit www.tspaSanJose.com.

NEED HELP WITH A CLASS?

I'm Frank, I have a degree from Stanford, and I can help you do better in any class.

Same day appointments. Contact me and I can help you IMMEDIATELY.

People I've worked with:

"Frank is very easy to work with and is committed to his teaching and his desire to help students. He is patient, explains the material well and focuses on teaching why something needs to be changed or why an answer is wrong."

"Frank has been of immeasurable help to my daughter. His kind and patient manner, combined with obvious command of the subject matter made it easy for her to learn."

408-883-4837 franktdai@gmail.com

Chapel Hill killings reveal disturbing double standard

By KatherineSun

On Feb. 10, Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha and Deah Shaddy Barakat — all Muslim college students around the age of 20 — were shot by their next-door neighbor Craig Stephen Hicks in Chapel Hill, N.C.

The victims were killed execution-style, with shots fired directly to their heads.

It would not be unreasonable to believe the murders were hate crimes when Islamophobia has only become more prevalent — a trend reinforced by unfair coverage of Muslims in the media.

Others contend that Hicks has a history of bullying his neighbors, regardless of their religion. His neighbor Samantha Maness characterized his dislike of all religions as "equal opportunity anger."

Testimonies by other neighbors and Hicks's ex-wife add weight to this opinion. It is likely they were not trying to defend him.

Since then, Hicks has been indicted on three counts of first-degree murder, and the FBI is investigating the possibility of a hate crime. Yet regardless of the outcome, the incident has sparked sorely needed questions about the public's attitude toward Muslims.

Despite news of the crime spreading rapidly online, large U.S. news outlets did not report on it until a day later. "The Independent," a British newspaper, posted news of the incident a full five hours before mainstream U.S. newspapers like the Washington Post did.

Notably, many Twitter users expressed outrage that they learned of the incident through Twitter rather than major media news outlets. Only after this increase in public pressure did the me-

dia report on the incident.

Yet another source of anger stems from the fact that the victims often did charity work and were well respected by their professors and peers. In fact, Barakat had been fundraising in the hopes of providing dental care to Syrian refugees in Turkey.

Underlying Islamophobia lurks in American society, in part due to incidents such as Charlie Hebdo by extremist groups

and influences of the entertainment industry. The movie "American Sniper," which has grossed over \$330 million in the U.S., is disgustingly Islamophobic to an extreme.

These stereotypes have led to past anti-Muslim crimes similar to the Chapel Hill shooting. Take the incident on Dec. 4, 2014, when the 15-year-old Mus-

lim boy Abdisamad Sheikh-Hussein was run over and killed in Kansas City, Missouri, by an SUV with the bumper sticker "Islam is worse than Ebola."

Afterward the mainstream media reinforced the double standard by reporting little on the incident, and when it did offer coverage, it often simply republished a report written by the Associated Press.

The media must help to lead thoughtful conversations in the community by reporting more extensively when incidents like the Chapel Hill shooting occur.

Meanwhile, citizens should become better informed and treat media reports with a dose of skepticism.

Thanks to Islamophobia, Muslims feel less safe and are unfairly perceived by others in a country that supposedly embraces all. Double standards in the means by which people receive information do nothing to help lessen existing prejudice. ♦

THE saratoga falcon <<

FOURTH PERIOD STAFF POLICY

The Saratoga Falcon is published six times per semester by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School, 20300 Herriman Ave., Saratoga, CA 95070. Views expressed in The Saratoga Falcon are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the administration, faculty or school district.

MISSION STATEMENT

The staff of The Saratoga Falcon is committed to objectively and accurately representing the diverse talents, cultures and viewpoints of the Saratoga High School community.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Saratoga Falcon welcomes all signed letters of opinion, which are subject to editing for length, accuracy and grammar. Please send them to editors@saratogafalcon.org. For ad information, call (408)-867-3411, ext. 222.

- Editors-in-Chief: Sabrina Chen, Deepti Kannan, Associate Editor: Maya Ravichandran, News Editor: Sherrilyn Ling, Opinion Editor: Helen Wong, Sports Editors: Andrew Jiang, Catherine Tang, Sports Columnist: Jihau Yu, Lifestyles Editors: Allison Lin, Vibha Seshadri, Entertainment Editor: Carolyn Sun, Feature Editors: Ashley Chen, Ariel Liu, Backpack Editor: Simi Srivastava, Web Editors: Aditya Chaudhry, Tiffany Zheng, Head Layout Editor: Aditya Chaudhry, Head Art Editor: Michelle Cen

AP tests should not be class focus

Last year, more than 500 students took almost 1,300 AP exams, which amounts to an average of one AP test for each student at the school. Of those students, 93 percent received qualifying scores, which means they will probably be guaranteed some sort of credit for their work if they attend a state system.

Given this reality, it may seem natural for AP teachers to tailor their curriculum to having their students achieve a perfect score of 5 on the tests. This test-focused mind-set, however, undermines the quality of education.

The AP exam is a four-hour test that induces both anxiety and hand cramps. When teachers use an excess of practice tests and stick with content only within to AP guidelines, it's inevitable that more creative activities or in-depth information will be shut out.

Too much emphasis on AP tests may also serve to "dumb down" classes. Without naming any particular subjects, the fact remains that some students are able to successfully cram for an AP test, which is supposed to be a semester-long college course, during spring break and get a good score.

The inevitable conclusion is that for AP classes to truly mimic the college experience, they must be more rigorous than the AP test itself.



MICHELLE CEN

Another point to consider is that for some students, the AP course they take in a particular subject may be their only exposure to the subject. Such classes include AP Computer Science, which only recently gained a very popular introductory class, and AP Environmental Science. Students whose only exposure to a topic is "that hard class where I had to memorize so much information" will not be likely to pursue it in the future.

One reason teachers may feel pres-

sured to focus too much on the AP exam is that they can feel that their own performance as teachers is measured by their students' pass rate since those numbers are known to administrators.

Despite such pressures, classes like AP Language and Composition (Lang) and AP Literature (Lit) spend minimal time preparing for the AP test itself, yet consistently produce students who perform well on the AP exams.

These successes show that the fears of students performing poorly are generally unfounded.

In an atmosphere that is academically stressful and competitive like Saratoga High's, it is integral that we strive to emphasize true learning over test preparation. A score of 5 should not be the end goal; rather, we should aim for deeper knowledge and understanding.

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

- Editors-in-Chief: Sabrina Chen, Opinion Editor: Helen Wong, Reporter: Ashley Chen, Ariel Liu

The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 37-1 in support of the editorial.



Jon Stewart retires from 'Daily Show': now what?

by David Fan & Helen Wong

On Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 6 p.m., young people around the nation rush to their TVs after finishing loads of homework and switch the channel to Comedy Central to watch "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart."

On "The Daily Show," Stewart lambasts and satirizes the latest news on politics, the media and a spectrum of other stories and topics.

Stewart pairs his scathingly accurate and often hilarious commentary with a sensitivity and insight that lends weight to what he says. For instance, one of his most memorable shows was during the North Korean crisis. During this show, Stewart mocked Kim Jung Un by calling him The Nuke kid on the Block. He then went on by making fun of his plans to "attack" the United States.

Sadly, on Feb. 10, Stewart announced that he would be retiring from the show by the end of this year.

When we first heard this news, we were astonished and saddened by the fact that one of our favorite TV hosts was leaving.

Stewart once described what he did as akin to throwing tomatoes at a blackboard from the back of the classroom. He claims, over and over again, that he's not a reporter — only a comedian. But everyone who's seen the show knows that he's more than that.

Stewart's charming personality and

the show's comical tone have made his show extremely popular among younger audiences. Forty-three percent of the show's viewers are under 30, and after the announcement of Stewart's retirement, students across the country asked in dismay how they are going to get their news. The Daily Show has become much more than a political satirist's dream. It's an influential tool of education.

During the start of the last show, Stewart showed clips from FOX News of Republicans reacting to the departure of Jon Stewart. Most of them were criticizing Stewart about how he distorts and changes the truth of the news.

"Their chronically angry war for ideological purity, where every aspect of life becomes a two dimensional battle for America's soul — it ages you," Stewart said in one of his shows. "Even watching it is killing me."

For now, the reason seems to be that even Stewart is sick of the things he's been fighting for so long. Perhaps yelling angrily into a camera for 16 years is tiring.

Luckily, there are other voices out there that "The Daily Show" has helped bring to prominence, John Oliver, the host of Last Week Tonight, foremost among them. After Stephen Colbert ended "The Colbert Report," "The Nightly Show," hosted by Larry Wilmore, has done a decent job in replacing the show.

Even if it's losing Stewart, America needs someone to throw tomatoes at the blackboard and be that voice in the back of the classroom, pointing out flaws to the willfully blind.



MICHELLE CEN

Meninism not a real thing

Meninism is apparently the latest fad in equality for men. Except, of course, for the lack of equality activism — by standing up for men of color, transgender men, and every other man. It is true that certain issues that meninists bring up should be acknowledged; however, the source of many of these issues often links back to traditional gender roles that men continue to uphold. Others are simply illogical, like the overwhelmingly high ratio of male to female combat deaths, since women weren't allowed to serve in combat until 2013.

-Claire Chou

Stop knocking on my door!

To those very persistent people who insist on trying to sell me everything from lawns to religion: don't. If I answer the doorbell against my better judgment, you've one minute to make your pitch. When I close the door before you finish, as I do, please do not put your foot between the door and the doorframe. While I genuinely appreciate your need for me to accept Jesus into my heart, I am relatively happy as an agnostic hell-bound heathen. And my lawn, while certainly patchy, only looks so because I'm saving water. Because we're in a drought.

-Helen Wong

Sine Curve, Whine Curve

I find it difficult to pity those students who skipped Geometry through a summer course and subsequently bemoan their current math class. Are you really going to complain about the pace of the class or the grade you receive when in reality, you are the root of your current struggles? Because of these students, teachers must slow down. This reduces the quality of the class. By succumbing to the bandwagon, these students perpetuate the mentality that math is to be sped through, and that each successive course is just another box checked off on a list.

-Katherine Sun

Desks: Gum-ridden atrocities

I'm not picky when it comes to desks, but the excuses for desks at SHS makes me want to cry. Even if you ignore the copious amounts of gum that can be found under virtually every desk, the desks are smaller than my pillow and aren't nearly as squishy. The armrests, which might be comfortable for nappers, are unfair to the left-handers of the world. What's worse is when these desks are squished into pairs or groups, and for the lucky winners who are stuck on the wrong side of the square, you have to pass a test in acrobatics just to get in and out of your seat.

-Ashley Chen

Trashing healthy dishes: Lunch regulations too strict

by Nidhi Jain & Rachel Zhang

An average apple has 95 calories and 22 grams of sugar. Honest Kids' "Apple Ever After" juice box has 40 calories and nine grams of sugar. Judging by these figures, Honest Kids should be healthier than the apple right?

Wrong. While apples contain vitamins and nutrients that are vital in our diet, the apple juice is simply sugary water. The caloric intake of a food item does not always correlate with its nutritional value, and thus should not be considered an important factor in deciding the healthiness of a food item.

This is a misconception evident in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, a piece of federal legislation passed in 2010 that allows USDA to enact healthy lunch reforms in schools in hopes of combating child obesity.

Under the new regulations, all snack items are required to have fewer than 200 calories and entrees have been reduced to 350 calories, a ridiculously low number when considering physically active adolescents should be consuming 3,500 calories a day.

The act has affected over 100,000 schools, where the majority of the students are on a reduced or free lunch program. In retaliation against the unnecessarily strict regulations, students have turned to Twitter to express their anger. Using the hashtag, #ThanksMichelleObama, thousands of students have posted pictures of their bland school meals,

most of them resembling indistinguishable piles of brown mush.

The distaste can be attributed to the sodium limitations imposed that require entrees to have fewer than 480 mg.

When Hunter Whitney, a student from Wisconsin's Richmond Center High School, tweeted a picture of her Spanish Rice last October, a commenter described it to be "floor sweepings mixed into fructose."

Whitney and other students end up throwing away their lunches and go to classes with empty stomachs. These habits are far healthier than a couple extra calories.

School lunches have taken a different turn at Saratoga. Our school cafeteria has experienced changes as a result of the government's push for "healthier" food options, which are unnecessary.

As a Basic Aid school, which means it is mostly funded by local property taxes, Saratoga High is exempt from much of the regulation. Nonetheless, the government incentivizes schools like SHS by creating a list of approved foods that are cheaper than the ones it deems to be "unhealthy."

Although many of these new food choices have healthier components, the ingredients list contains a plethora of processed additives. For instance, many of the grain products have been replaced with wheat alternatives. Despite the seemingly healthy replacement, The Journal of the American Medical Association actually published a study, finding that a chemical, Bisphenol A, in "many



MICHELLE CEN

packaged foods [is] associated with an increased risk of child obesity."

USDA's main goal of the law was to help reduce childhood obesity. But by serving obesity-linked lunches, the implementation of the act has backfired. Recently, even the fruit drink Odwalla has been banned from the cafeteria.

For beverages, USDA requires the drink to have less than 40 calories per eight fluid ounces, and Odwalla's "Original Superfood" drink does not meet the requirement with 131 calories per eight fluid ounces.

However, most of the calories are added on by the fruit. Thus, the legisla-

tion fails since it looks only at the caloric intake when deciding whether to ban a drink.

The government has placed the power of lunch reforms in the wrong hands. The USDA fails to properly understand the needs of high school students.

Instead, the government should create a general guideline for schools to meet, while leaving the specifics up to the business manager of each school district, who comprehends the demographics of the students better.

No matter how healthy a new cafeteria food is, it's ultimately useless if the students toss their meals in the trash. ♦

Recent rolling block decision sets bad precedent

by Ashley Chen & Eric Sze

The rolling block schedule had become Saratoga High's own dead horse. Every few years, the administration would revive the subject for debate, and then put it to bed weeks or months later. Some teachers would argue that they wouldn't be able to see their students often enough, and others said it might not be worth the effort to change.

This year, the dead horse was revived when principal Paul Robinson suddenly announced that the school would be adopting a Los Gatos-esque rolling block schedule for the 2016-2017 school year.

While many students applaud the decision, the positive effects of the rolling block are still questionable. And because Robinson announced this change without much discussion with Saratoga's 1,400 students and 70-teacher staff, previous concerns about the efficacy of rolling block have not been addressed.

For instance, a strong argument against the rolling block schedule is that teachers can make contact with students only two times a week every other week. This may result in greater inequality between students who are taking the same class in different periods; if a teacher holds a test on a Friday, students in an-

other period will take the test the following Monday, giving them the weekend to study. There will be an effort to put all classes on one day, but the success of that is still unclear. Foreign language classes rely on regular contact in order to build fluency. Another concern is that students may be pressured to take more classes under the new eight-period schedule. At first glance, the initiative was lauded for its ability to reduce the number of absences athletes are forced to take; students can

take six periods and have free seventh and eighth periods.

In reality, an eight-period schedule will drive students to take more AP and Honors courses, which invariably causes more stress for students.

In the 2011-2012 school year, two-thirds of the teachers voted against the rolling block. In 2012-2013, the two-thirds majority decreased to a 55 percent majority. Now, the schedule is being implemented with only the approval of the department chairs.

Although most students may like the idea of the rolling block, they fail to realize that the extra time will probably push teachers to assign even more homework and give more Monday tests.

Still, the most serious problem with the addition of the rolling block sched-

ule is not its negative impact on students and teachers, but the administration's failure to communicate with students and teachers and use their input in their decision-making.

Robinson did email SHS families to open the rolling block schedule change to discussion. However, this belated invitation was sent on March 9, almost a month after the rolling block schedule was announced on Feb. 10. While the gesture was well intended, it should have been sent earlier.

It is also important to acknowledge the creation of a new committee that will work to include student, parent and staff input in the development of a new district-wide bell schedule; however, this committee, like Robinson's email, is belated and is unlikely to result in an overall reversal of the rolling block decision.

Robinson's decision to implement the rolling block with virtually no consultation from the community sets a bad precedent for the future. ♦

The real issue is the administration's failure to communicate with students and teachers.

Time, money spent for standardized testing a waste

by Ashley Chen

It starts with one innocuous day sometime in elementary school — usually second or third grade.

By fourth and fifth, though, it becomes an annual, weeklong event. Middle school provides no reprieve, and by high school, it becomes the center of many students' academic lives for a few years.

This is, of course, standardized testing. Smarter Balanced, CST, STAR, CAHSEE, SAT, ACT are all the same ugly phenomena bunched up in far too many individual tests. The truth is that standardized testing, at least at the frequency with which it happens, wastes educational time, indicates wealth more than anything else and adds unnecessary stress to students' lives.

The worst part is the amount of time

testing consumes. Juniors this year will spend most of two school days taking the Common Core exams, and because the tests require a computer and our school does not have adequate resources, the testing will be staggered between four days. Because most junior classes are halved during the testing period, this translates to almost a week of lost instructional time.

Although the typical Saratoga student may only take the CAHSEE once, they spend much more time on standardized testing prep because of these exams.

One argument in favor of standardized testing is the need of an objective measure that could allow comparison of students. While this sounds sensible, it is easier for students if schools simply use factors like percentages of college-bound seniors to grade themselves. Of course, AP, SAT and ACT exams

are riddled with problems as well. Not only are these exams around five hours each, students can spend over 50 hours preparing for just one. (See the Princeton Review's 60-hour Summer Immersion course for an example.) This time represents lost potential; students would benefit more from studying a given topic in-depth, rather than a given test.

This preparation has the added detriment of expense. For instance, Kaplan offers an 18-hour prep course that costs a staggering \$700, which totals to around \$40 per hour. Keep in mind that the teacher is often only proctoring exams.

On the other hand, the Princeton Review has an "honors" test prep course, which guarantees students a score of 2100 or higher in the SAT. What does it say when a for-profit company is willing to stake its revenue on unknown students scoring in the top percentile of a

test? It suggests the test is predictable to the point of trainability, and that students who have parents who can fork over the money have a significant advantage. This claim is backed by a 2009 New York Times article, showing that jumping an income bracket of \$20,000 was correlated with a 12-point increase.

These students already face the difficulty of being from a low-income family, and are more likely to attend a high school lacking a college-bound culture or have parents that have not completed higher education. They don't need the double jeopardy of a low SAT score to discourage them.

In short, standardized testing wastes instructional time and doubles the disadvantage of those who cannot afford test prep. While Common Core is a step in the right direction from STAR testing, we need to move one step further. ♦

Winter guard deserving of more gym time

By Claire Chou & Isabelle Tseng

One of the school's strengths is the vast variety of extracurricular activities offered to students. Unfortunately, not all of these activities are recognized equally: sports such as football and basketball are higher profile regardless of how well or poorly the team is doing, while others remain under the radar.

One such group is winter guard. Technically classified as a "sport of the arts," this often-overlooked activity requires extensive practice. Members must master skills on equipment and in dance, as well as learn drill, choreography and flag/rifle/sabre work for a 4-plus minute show. Rehearsals consist of a dance warm-up; dance, flag and rifle "technique blocks"; learning and "chunking" through sections of the show; cleaning existing work and full run-throughs.

And for this, winter guard needs more gym time.

Some argue that practice could take place outside of the regular twice-a-week rehearsals (Mondays and Thursdays from 6 to 9 p.m.), eliminating the need for the gym. Members are expected



HELEN WONG

to spend time to practice what they already know. This is a hassle and requires the guard members to relocate themselves, their equipment and the stereo, this is impractical and dangerous.

Winter guard is a team sport, and consists of work and drill, both which require the presence of the group and therefore necessitate formal (group) rehearsals. This necessitates the use of a large indoor space: the gym.

Even with limited rehearsal time — which is far less than other schools; Saratoga guard rehearses 6 to 11 hours each week, while competitors average 16 to 20 — the guard has been flexible with their venue. They switch between each of three possible practice areas (the dance studio, the Small Gym and the Large Gym) to avoid infringing on other groups.

The guard rehearses in the dance studio. The space is too small to accommodate 28 members and four instructors. They are crowded, stretching and practicing dance basics, when they need to work on their show (which requires the use of a gym).

Winter guard practices in the Small Gym. It's not ideally sized, but is big enough for the guard, their floor and their equipment.

The Large Gym — which they rarely get to use — offers more practice and bleachers, where instructors have an advantageous viewpoint for creating drill forms and for overseeing rehearsals. During performances, the audience and judges, have a similar viewpoint.

One goal is to move up a competitive class. The administration and music department recognize issues with gym space, and funds from the Measure E bond are being used to build new gym space in the next few years.

Not getting their fair share of this gym time results in low competition scores, which results in being discounted as a sport and being de-prioritized for gym time, which results in low scores.

It is an unnecessary negative cycle that can and should be broken. ♦

Google's self-driving cars dangerous robots for now

By Nidhi Jain & Rachel Zhang

Imagine driving to school one morning. As you pass the white Lexus in front of you, you notice something peculiar. It's moving, but the driver is eating with both hands. With the release of Google's self-driving car in the near future, this could be the new reality for passengers.

Google's car is a hands-free automobile that allows users to sit back and relax, while it navigates through traffic for them. The car's potential release date is between 2017 and 2020. Unfortunately, self-driving cars are no longer a distant fantasy, having already been legalized in four states.

Today, robots manufacture goods, and computers supervise efficient softwares. The human race is already significantly dependent on technology, and now, with self-driving cars, we are letting technology take over simple tasks such as driving. If individuals hand over their control of driving, then technology taking over eating and walking seems

plausible in the near future.

Currently, Google is using a white model of a Lexus for the automobile's framework. The small, spinning box mounted on the roof uses ranging technology to evaluate its surroundings. In addition, there are several more cameras and sensors located above the windshield.

However, even with the technological advances, the sensors and cameras struggle to discern simple objects in poor weather conditions.

According to Forbes writer Joann Muller, as of August 2014, the prototype used "sluggish speeds" to cross a 4-way stop. Additionally, it was unable to distinguish running over a soda bottle from running over a pedestrian.

Although Google expects to fix these issues by 2024, there are bound to be

more issues that will only be found after the innovation is publicly available. Not only is the car not at a technologically safe level yet, but the promoted use of the car also may also be impractical.

According to self-driving car supporters and Forbes magazine, this technology could potentially avoid 30,000 injuries annually. In actuality, the driver is still in danger, if not more so compared to a normal car. According to the Daily Mail magazine, the U.K. government would require passengers in self-driving cars to be ready to take the wheel at any moment.

Considering this, in the event of emergencies, passengers would not be able to make last-moment judgments that could make the difference between life and death if they are not paying attention.

The car, a seemingly harmless automation, becomes a new medium for hackers to harm others in a wide-scale attack.

Because all of the systems are based on the same software, one successful hacking can evolve into a fatal threat for all self-driving cars on an enormously wide scale basis. The risks involved do not justify the expensive price. According to Business Insider, the sensors Google seeks to install sensors that cost \$250,000. Adding on, the retail price of the car and other customer components would result in a car that costs more than \$300,000. Compared to a normal car, which costs on average 10 times less, only a small percentage of individuals can afford Google's car.

Even a chauffeur-driven car at one's beck and call would be cheaper than this. Currently, the self-driving car is not at an implementable stage. The risks of potential hackers and unavoidable accidents are already large obstacles, in addition to the hefty price of the car.

In the end, it comes down to a simple question regarding safety: Would you feel safe letting a car take your life into its software-driven hands? In the short term, our answer is no. ♦

Would you feel safe letting a car take your life into its software-driven hands?

Obama's adorable human side captured through BuzzFeed

By Allison Lin & Vibha Seshadri

On Feb. 12, BuzzFeed uploaded a video called "Things Everyone Does but Doesn't Talk About," in which President Barack Obama demonstrated his personal quirks, such as mispronunciation and taking selfies with a selfie stick, while indirectly promoting ObamaCare at the same time.

The 2-minute clip directly demonstrates day-to-day struggles in a quintessential way that captures the essence of citizen life, and serves as a great way for the president to connect with the people, especially youth. BuzzFeed draws a lot of attention from young adults. According to the Huffington Post, 28.7 percent of BuzzFeed's audience are adults ages 25-34, the highest percentage out of seven age groups. Obama has strate-

gically used BuzzFeed's audience to promote ObamaCare.

On Dec. 8, Obama appeared on "The Colbert Report" in order to advocate for ObamaCare. The fact that Obama embarrassed himself illustrates how determined he is to ensure that they understand the options available to them.

He has advocated for ObamaCare on shows such as "Between Two Ferns," and internet comedy series hosted by Zach Galifianakis, and several other vlogging sites.

Many have slammed the commander-in-chief for participating in such self-degrading advertisements, condemning him for wasting precious time.

The video encapsulates Obama's ability to relate with citizens, especially the nation's youth, whose interest in politics is gradually increasing as they near voting age.

Obama's attempts to reach

out to them is something to be both admired and followed.

Another reason people are criticizing Obama for taking part in the video is that the video was filmed the same day the White House was dealing with the death of ISIS hostage Kayla Mueller.

Mueller's death is a tragic incident, and the government should place further attention on the issue stewing in Syria. However, it is easy to forget that the president is faced with hard-hitting news and dismal occurrences every day. At the end of the video, he questions, "Can I live?" The leader of our country is not a divine being, he is simply one man.

In the video, a BuzzFeed staff members judge Obama for pretending to shoot basketball hoops in a White House office. The president simply replies, "You do you." Harsher critics have turned on him, claiming



http://www.tribunenews.com

A BuzzFeed video showed a lighter side of the president Obama.

that this statement applies to his attitude toward other foreign leaders and dictators. Obama uses this phrase in order to encourage youngsters to feel comfortable with their personality and background. If motivational speakers are not disparaged when they say, "You do you,"

then why should Obama be denounced? It is human nature to be critical of those in power.

Obama is doing something impactful with the exposure he was given on BuzzFeed, and his words should not be twisted by those who disapprove of his political agenda. ♦

PMT Guide for Dummies

BY: GWYNEVERE HUNGER AND SIMI SRIVASTAVA

REPORTERS SEEK POPULAR MILK TEA JOINTS & INVESTIGATE THE SPECIALTIES

JAZEN TEA

Location:
1089 S. De Anza Blvd
San Jose

Price Range: \$4-6

Best Flavors:
Lychee
Tutti Frutti
Caribbean Breeze

Best Toppings:
Fruit bits and Jelly squares

Specialties:
Snow Sip Blended Drinks
Large sizes
Frequent sales and gifts



EXTRA
You can make it during lunch.

FANTASIA

Location:
10933 N Wolfe Rd.
Cupertino

Price Range: \$4-6

Best Flavors:
Jasmine
Original

Best Toppings:
Boba and Grass jelly

Specialties:
Speedy Service
Authentic Tea Flavor
Fresh, chewy pearls
Reward points cards



EXTRA
It has fast service.

GONGCHA

Location:
Westgate Center, 1600
Saratoga Ave, San Jose

Price Range: \$4.50-6

Best Flavors:
Lemon Ai Yu
Milk Foam Series

Best Toppings:
White pearls

Specialties:
Reward points cards
Choice of ice
Sweetness levels
Fresh flavor



EXTRA:
Their boba is really sweet and chewy.

GRAPHIC BY HELEN CHEN

Vegetarian myth busters

Cows go Tu-MOO



Shreya Tumu

"You're a vegetarian? Oh, I'm so sorry."

This is the typical response I get when I tell someone I don't eat meat. But guess what? I'm not sorry about the lifestyle I have chosen. And yes, it was my decision.

Just because I am a South Indian, many assume that my parents are forcing me to be a vegetarian because one of the important principles of Hinduism (and several other Indian religions) is the practice of avoiding meat, especially beef. This is the reason that my parents are vegetarian, but my parents never forced it upon me. They only introduced me to the lifestyle.

I've encountered a lot people criticizing why I want to be a vegetarian. They tend to ask rude and intrusive questions rather than respect my decision. I'm a vegetarian because of ethical and health reasons, yet many people can't accept that. Many meat-eaters believe that vegetarians are tempted by meat and have to restrain themselves, which is not true.

In fact, the idea of eating meat completely disgusts me.

Another misconception people have is that vegetarians eat only greens, tofu and raw vegetables. But no person can lead a healthy life consuming only vegetables and proteins. For me, carbs in the form of foods like rice, pastas and pizzas, are a real life-saver.

Another misconception is that vegetarians don't eat enough protein without eating meat. In truth, quinoa, nuts and beans provide more than enough protein.

Dairy products also make up half my diet and are another of my sources of protein, as well as lentils, which are served in hot soup. Sandwiches, soups, Indian curries, pad thai, pastries, breads and the list of what vegetarians can eat may actually be endless. People always criticize veggie burgers, but they are probably just as scrumptious as the original one.

Honestly, I can't blame others for believing many of the misconceptions associated with being a vegetarian because even I believe some of them. Just recently I figured out that I can have sushi rolls, thanks to a friend who insisted to go out for sushi despite my resistance. I was surprised to find that there were so many vegetarian options like avocado, yam, mushroom and egg sushi, on the menu that we couldn't order them all.

My meals are never as boring as one might suspect. So don't feel sorry for me. I am proud to be a vegetarian. ♦

topfive

PET PEEVES OF VEGETARIANS

- When people assume we can just take the pepperoni off pizza
- Meat-eaters apologizing for eating meat in front of us
- When people joke that all we eat are greens and rabbit food
- Cross-examination about why we want to be vegetarian.
- People think we are also vegan

>>>Deepti Kannan

Can you cook an ethnic dinner?

By Ami Nachiappan

"This is going to turn out horrible." Those were my 14-year-old sister's, Kaviya, words after I told her that the Falcon's Lifestyle editors had dared me to prepare a foreign dinner for my family.

I have baked assorted desserts that my family has thoroughly enjoyed, yet they didn't seem to think I was able to cook well. I've prepared a few simple meals here and there, but never a full-fledged dinner.

It's true, I got off to a rocky start. Due to my lack of planning, I had forgotten that I had three tests and a history trial the same week I was supposed to complete my cooking challenge. Before busy weeks, I usually spend most of my weekend studying, but living by my motto "food before school," I plunged headfirst into the challenge of creating a delightful Thai meal that would delight my family's taste buds.

On Friday evening, I sat down in front of my computer and started brainstorming possible dishes to cook. Since my family loves Thai food, I had some experienced critics to impress. After browsing various recipes, I came across a website called thai.food.com that had relatively easy recipes (or so I thought).

For an appetizer, I decided to put together a spicy Thai Cucumber Salad, a refreshing platter of sliced cucumbers topped with a pepper vinegar mixture. The pictures looked very appealing with their beautiful garnishes of cilantro and peppers, and sauce poured perfectly across the dish.

The second dish I decided to prepare was Thai peanut, a noodle dish with chopped broccoli, topped with a peanut vinegar sauce. The recipe said the dish took a mere 25 minutes to make, so I was sure it would be simple.

Saturday evening came, and I began to dig through the pantry to find all the ingredients. After rereading the recipe three times, I started chopping up vegetables and heating up a saucepan for the cucumber salad. As I started to slice the cucumbers, I turned to my side to see my mom laughing at me. I pleaded with her to help me, but her threats to email the newspaper adviser Mr. Tyler about me "cheating on an assignment" shut me up, so I continued working.

The lack of trust from my family also did not help my nervous disposition.

My mom, though excited to have the day off from cooking dinner, decided early in the afternoon that she would make some back-up dinner in case mine didn't work out. So much for a boost of confidence.

After pouring the last of the sauce over the cucumbers, I added some cilantro and onions. Eager to know how it tasted, I called my dad and sister over to try.

My dad seemed to enjoy it, and I was flooded with the feeling of relief. Sadly, that relief didn't last as my sister started running and screaming around the house with her face beet-red. The rest of us were puzzled as to what was wrong with her.

It turns out that I had put a bit too much chili pepper in certain parts the cucumber salad, and my sister had tasted a particularly spicy spoonful.

While the cucumber salad turned out surprisingly well (disregarding the spice incident), the Thai Peanut didn't bring as many smiles.

The recipe involved cooking pasta while simultaneously concocting a vinegar sauce.

The whole kitchen was in chaos as I managed two stoves at once, struggling to cook the pasta without burning it, while keeping my eye on the



FALCON // AMI NACHIAPPAN

As an appetizer, Ami prepared a spicy Thai Cucumber Salad.

sauce that was slowly beginning to bubble. The thought that I may burn the house down definitely had me nervous next to the boiling pot of water on the stove.

After cooking only two dishes, my arms were aching from all the stirring, and my energy had drained.

The total preparation time for both dishes was supposed to be only 35 minutes, but in reality, it took three times as long.

Cooking dinner was an enjoyable experience for the most part, but I decided that for at least the rest of high school, I would leave that job to my parents.

If you ever decide to cook (with not much prior experience) for your family, I'm warning you: The food might not be so appe-thai-zing. ♦

WHO I ASPIRE TO BE



Michael Cole, 12

Stephen Curry

An all-star through hard work

By Aditya Chaudhry

Senior point guard Michael Cole wasn't always the star scorer who could carry his team to victory.

Although Cole was on the Redwood Middle School basketball team for three years, he was mainly a bench warmer.

"The only reason I played was because in middle school everybody had to go in for a couple of minutes," Cole said. "I had the desire to get better and I worked really hard to improve." Standing a little over 6 feet and known for his quickness,

Cole has long admired Golden State Warrior guard Stephen Curry, a point guard who shares familiar physical characteristics.

Cole has especially admired Curry's work ethic and constant desire to improve.

Although Curry attended Davidson College, a small school in North Carolina, he put in the work to become one of the best players at the college level and even in the pros.

"[Curry's work ethic] teaches you to be tougher, which helped instill into me a work ethic to also do well in school," Cole said.

Cole has spent thousands of hours on the basketball court to improve his game. From waking up at 5 to practice in the gym to coming to school for weight training, Cole has taken himself from middle school bench warmer to high school star.

"[Basketball] has taught me to be confident with who I am and how I play," Cole said. "Confidence that the ball is going to go in when you shoot is the first key to being a good shooter, because if you aren't sure or not when you shoot [the ball], then the ball's not gonna drop through the net." ♦



Kushagro Bhattacharjee (10): "I admire Mr. Yim for his knowledge of math, his keen perspective and sense of humor."

Laura Makeever (10): "I've read Miranda Kerr's books and I admire her perspective on life."

Blake Propach, 12

A multi-talented actor

By Maya Ravichandran

Senior Blake Propach paused as the laughs from the crowd echoed into his ears; since Dogberry from "Much Ado About Nothing" is a ridiculous person, his over-the-top gestures and facial expressions were perfect for the part.

Propach did not expect to love acting; he sort of "fell into it." His mother forced him to audition for the school play "Willy Wonka" in elementary school, in which he played Grandpa Joe.

"After I did ['Willy Wonka'], I had to do the next one and the next one and the next one, not because I wanted to, but because it is what I [was used to]," Propach said. "I love [acting], but it was a mistake in the beginning."

Propach is particularly fond of comedy in all forms from Shakespeare to improv to slapstick. Because each crowd is different than the last, Propach said he loves feeling out every crowd and figuring out which types of jokes will make them laugh the most; sometimes it's the slapstick humor, and other times it's the wit.

"You never really know until you get those first few lines out," Propach said. "I love tailoring to my crowd and just trying to make them laugh."

Though comedy is his favorite genre, Propach said he particularly enjoyed doing "The Crucible" during his sophomore year. Though it was quite a serious show, he loved how everybody was very involved in the

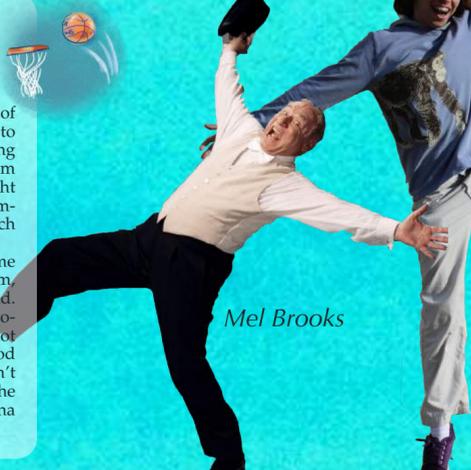
production of the play. Instead of learning about comedic beats, Propach was learning how to best showcase dramatic beats.

"We were still feeling the crowd, but it was a very different experience," Propach said.

Propach looks up to longtime actor Mel Brooks, who is known mostly for his comedic acting, writing and directing.

Brooks is also one of the few people who has won an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony Award.

"I love Mel Brooks because he didn't even go in for acting or anything like that," Propach said. "He came from nothing and he became an actor, director and screenwriter. He is one of the funniest people in movies now." ♦



Mel Brooks

A billionaire with common sense

By Larissa Chiu

Since the first grade, senior Mahir Jethanandani, author of "The Immaculate Investor," a recent self-published book on finance, has always been interested in investment and finance.

Jethanandani discovered his interest in managing money when his parents asked him to budget the spendings for his dog in the first grade. This meant that he had to fund his dog's food, toys and health check-ups.

This childhood investment transformed from a hobby to a way to generate a substantial income for Jethanandani. He realized that he had endless possibilities of making money, which also taught him valuable skills for the future and showed

him a variety of fields such as economics, finance, psychology and sociology.

Since childhood, Jethanandani has won many of the investment competitions that he's participated in, such as the Ithaca College Investment Competition and the WallStreet-Survivor Investment Competition.

He has built a codex algorithm to predict stock market prices, and has read "The Intelligent Investor," a 1,300-page book written by Benjamin Graham and a favorite book of his role model Warren Buffett.

Jethanandani first discovered Buffett when he read a New York Times article on Buffett's advice to Coca Cola. As an elementary school student, Jethanandani was captivated by the billionaire investor.

"[Buffett's] letter to his investors at Berkshire Hathaway employed everyday language and precise, sensible analysis on how to invest and run a company," Jethanandani said.

Jethanandani said Buffett uses the "everyday-man analysis" in his analysis of companies. Buffett is open with his strategies and is concerned about current economic and financial issues.

Jethanandani hopes to be like Buffett one day. He plans to "further develop the investing tactics and prowess to better understand a company's operations, product and financials work." ♦

Warren Buffett



Mahir Jethanandani, 12

A dancer with crazy moves

By Aditya Chaudhry

Minutes before senior Patrick Huynh took the stage for his last Homecoming Quad day with fellow seniors Tim Chau, Jonathan Huie and James Freeman, he could the beat of his heart above the bass of the music.

After three minutes of performing moves such as jackhammers and doing pretzel-like stances, Huynh was stunned to hear the deafening roar of the crowd. Learning how to dance at this level, however, was something he had to work hard to learn. He started break dancing in sixth grade after watching professional dance crews, such as Super Cr3w, on America's

Best Dance Crew. Huynh tried to replicate the crew's moves himself, but found it was difficult to learn from videos.

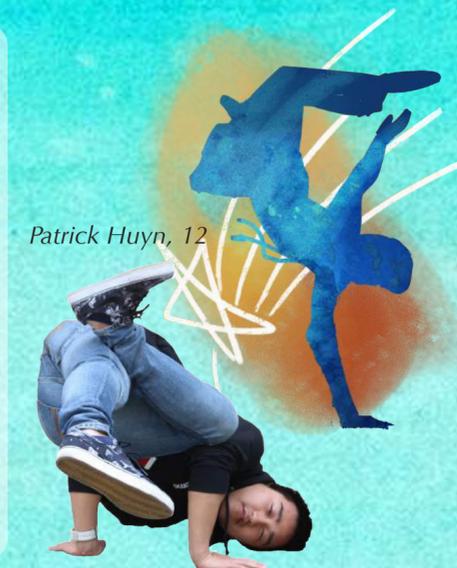
"Learning from YouTube was hard because there was no real instructor teaching," Huynh said. "It was all learning from a video so no one ever told me what I was doing wrong or how to fix my mistakes."

For two years, Huynh practiced breakdancing from these videos, but in order to improve his dancing skills, he joined a local dance class in Cupertino called Dance Academy USA.

Huynh said his favorite moves are power moves. These are performed in a circle with transitions linking each one to

make it seem as fluid as possible. While Huynh has danced in a couple of breakdancing competitions like the Cypher Cup Cupertino Edition and the Cypher Cup Santa Clara edition, he hasn't been able to make it past the preliminaries. Huynh plans to participate in even more competitions and join a dance crew when he goes to college.

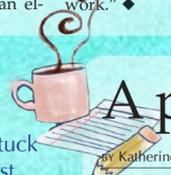
"I like how breakdancing gives me a sense of accomplishment when I finally [learn] a move," Huynh said. "It teaches me how determination can eventually lead to success after long hours of practice. The sense of accomplishment is basically my motivator to want to keep dancing." ♦



Patrick Huynh, 12

Irene Chen (12): "Ms. O is super welcoming and encourages all of her students to participate."

Kevin Chow (10): "I admire Maya Lin because she stuck to her creative principles and created one of the most innovative public structures, the Vietnam Memorial."



A programmer with vision

By Katherine Sun

Resume builder that sorts students' interests? Check. Learning center for AP Computer Science? Check. Online golden rod system? Check.

These are just a few of the projects that senior Aditya Aggarwal has participated in as a member of the school's Application Developers Club. Aggarwal has also contributed to projects that range from an app for community health checkups in Guatemala to the SHS app that many students carry on their phones.

He first gained exposure to programming in middle school while playing around with the appearances of web pages he made from scratch. After entering high school and joining the Application Developers Club, of which he is now co-president,

Aggarwal realized how much he loved "seeing apps in action" and coming up with different ideas. For this reason, he admires the Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

"[Zuckerberg] gets an idea, and he sees the implications of that idea and how many people can be affected by it. And from that he pretty much works on it," Aggarwal said.

Aggarwal describes mobile programming as "tough and actually painful at times" because a single project can drain him for months.

As he painstakingly reduces the number of errors in a program from 50 to zero, another 100 errors might appear. Still, he says the work is worth the struggle when he feels the "thrill" of seeing a project to its completion.

"You see that there's something worthwhile at the end, something you were imagining the whole way through and now it's better than you imagined," he said.

Aggarwal had the chance to apply his ideas in the real world when he interned with a professor in Guatemala over the summer and created an app for children to schedule health checkups. The project spanned four months, though he only stayed in Guatemala for two weeks.

"I just believe that with programming you can help people," Aggarwal said. "In some cases it's much harder, but then it's worth doing. It's worth pushing yourself to go that far to make that impact so they can focus on the things that are important in their life." ♦

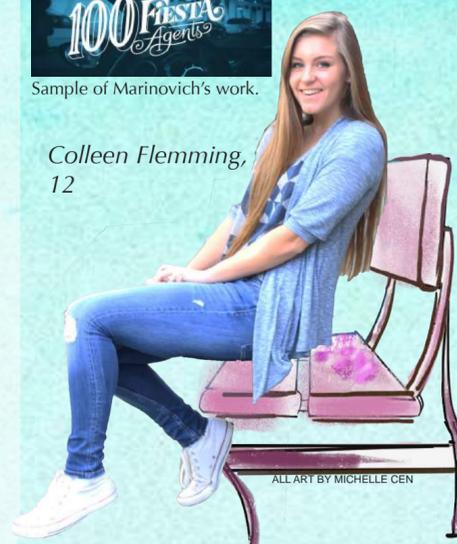
Aditya Aggarwal, 12

Mark Zuckerberg



Sample of Marinovich's work.

Colleen Flemming, 12



ALL ART BY MICHELLE CEN

An influential graphic designer

By Katherine Sun

Senior Colleen Flemming sits at her desk, spreading out the sheets of binder paper before her. One page is covered in her short, linear handwriting. The one next to it is filled with her bubbly cursive.

"People hate doing notes, and I think it's so much fun because I get to write letters for hours," Flemming said. "I probably spend more time focusing on how my handwriting looks than the actual notes, but I love writing."

Flemming, who changes her handwriting each month, has a passion for all things graphic design.

After realizing she struggled with creating realistic portraits, she turned to art forms that include typography, logo design

and line art.

"I decided that I couldn't draw things that looked real, and so I got really into drawing things that just came out of my head," Flemming said.

She prefers intricate and time-consuming art because it soothes her. Last year Flemming did a project on her own about pointillism, which involves using tiny dots of paint to compose one whole picture. She chose to form a flower by painstakingly using the bottom of a toothpick instead of specialized tools.

"I do really tedious art all the time, and I take a lot of time with the stuff that I do," she said. "I honestly get sad when I finish pieces. I wanted to keep going with the [pointillism project], but there just wasn't any more space on the

canvas for it."

Flemming never took professional art classes before her art elective this year; instead, she has learned by looking at other artists' work and "just trying over and over again."

She especially admires the graphic artist Erik Marinovich because he has designed for brand name companies like Nike and serves as a model for what she wants to do in the future: graphic design.

"When I was considering career options, I was trying to think of something that I've always had in my life, and art's been something that I've always been doing," she said. "I may not always be taking a class, or drawing all the time, but it's always something I've gone back to. You'll always find drawings in my notebook." ♦

Esha Krishnamurthy (10): "Taylor Swift truly cares about her fans and she lets them know."





GRAPHIC BY CAROLYN SUN

'Fresh off the Boat' relatable for Asian-Americans

by Ashley Chen
& Ariel Liu

As every social media commenter knows, it's not easy to be the first. Nevertheless, ABC's newest family drama, "Fresh off the Boat," is doing just that by taking the role of the first prime-time, Asian-led TV show since the 1990s when Margaret Cho starred in "All-American Girl."

While "Fresh off the Boat" may have its downfalls, its humor and genuine attempt at authenticity are admirable and make the show well worth the watch.

The show depicts a Taiwanese-American family who moves from Washington, D.C., to Orlando, Fla., to start a Western-themed barbecue restaurant. Protagonist and narrator Eddie Huang is the only Asian student in his new middle school in Florida, a foreign situation for many Saratoga students.

Still, "Fresh off the Boat" is easy to relate to in many other ways. For children of so-called tiger parents, who are familiar with piano and violin lessons, SAT prep courses and more, Eddie's mom Jessica's disappointment in her son's straight A's in place of A-plus grades is perhaps a common circumstance. Equally funny is Jessica's perplexed expression when she discovers that in Orlando, there is no local "Chinese Learning Center" (CLC), and her subsequent decision to create a homeschool CLC for her children.

Some other stereotypes ring true. For example, Jessica refuses to turn on the air conditioning in her house due to her frugality; thus, she takes her sons from the frozen food aisle of the supermarket to open houses with central air conditioning to avoid having to pay for the AC herself.

Likewise, we can recall countless winter days when we begged our parents to turn on the heater but were turned away

with a curt, "Put on a jacket." Rather than "waste electricity and money" on the AC and heater, our parents expected us to solve below-60 and above-85 degree temperatures with blankets and ice water.

One criticism of the show is its title: "FOB," or someone who is "fresh off the boat," was traditionally used as a derogatory term for a recent immigrant from an Asian country. But in our society today, "fob" is often applied to anyone who likes Asian culture, be it Kpop fans or Chinese drama admirers. Because the Asian community has reclaimed the word, its once-negative connotation has faded.

To its credit, the show doesn't shy away from racial issues. In one poignant scene, Eddie arrives at the first day of school to find

that he has nowhere to eat lunch. He instinctively tries to join the other "misfit" in the room, the only other non-white person near him—an African-American boy named Walter.

Walter welcomes Eddie, in a sort of "we're in this together" spirit. But when a popular student named Brock invites Eddie virtually two seconds later to sit at his table, Eddie abandons Walter. Even more ironic is that Brock and Eddie bond over black culture, leaving Walter out of the equation; in other words, Eddie and Brock's obsession with rap is an appropriation of African-American music.

Next, Eddie takes out his Asian lunch and is ridiculed by Brock, who says that "Ching Ming is eating worms!" Eddie returns to Walter, making it clear the Walter is the "second-choice friend," and while a later lunchroom brawl may appear to identify Walter as an oppressor, not a victim, the truth is that Walter is consistently friendly to Eddie when Eddie is ostracized by the Caucasian

majority at his school.

Meanwhile, Eddie jumps at every chance possible to join the popular crowd, even if it means turning on the one person who accepted him from the beginning. This anecdote of Eddie and Walter's friendship symbolizes a larger problem of minorities stepping on each other to earn the same small slice of acceptance in larger society.

"Fresh off the Boat" is similar to ABC's "Black-ish," which features a successful black man who worries that his family's cultural assimilation has caused a disconnect from their African-American roots. For instance, in the first episode, Dre Johnson receives a promotion to become his company's first black vice president, but is confronted by his son's conversion to Judaism, motivated by a desire to have a bar mitzvah like his friends.

Like the Johnsons, the Huangs struggle to assert their Asian American identity, holding on to staples like Chinese rice bowls and taking one's shoes off when entering the house even as the mother, Jessica (Constance Wu), learns to rollerblade with the neighbors. While these two families' implicit battle between their ethnic heritage and American identity may appear to overlap, each show presents the message in an original manner; regardless, the world has more than enough space for multiple diverse shows.

Despite some flaws, "Fresh off the Boat" is still an engaging show. In a world where finding an Asian-American in a mainstream media lead role is about as likely as eating a delicious airplane meal, any positive representation is welcome.

The cast of "Fresh off the Boat" thus rightly joins Lucy Liu ("Elementary"), John Cho ("American Beauty"), Brenda Song ("Suite Life") and a few others as the representative faces of Asian America in popular media. One can only hope that ABC's new show is a step to greater diversity on TV. ♦



http://blog.asianinny.com

Hollywood should cast more actors of color in lead roles

by Ashley Chen

It's no secret that Hollywood is a white, white, white world. According to the 2015 Hollywood Diversity Report, conducted by the UCLA Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies, 83 percent of lead actors in feature films are white.

Too often, the people of color (POC) who make it to the big screen are often relegated to smaller, supporting roles—or play antagonists. When POC are depicted as whole, round characters, as in the Academy Award-winning "12 Years a Slave," the positive representation of minority culture elevates the film to an unique level.

Lauded by The Guardian as "stark, visceral and unrelenting," the film won

an Oscar for Best Film, and its leading actor, Chiwetel Ejiofor, received a BAFTA for his performance. By showcasing the stories of the slaves in the American South, "12 Years a Slave" succeeds not just because of its acting and cinematography, but because it shares an often-silenced side of history.

Hollywood doesn't always succeed, though. One example of a ruined movie is "Avatar: the Last Airbender." The original cast featured an engaging and diverse group of Asians—the protagon-

ists included a lighter-skinned monk and two darker-skinned siblings, and the original antagonist was lighter-skinned. In contrast, the live-action film has Caucasian children portraying the Asian protagonists, while the antagonist is played by a POC.

This directorial choice not only marginalizes the possibility of POC saving the world, but what does it say about our society when, according to Hollywood, a story about a boy controlling the elements is more better with a white hero?

If we truly want our society to become more integrated and accepting, we need to start with stories we tell in film and on TV.

ciety when, according to Hollywood, a story about a boy controlling the elements is more better with a white hero? ♦

Syrian-Korean senior pursues career in theater

by Larissa Chiu
& Claire Chou

Senior Danny Kawadri, then a sophomore, stepped onto the stage wearing a dashing suit and tie. Hundreds of people stared in silence as the lights of McAfee Center illuminated the stage.

Kawadri began projecting his deep voice across the stage, speed-singing the song "The Speed Test" in the musical "Thoroughly Modern Millie." The audience watched in awe as Kawadri's voice never faltered, accumulating speed and humor by the second. After his piece, a roar of applause rang throughout the auditorium. Kawadri stood on the stage in confidence, trying his best to stay in character, but unable to contain his pride.

Kawadri is one of the school's many talented actors and singers. Performing has become one of Kawadri's passions.

Being half Korean and half Syrian, Kawadri acknowledges that he is a minority in a white-dominated entertainment field and that there is "a long way to go" for people of color in the industry. In order to solve this lack of diversity, he said that people should be more open to the arts of different cultures.

"I'm not Christian, yet I sing about Je-

sus and the Virgin Mary," Kawadri said. "It doesn't feel like a moral tension at all. To me, it's simply art. When minorities break these media stereotypes, it's considered an anomaly. This frame of mind has to change."

One instance in which he more aware of being a minority occurred during National Honor Choir, held in Salt Lake City in February. He said the experience was overwhelming, seeing that he was one of the few performers who weren't white.

"I made a really great friend from Arkansas, and even he said that it was a unique experience talking to someone multi-racial, since most of Arkansas is homogeneously white," Kawadri said.

Through this experience, he realized that places outside of the Bay Area have yet to become ethnically diverse, not only in the entertainment business, but in the community itself. Kawadri has also noticed, however, that there has been an increase in diversity in the industry, noting that "Diversity is achievable, but it will take a long time for it to not seem forced or out of place to many people."

Kawadri auditioned for his first musical "South Pacific" in spring of his



FALCON // LAUREN LOUIE

Senior Danny Kawadri rehearses for the spring musical "The Mystery of Edwin Drood."

freshman year. He intended to use the experience to supplement his vocal performance.

Kawadri's involvement in choir and classical voice began long before joining theater. He now sings in Chamber Choir and has attended multiple honor choirs such as National Honor Choir.

"Quite suddenly, however, I found myself enjoying theater just as much as studying classical voice," Kawadri said. "It definitely clicked with me."

After assimilating into the cast of "South Pacific," Kawadri was struck by the similarities and contrast between drama and competitive sports. Both encouraged a sense of companionship between teammates and cast members, respectively. According to Kawadri, be-

ing in a cast builds a level of trust and strengthens friendships since "it takes a lot of courage to perform in front of others every day."

Through his experiences in front of an audience, he has encountered roles that he loved to perform, but also roles that he struggled with. As his high school career comes to an end, Kawadri said theater has become a significant aspect of his life. He plans to continue in college with a major in classical music with an emphasis on voice. He hopes to one day star in his dream role of Captain Georg von Trapp in the musical "Sound of Music."

"Live performance is the closest that you'll ever get to the barrier between reality and fiction," Kawadri said. ♦

Disney's ethnically diverse princesses commendable

by Maya Ravichandran
& Carolyn Sun

Recently, Disney announced that the new princess Elena will star in an upcoming 2016 television series called "Elena of Avalor." Elena will be the first Latina Disney princess, living in an enchanted fairytale kingdom inspired by diverse Latin cultures and folklore.

Disney's effort to diversify its princesses is commendable. As children, we all eagerly watched Disney princesses overcome their obstacles, and when we shared a similar culture, we felt even more connected.

The animation studio may have initially favored Caucasian princesses, such as Aurora, Cinderella, Ariel and Snow White, but by the 1990s, it had started diversifying with princesses of different races and cultures. Although the earlier movies may be regarded as classics, they created an artificial and narrow ideal for young girls to look up to. Disney has represented many races in its proliferation of princesses, but it should continue branching out to include an even wider diversity of cultures.

Appearing in "Aladdin" (1992), Princess Jasmine was the first Disney princess of color. She not only possesses the brown skin and dark eyes and hair characteristic of her Arabian background, but also wears clothes similar to the costumes of Middle Eastern belly dancers. Admittedly, the way she is drawn isn't an accurate of a real Arabian princess, but Disney's effort to incorporate at least some aspects of Middle Eastern clothing into her character was a step in the right direction.

More impressive, however, is that Disney even varied the facial structures of its princesses in some movies. The animators gave Pocahontas, a Native American princess, prominent cheek bones and perhaps more East Asian features; at the time, this depiction was scientifically accurate.

For Mulan, Disney drew her eyes to be almond-shaped, matching her facial structure to her ethnicity instead of whitewashing her. In the past 20 years, Disney has been making its princesses more active and independent, especially Mulan, Pocahontas and Tiana, who is African American. All three do not rely on being rescued and would rather solve problems on their own. All three are women of color.

This is a stark contrast from Disney's earliest princesses like Cinderella, Snow White and Aurora, who spent their time dreaming of a better life and expecting a prince to come save them. While the earlier princesses created an image of a "damsel in

distress," the later princesses contributed to the feminist movement in a positive way.

Even more recently, however, Disney seems to be back to designing its princesses to have similar, if not nearly exact, facial structures, which relate to ethnicity. Rapunzel from "Tangled" and Anna from "Frozen" could be fraternal twins, and the upcoming Princess Elena seems to be their sister with only differences in coloring. Giving Caucasian princesses and princesses of color the same facial structures is a disappointing step back from Disney's progress in the '90s. In a sense, the studio is whitewashing the princesses in other ways besides skin color.

But ultimately, the chance to watch a heroine with similar background or skin color bravely confront and solve her problems is a gift to young girls, providing a feeling of acceptance and security in their unique cultures and identities. Disney paved the way for more ethnically diverse animated characters, and we can't wait to see what race and culture they draw inspiration from for their future films. ♦



GRAPHIC BY HELEN CHEN

Junior explores digital art via online forum

by HelenChen & SpringMa

Then 10-year-old Yena Jeong scrolled through countless art competition submissions in awe, admiring the clear strokes and defined lines of digital art. She struggled to cast a vote for her favorites, distracted by the impressive portraits of several species of characters under the classic yellow Neopets banner. After seeing the work of others, Jeong was eager to explore the unique field of digital art.



Jeong

"I used to play Neopets a lot [in middle school], and I still do," current junior Jeong said. "Ninety-nine percent of the art in the art community is digital. It looked a lot cleaner to me, which appealed to me because I like things a lot more clean-cut." In middle school, Jeong installed Photoshop on her laptop and bought her first refurbished tablet. After experimenting for several months, she familiarized herself with the unique coloring techniques and brushes on Photoshop. "I didn't have a tablet [at first] so my first few draw-

ings were spent sparring with my laptop's mousepad in an attempt to draw something pretty," Jeong said. "There were a lot of tools and buttons and icons with functions that I had no idea were possible."

Under the usernames y_misty, shells_attack and more, Jeong has won several weekly Neopets "beauty contests," where users submit their own recreations of Neopets characters. The submissions are categorized by the character's species and voted on by users.

Jeong noticed that unlike traditional forms of art, which she has been practicing since elementary school at private studios, digital art required her to organize her thoughts before picking up her stylus.

"For traditional mediums, a lot of the time you draw something and don't realize that it's a few centimeters off from where you wanted it," Jeong said. "But using Photoshop make it easier to have a finalized draft first."

Jeong said that although artists can quickly fix and change mistakes in Photoshop, it "doesn't necessarily make it an easier medium to work

with, just a different medium." In fact, to Jeong, the scope of digital tools available was especially daunting when she attempted to learn Photoshop on her own.

Even though working with her tablet did not provide her with a sense of "finality" that acrylic and paint offered, Jeong said she enjoyed mimicking aspects of traditional mediums on Photoshop. Through manipulating different brushes and effects, Jeong learned to make her art as realistic as possible.

Although this year is Jeong's first year in the school's art program, she has found uses for digital art as she explored further with traditional art in Art 2.

In a recent project in which students overlapped square parts of pictures, most students physically wove magazines or photographs together. Jeong used Photoshop to supplement her planning process by "switching out images faster."

"[Jeong's] use of technology and Photoshop for her paintings or anything she puts on a 2-D surface is a great tool," art teacher Diana Vanry said. "She's developing concepts and working out her compositions much faster now."

As she continues to use both



Courtesy of YENA JEONG

Junior Yena Jeong uses Photoshop and Illustrator to create a collage.

digital and traditional art, Jeong intends to focus on improving her coloring and shading, in addition to exploring different styles of drawing. She also practices with Photoshop and other online design programs on a daily basis when completing pages for the yearbook and other projects.

Currently, Jeong said her style is "based on using the layers option of Photoshop with maintaining a visibility in the type of brush and strokes I use." Even so, Jeong said her style has shifted through differ-

ent phases based on what she has learned.

In the future, Jeong plans to major in either graphic or product design at college, pursuing her passion for lettering and working with three dimensions.

"Art has definitely demonstrated to me that there are so many opportunities and methods for expression," Jeong said. "The fact that art has never-ending possibilities is so alluring and powerful. That's why I pick up a pen or pencil or stylus or brush, to try and create something new every day." ♦



GRAPHIC BY HELEN CHEN

by NidhiJain & AllisonLin

In a typical year, somewhere from 10 to 15 percent of Saratoga High students will attend two-year universities after graduation, according to recent statistics. Students choose community college for a variety of reasons, whether it is the lower costs associated with the community colleges or the knowledge that transferring to a four-year university works well after attending a two-year community college.

A senior's decision

One senior who has chosen this path is senior Sydney Torrens.

"I decided to attend a community college ultimately because I needed to buy more time," Torrens said.

Torrens is a student in the Media Arts Program who aspires to work in the film industry in the future; however, she was unable to get into her dream film school or a similar one, something she still hopes to accomplish into in a couple of years.

In the meantime, she plans to go to community college to further her skills.

"I know what my limits are when it comes to my skill set and study habits, and that's something that isn't talked a lot about at Saratoga," Torrens said.

Torrens advises students who also struggle with test-taking to realize early on that there's more to acquiring an education than scoring high.

"It's about working hard, pushing and then not beating yourself up about things you can't control, being proud of what you have done and trying to improve on the standards you've set for yourself and not others," said Torrens.

Torrens is grateful for the open-mindedness of her family and others around her at school. This supportive mindset gave her the confidence she needed to look into other options besides a four-year college immediately after high school.

Torrens took a tour of De Anza in order to check out the college that several friends had mentioned to her. This tour was one of the main reasons she chose to attend the college. She loved the atmosphere and plethora of opportunities there, not to mention costs that won't put a huge dent her parents' pocketbook.

In the next two years, she hopes to get an apartment with a few friends, graduate with an AA degree in Film Production and finally transfer to a film school she wants to attend.

Community college gives me a second chance at finding the right film school.

senior Sydney Torrens



Torrens also wants to be debt-free in 10 years so she can live without financial burden and travel. Attending a community college will save her and her family thousands of dollars and give her the opportunity to also save money through working jobs, she said.

"I want the best possible education in my area of interest, [film] and attending a community college gives me a second chance at finding the right film school that I didn't have a chance to apply to

during high school," Torrens wrote in a blog post.

One of her main concerns for attending De Anza is that the social atmosphere will be unlike that of a four-year college.

"Friends of mine at community colleges say that making friends and having a social life comes second to finishing up that AA degree and getting out of there and on to bigger and better things," Torrens said. "The mentality is very 'get in and out and just focus on yourself' on a day-to-day basis."

Torrens believes she will be able to focus on school while still seeking out connections through involvement in clubs and in classes.

One factor that shocked Torrens was De Anza's high percent of community college graduates who go on to four-year universities.

"I was stunned. I guess I had always thought that community and junior colleges were meant to take a student halfway up the ladder," Torrens said. "But I realized then that for many, their ladder's rungs stop at two years and that's enough."

Torrens plans to get the most out of this opportunity at De Anza.

"I'm excited for this. I am thankful for the education I've received at Saratoga and I'm confident that this next part will be a piece of cake with a fair serving of challenge on the side in other ways," Torrens said.

Alumni experience in junior college

In the class of 2014, 86 percent of students chose to attend a four-year university, while 14 percent of students went to a community college.

According to class of 2014 alumni Ethan Gelfand, a current freshman at

West Valley Community College, this smaller percentage can be attributed to uninformed judgment.

"Many [individuals] stereotype community college to be boring and dull, so they choose against it," Gelfand said. He then added on stating that this is false.

Gelfand and his parents had planned for community college since the sixth grade. Gelfand said that money was the biggest factor in their decision.

Although many Saratoga High students gear themselves toward Ivy League schools, UCs and other elite colleges, Gelfand tried to refrain.

"Everyone should strive to their goals. Me? I'm just happy to have the opportunity to go to college, whether it's Stanford, California Polytechnic State University or West Valley," Gelfand said.

One of the unique advantages that Gelfand enjoys includes meeting people of different ages. Although he feels that some of community college's disadvantages include the lack of fraternities, sororities and dorm life, he points out that like four-year college students, he can still hold jobs and receive coveted internships.

Gelfand says one of the unique advantages of community college is the smaller class sizes. With a dozen students per class, it is easier to contact the professor.

Gelfand is currently enrolled in several classes including Statistics and Calculus, which he states are much easier for him than other students because of the AP Calculus and AP Statistics courses he took in high school.

Gelfand also feels that the lesser percentage of students attending community colleges should not discourage students from considering it.

"College is what you make it to be. I make [my experience] the best no matter what." ♦

'Nobody's perfect,' but Miley Cyrus comes close

Making it rain



Nidhi Jain

When they hear the name Miley Cyrus, most people conjure a disturbing image of her newly popularized dance move dubbed "twerking," in which dancers violently shake their behinds.

On the other hand, think of a confident and talented woman who possesses an ample number of admirable characteristics. Basically, I'm obsessed with Miley Cyrus.

Before you begin to judge me, I must have you know that her decision to abstain from wearing substantial clothing has not in any way encouraged my liking for her. In fact, I often find myself still being a follower of my middle school dress code.

Nevertheless, I admire her confidence in taking bold actions and starting new, yet odd, trends.

My sudden realization of Cyrus' confidence dawned upon me slightly over a year ago. At the time, I was far from a Miley Cyrus fan and only an occasional viewer of "Hannah Montana" reruns.

It started on a Tuesday afternoon, when my proactive freshman self had completed all of my homework the previous night. At 5 p.m., I received a phone call from my excited father, who proceeded to tell me that he had received two free Miley Cyrus Bangerz concert tickets from a client. My father, who is slightly behind in modern pop culture, was oblivious to Cyrus' recent transformation from a sweet Disney Channel

character to a scandalous pop star.

After realizing I would be unable to find a friend to come with me on 7 p.m. of the same day, I accepted the obvious solution: going with my father.

As we entered the SAP Center, my father quickly realized that he did not fit in with the rest of the "teen girl"-dominated crowd. Luckily, our suite seats provided us with a barrier from the screaming fangirls. I still have a hunch that he was more excited to eat the free guacamole than to watch Cyrus perform.

After my awkward attempts to warn my father of potentially inappropriate dancing, the lights faded and Cyrus entered the stage, energetically blowing kisses to the audience. As she sang each song, I fell in love with her flawless voice and confidence. At one point, I looked

over to share my excitement with my father, only to find him in a deep slumber.

By the end of the concert, I no longer paid attention to her clothing choices or hairstyle. If anything, her sparkling outfits added to the uniqueness of the performance. I still felt uncomfortable while she was twerking, but I nonetheless enjoyed the concert immensely. My father, on the other hand, was a little angry when the loud finale woke him up.

Throughout the next week, I, drawn to her amicable personality, watched interviews with her everyday. I even admired her tact as a business woman. In response to questions regarding her controversial behavior, she stated that regardless of their opinion of her, they are giving her publicity, and so either way, she "wins." Soon enough, I was a fan.

So next time you see me, don't start an overdramatized rant about Miley Cyrus; otherwise I just might have to come in like a wrecking ball. ♦

'Jupiter Ascending' like glorious sci-fi drug trip

by HelenWong

"Jupiter Ascending" takes the prize for most glorious film fail of the year. It didn't win an Oscar, but it could easily be in the running for a Razzie, an award that goes to the worst film of the year. It was, on its opening weekend of Feb. 6, a box office flop, but soon made up for that money in soaring international sales.

In "Jupiter Ascending," the protagonist, a young woman named Jupiter Jones (Mila Kunis), discovers that she is space royalty. The entire two hours of the movie deal with her adventures in space, falling in love with a space werewolf and becoming owner of the Earth. To sum it up in four words: The plot isn't great.

That said, however, the movie has plenty of fantastic individual elements. Eddie Redmayne should have received at least a BAFTA; he already has one, but needs more for his performance as an emotionally unstable capitalist space prince. Not only does he spend the entire movie lounging around in sparklegoth space-chic-vibe clothing, but his be-dazzled costume allows for an excellent view of his rock hard abs.

Channing Tatum, however, gives Redmayne a run for his money in an oftentimes-shirtless-but-deeply-emotive portrayal of an angry space werewolf, Caine. He spends much of the movie saving protagonist Jupiter Jones from various threats like the marriage proposal from Squareface Space King, a royal sibling of Redmayne's character.

Jupiter Jones herself is a Cinderella of sorts. She and her family are Russian immigrants living in Chicago who all run and work at their family-owned cleaning company.

Kunis does an excellent job of portraying a brave character. There is one scene, however, in which she confesses her love for Caine. When he protests he is more dog than human, she says raptly, "I love dogs!" I had to put my face in my hands. The secondhand embarrassment was overpowering.

The main problem is the plot and its drug-trip devices that attempt to hold all everything together.

It kills me that there was so much potential in the universe built by the producers, the Wachowski siblings responsible for "Cloud Atlas."

The entire plot has so many subplots — a telescope, liquor made from dead people, a dead-but-not-really-dead mother — that keeping track of them all in a semblance of cohesion is actually very difficult. What the Wachowski siblings have made is both an atrocity and an artistic success. It's like every sci-fi and superhero trope tossed into a stew pot. It's downright embarrassing. It's unabashedly indulgent.

The sheer fearlessness of it all is impressive, and that's what saves the movie from being not only trash, but glorious trash worthy of a re-watch for the next time I'd like to watch something mind-numbingly comforting. It is the perfect two-hour distraction for a sick day, or for finals week. ♦



GRAPHIC BY HELEN CHEN

Going to the DMV? It pays to take the time to study

by EmilyChen & AmiNachiappan

"Oh god, please help me," sophomore Esha Krishnamoorthy repeatedly told herself while tightly clutching the Indian statue of a god in her hand. As a man started walking closer and closer, Krishnamoorthy went into panic mode and started to freak out. But once the "really nice man" stepped into her car, Krishnamoorthy was convinced that "there was a god."

Krishnamoorthy was taking her behind-the-wheel license test for the second time. She had failed her first test in early February.

"[My first time,] I had a really strict Asian [DMV examiner] who had such a strong accent that I couldn't understand a word he said," she said.

When he would ask her to "turn at a green sign," she mistook it as "go at the green light" so she would continue driving. Due to these misinterpretations, she failed her first driving test.

Twenty days later on Feb. 27, Krishnamoorthy was ready to redeem herself. Instead of going to the Los Gatos DMV because she heard it was really hard, she went to the Santa Teresa DMV.

"There are a lot of people in Los Gatos so I knew if I accidentally hit someone, I would be done," she said.

At the Santa Teresa DMV, Krishnamoorthy was relieved to have a kind DMV examiner, who passed her with 14 errors. Just one more error, and she would have failed.

Many students decide not to go to the Los Gatos DMV for their drivers test due to the "compact and small town area," according to health and drivers education teacher Amy Obenour. Also, it has been rumored that nine out of ten students who take the behind-the-wheel test at the Los Gatos DMV fail.

"Fridays in Los Gatos are garbage days, and no one knows if it's legal to pass a garbage truck," said Obenour. "Don't take your test on Fridays."

Despite the challenges that Los Gatos

presents to hopeful drivers, sophomore Aryana Goodarzi did not feel scared and took her behind-the-wheel test there.

"I have lived in Los Gatos for six years so I know the roads," she said. "It's harder if you take it in a place where you don't know the area."

Goodarzi took her test early January at the Los Gatos DMV and passed. Some students, such as sophomore Tristan Bush, choose to take their test at Santa Clara's DMV because "it isn't too far away and isn't too hard."

After waiting in line for two hours in the middle of June, Bush was second in the line, ready to take the test. But due to the scorching heat, his car's engine began to heat up, then broke down. Still eager to get his license, he took his test the next morning and passed.

Obenour agrees that one DMV examiner and/or route may be harder than another, but before taking the test, "it is still important to have done all of your 50 hours of practice including your ten hours at night and have completed your six hours of drivers training lesson through a good driving school."

DMV locations and examiners do af-

fect the overall driving experience, but according to Obenour, students must practice driving for 50 hours in the six months before their test.

"The more confidence you have with your parents in the car, the more confidence you will portray in your behind-the-wheel test," she said. ♦

>> #bigidea

The different DMV's

Los Gatos
Pros: slow speed limit, only one route
Cons: Many pedestrians, narrow streets, busy because of downtown area, notorious for failing drivers

Santa Clara
Pros: Routes posted online, wider streets, comfortable speed limit
Cons: Lots of traffic, buses, bicyclists, trucks and pedestrians

Santa Teresa:
Pros: Wide streets, little traffic, business area, few pedestrians
Cons: Many unprotected left turns and relatively faster speed limits

Students share insights into rave culture

by Stefanie Ting & Eileen Toh

No less than 5,000 attendees crowded into the City National Civic Center in San Jose on Feb. 28, most dressed in animal- or character-themed costumes consisting of shimmery mermaid-leggings, fluffy legwarmers and crop tops.

Fluorescent lights spun across the room as they allowed themselves to forget the obligations that restricted their freedom and lost themselves to the beat of the blaring electronic music. No boundaries confined these souls, no prejudice fueled drama between them. The only rule seemed to be "Peace, Love, Unity and Respect" (PLUR).

Raves like this one, which was called Wobbleland, are parties or events attended by large numbers of people, where attendees from all around the area can dance to fast, electronic music. Unlike school dances, raves have no dancing or clothing rules, with the exception for those under 18, who

dine de Roos, who started attending raves when her older sister brought her to one her sophomore year and recently attended Wobbleland.

"I fell in love with the atmosphere [at my first rave]," said de Roos, who attends three to four raves every year. "You can honestly just be yourself because no one will care."

According to de Roos, raves appeal to several types of people, from those who "go just to say that they went," to those who use raves as opportunities to freak, a style prohibited at school dances.

Senior Irene Chen-An, who also attended Wobbleland, said meeting new people and making friends outside of her usual friend group at school is the best part about raves. At raves, she said attendees wear candy, or "kandi," bracelets. If they get to know and like someone, they then give the person their own bracelets using hand signs that stand for "Peace, Love, Unity and Respect."

"How much you enjoy raves depends on what vibes you have," Chen-An said. "If you're all happy, then people want to hang out with you. If you're wearing a cool costume, people are going to compliment you and try to get to know you."

At Wobbleland, Chen-An be-



"There is no judgment. We just dance and it's so great to dance [all] your problems away."

junior Beaudine de Roos

MICHELLE CEN

trayed a girl from San Ramon Valley High School. She lent Chen-An her jacket during the rave, and the two followed each other on Instagram.

Once the rave came to a close, Chen-An sent the girl a direct message through Instagram asking where she was because she still had her jacket. The girl replied, "You can keep it. We'll see each other next time."

As popular as raves are with some students, not everyone has fallen in love with them. One example is an upperclassman who attended Wobbleland as her first rave and spoke to the Falcon under the condition of anonymity.

"I'm never going to another [rave] again," she said. "The music was really good, but there were so many people there that were from different backgrounds [and] a lot of them were really creepy."

This girl said female attendees are highly susceptible to unwanted sexual advances, as

some attendees seek to take advantage of the unwary and vulnerable.

"Guys just come up behind you and start grinding, and you don't even know what they look like," she said. "If you turn around to face them, they automatically assume that you want to make out with them. I would normally just walk away, but there are a couple instances where they grab onto you, and you can't get away from them."

Looking back, she advised potential ravers to stick with friends to avoid awkward or dangerous situations: the more friends, the better.

The other notorious association with raves is the perception of rampant drug use. According to a study on eMedicineHealth.com, 89 percent of rave attendees reported using ecstasy, a popular club drug, at least once, and nearly 50 percent reported use within the past month.

According to de Roos, while raves are stereotypically por-

trayed in films as filled with drugs, many attendees have equally enjoyable experiences while sober.

"With every party, there is going to be drugs or alcohol, even here in Saratoga, but no one is there just handing you pills," de Roos said. "It is your decision, and if you make a bad decision that you think is OK, then that is on you. It is not on the atmosphere of the raves or any of the dance parties."

In response to the stereotype that ravers "just go out and don't really care about anything other than parties," junior Chloe Koon said that the students from the outside do not necessarily understand the balance ravers are able to achieve between academics and raves.

"I feel like parties shouldn't have such a negative connotation in Saratoga," Koon said. "It is a fun way not only to switch over to another group of friends, but also to just meet new people." ♦

"How much you enjoy raves depends on what vibes you have."
senior Irene Chen-An

Environmental Club spreads eco-awareness

by Eric Sze & Rachel Zhang

On a typical Tuesday lunch in science teacher Kristen Thomson's room, 1015, members of the Environmental Club can be found scattered about carrying mounds of Cheerios in their hands. One student dumps her pile of Cheerios into a large box, the heap growing larger as other students continue to add more.

The Environmental Club, a club that focuses on spreading environmental awareness, was demonstrating bioaccumulation, the buildup of toxins in an organism, a common phenomenon found in nature.

Each student represents a fish in the ocean, holding handfuls of cereal that symbolize toxins. As the student collects more Cheerios, she becomes "infected."

Juxtaposing household items with important environmental subjects, this simple yet informational simulation is one of the many creative activities juniors Meera Rachamalla and Michelle Shen have conducted in the Environmental Club.

"It made me proud to see that Michelle and my efforts actually had an effect on raising awareness for the environment, when we saw everyone enjoying and participating in the activity," Rachamalla said.

During the spring of their freshman year, Rachamalla and Shen created the club out of their passion for the environment. Currently boasting around

30 active members, the club has grown tremendously in the last two years, overcoming many of the initial problems that new clubs face.

In the early stages of forming their club, Rachamalla and Shen argued over what their club's focus should be. While Rachamalla advocated for weekly discussions and simple activities, Shen stressed on volunteer opportunities and events. Eventually, they settled for a combination of the two.

Having finalized the goal of their club, Rachamalla and Shen began advertising and promising to serve food at all their meetings, an incentive they said has significantly contributed to their growth.

Shen and Rachamalla are able to keep members interested by offering fresh ideas and volunteering events at each meeting. The two spend up to two hours every week planning the topic of the meeting and additional activities.

In the past, they teamed up with the club to create beautiful eco-friendly bracelets by braiding pieces of colored plastic bags.

Besides completing small arts and crafts, club members also discuss timely environmental events. Recently, one of their meeting's topics was about President Barack Obama's veto of the Keystone XL pipeline legislation, which angered Alaskan politicians who thought that the government was "declaring war on Alaska's economy."

"Bringing awareness about environmental issues is very important," Shen



Courtesy of MICHELLE SHEN

Juniors Michelle Shen and Tiffany Zheng prepare mulch to fertilize trees in February 2013.

said. "Having discussions really integrates people and gets them active in them."

Using a PowerPoint, Shen and Rachamalla outlined the summary of the situation and included three brief news clips. They then posed a question to the group: "Should we pick environmental conservation and the protection of natural habitats, or should we focus on state's rights?"

Unfortunately, the bell rang a few minutes later.

"[In a usual discussion] people might ask a few more questions, but it's not a Socratic where everyone participates," said Shen. "Sometimes, I'll get a question or two."

The club's interest in the environment often expands past the classroom and into the outdoors. Its volunteer

events center around nature, attracting many members who love working outdoors.

"With a lot of different clubs' volunteer events, you might be filing papers," Shen said. "[We have] really interactive events and I think people enjoy them."

For example, the club has organized outings to Full Circle Farms in Sunnyvale, where they got to pick fresh produce, as well as the Tree Amigos program in San Jose, where they helped out with the nursery and learned about urban forestry.

To students who want to form their own club, Shen advises them to ask themselves some serious questions.

"If you are creating a club, make sure it's something you're really passionate about," Shen said. "Don't just do it for colleges." ♦



The Falcon conducted a Socratic seminar via Google Hangouts with students from local schools. For the full transcript, visit saratogafalcon.org.

Q: How are you privileged?

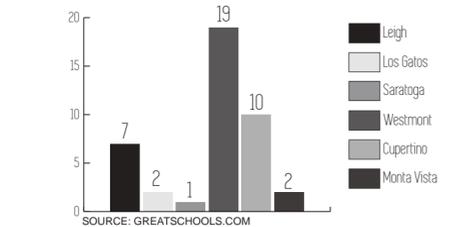
Allan Wu: There's definitely a clear generational divide [between my privilege] and the privilege my parents had. [For instance, I have] all this money available to buy prep books or take a class. My dad didn't come from the best economic background. [But this isn't] necessarily beneficial to me, because as a result of all these privileges, I don't come to value them. Ultimately, I [do] not work as hard as my parents and I live a lifestyle that's a lot more lax, [and] the most I can do is come to accept that I am privileged.

Caroline Oliver: I'm a white, heterosexual female. If I go into the job force not having any tattoos, being from Saratoga, Calif., having what I hope to be is a pretty good education, that gives me an edge over anyone [who deviates from the norm in any way. At the same time, a lot of my privileges] stem from money.

Meilan Steimle: Socioeconomic worth due to where I grew up and the fact that I won't have to struggle to afford college [is] definitely a privilege.

"We have the responsibility to use the opportunity, that so many people don't have, to make positive changes in the world."
-Junior Nicole Siguenza

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN FREE OR REDUCED-LUNCH PROGRAMS



Q: What are your responsibilities as a privileged person?

Nicole Siguenza: As privileged people, which I think we can all agree that we are, first and foremost we have to acknowledge that we're privileged. We [then] have the responsibility to use the opportunity, that so many people don't have, to make positive changes in the world; [for instance, by] helping bring people who are less privileged up so we're all on a more equal platform.

Allan Wu: I'm pretty cynical; I don't think that it's our obligation to help people in need. It's definitely needed, but I think we're being overly idealistic and romanticizing. At the end of the day, I think you're either born into your privileged situation or you're not. Few people from inferior situations or worse upbringings can make it up to a better position. That's the reality. As teens, we like to help our community, to go out and help different people but, in reality, when we have to go out into the real workforce, college, not all is what it seems and people are a lot more aggressive and deceptive. The reality is that the world is unfair and not everything is equal. ♦

Q: What do you think privilege is? In what ways can someone have privilege?

Hanno Rosner: Privilege is power; it's basically a condition [where you have] options. You can build up your privileges throughout your life — when you're 10, you can't drive a car, but when you're 15, you can test so you can drive.

Hyuntae Byun: If we define privilege as an inequality between various groups of people, just by living in the Silicon Valley, we have access to reliable transportation, stable internet and a stable food supply. Depending on where you draw the line between privilege and human rights, every single human right we have is also a privilege. Just because it's defined as a human right doesn't mean everyone around the world has it.

If you want to delve deeper into the idea of social inequality, there are regions that we identify as third world, but [are so far away geographically that] we become more desensitized to it — there's a layer of superficiality [that exists] because you develop your life around a very specific environment, which keeps you within your socioeconomic status.

"Just by living in the Silicon Valley, we have access to reliable transportation, stable Internet and a stable food supply."
-Junior Hyuntae Byun



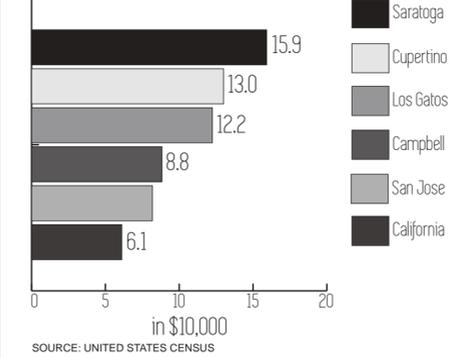
Q: Do you think you are prejudiced against any groups? How do you reduce this prejudice?

Meilan Steimle: We as a generation are [already] very polluted [by prejudices]; it will be very difficult for us [to overcome them by raising] awareness and actively fighting against the prejudices that we have. But if [prejudices fade], then a new generation will grow up without having been exposed to them.

Hyuntae Byun: That's true, but only if you think of prejudice as something evil. If you look at every single human society that has ever evolved on this world, they all had caste systems and developed prejudices. So my point is that merely allowing prejudice to become extinct will not [mean] future generations [will not have] to deal with it. You must pass on that same ideology that allow[ed] you to fight off these prejudices or they will reemerge.

Eric Zhang: Prejudice in general [has] a negative connotation, but it shows diversity and it keeps people from having a society [where everyone] conforms to everything.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Junior Hanno Rosner (Westmont) is a surfer and a competitive swimmer for De Anza Cupertino Aquatics.



Junior Meilan Steimle (Harker) is Opinion Editor of the Harker News and enjoys creative writing.



Junior Caroline Oliver (Saratoga) plays clarinet in the school symphony and is involved in Girl Scouts.



Junior Hyuntae Byun (Los Gatos) is on the staff of the El Gato newspaper and enjoys playing badminton.



Junior Allan Wu (Cupertino) is an officer of his school's competitive FBLA team and enjoys playing sports.



Junior Nicole Siguenza (Leigh) is a member of her school's Interact Club and works at CineLux Theatres.



Junior Eric Zhang (Monta Vista) is an aspiring computer programmer and the setter of his volleyball team.

Race against the clock: Teachers talk grading

By Stefanie Ting & Rachel Zhang

It's an early Friday morning and, while most students are still cocooned in their warm sheets at 7 a.m., English teacher Natasha Ritchie is already in her classroom, finalizing the day's lesson plans.

Although she has already worked for two weeks of summer break planning her overall lessons, Ritchie often spends an additional hour every morning to create, tweak and improve each day's lesson.

A little less than an hour later, Ritchie's English 11 MAP students groggily trudge to their seats. When the second bell rings, she stands poised in front of the classroom, ready, once again, for her four hour and 15 minutes of teaching to begin.

Contrary to the belief that teachers have the opportunity to grade during the day, Ritchie rarely has the luxury to do so. Initiating and directing class discussions, she is constantly away from her desk throughout the entire period.

Three periods later, it is 2:20 p.m. and her school day still has not come to a close. After the sixth-period English 11 MAP students leave her room, Ritchie settles down in front of her computer, responding to emails from students, parents and colleagues while dealing with other business until 4 p.m.

"I rarely have the energy to grade after this, especially with a 4-year-old [son] at home who expects that I can give him at least an hour of focused attention," Ritchie said.

Because of her intense workload on weekdays and dedicated family time, she finds herself resorting to "power-grading" sessions on the weekends to catch up, clocking in at least eight hours almost every weekend.

Ritchie has fallen into a routine of continuous grading and missed family time. By 1 p.m. on a Sunday several weeks ago, she had finished a total of 24 "The Great Gatsby" essays, spend-

ing at least 20 minutes on each of them. To finish grading all 112 of her students' essays, it would take her more than 37 total hours.

"[Twenty-four papers graded is] not even a full class, and I missed three family activities," Ritchie said. "My husband and son went on a bike ride and picnic at Wilder Ranch on Sunday and fishing on Saturday. I missed both!"

Teachers like Ritchie put in countless hours each day to keep their classes moving ahead.

Their efforts are often overlooked, brushed off by some students' remarks on how slow some teachers are at grading papers. Some parents even complain in front of the classroom, also blinded from the work teachers put in behind the scenes.

With a full-time teacher having 130 or more students in five classes, he or she often has several dozens of assignments and tests to grade each semester.

Sacrificing their personal time, they carve out hours outside of school to provide students with quality lesson plans, timely test results and essay feedback.

Another example of this is AP US History (APUSH) teacher Kim Anzalone, who always has a fresh stack of either homework assignments or tests to score on her desk.

Anzalone spends a full week grading three classes of APUSH tests, which include both multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Amidst furious grading, Anzalone also has to prepare for upcoming assignments and notes, which includes updating the Canvas calendar a month in advance.

"It is a continual process," she said. "There is always something to grade during my prep period in addition to lesson planning. [There] is never enough time."

According to Anzalone, her students understand that because of her tight schedule and heavy workload, she may not be able to return assignments as

quickly as they would like.

Likewise, Chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu's students and especially her TAs comprehend the time-consuming work put into each class.

One of her TAs, junior Amy Zhang, has developed a deeper appreciation for teachers, having experienced firsthand a portion of Nakamatsu's workload.

"I understand why teachers have so many things on their plate, so it makes sense why it takes awhile to grade a test," Zhang said.

For instance, Nakamatsu said she finishes her teaching plans for an entire unit, which consist of the topic, the order and time frame allocated for each lesson, in two to three hours.

Preparing ahead of time helps her to alleviate some of the stress within the week and free up time to correct labs and tests.

Similarly, Ritchie strives to return graded work in a timely fashion while still providing insightful comments for her students.

Although holistic grading is far more intensive, Ritchie prefers giving students more feedback than simply scoring on the individual criteria.

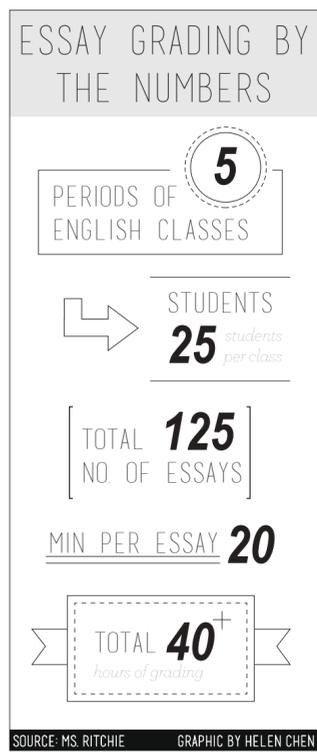
"I try really hard to give immediate feedback on drafts or in class after quizzes," Ritchie said. "I also try to share general trends immediately after [starting to] grade a batch of papers."

The work a teacher puts in behind the scenes is often disregarded by students, who are more than often just eager to see their test results.

"It is frustrating [when students complain] because I already put in full eight-hour days at school, more at home and then miss family time to grade on the weekends," Ritchie said. "I understand that students want feedback before it becomes less meaningful, but it takes such an incredible amount of time to give thoughtful and genuine feedback."

To alleviate her oftentimes intense workload, Ritchie suggests allowing students to grade their own papers, an effective method she has implemented this year.

Ritchie also said that "the most notable solution, the only one that would



GRAPHIC BY HELEN CHEN

Junior strives to complete, publish fantasy novel

By Helen Chen & SpringMa

During her freshman year, a combination of boredom and creativity inspired now-junior Giulia Corno to begin a story that eventually developed into her first full-length novel.

The storyline, set during the Reconstruction period in the South, features an orphan named Aurelia who aspires to become a doctor. When she helps an injured angel, Aurelia becomes part of a prophecy that brings the two characters together on a mission to save the rest of their realm.

Despite the months of hard work she spent following her initial decision to start writing, Corno was unsatisfied with the 200 pages she had written, so she decided to start from scratch by changing her novel's focus to a different character. Corno said her initial protagonist did not have the confidence or powerful presence that she had originally envisioned for the main character of the novel.

Knowing that her new narrator had more potential, Corno wrote and rewrote several parts. Equipped with an "independent, resilient and stubborn"

brunette named Aurelia as her new main character, Corno made sure the narrator conveyed the message that trust lays the foundation of a strong relationship.

"One thing that really messed with me at first was that I didn't have a name for [Aurelia] when I started writing," Corno said. "To me, Aurelia's identity was intertwined with her name. The second time around, I had a name for her, and that locked her character in."

"I like how I can be creative with whatever happens in the novel and end the book any way I want."

junior Giulia Corno



Corno has planned her novel down to the characters' interactions. Her organization, however, is often overridden by her characters, who "have a mind of their own."

"If you ever hear an author say characters write themselves, it is true,"

Corno said. "Whenever authors' notes said [that] characters were hard to work with, I didn't think it was true until I started writing myself and many scenes just wrote themselves."

Due to her love for both historical nonfiction and fiction, Corno said having an utopian setting allowed her to embed the basic events of Civil War into her plotline while also "twisting the details."

Doing so also allowed Corno to incorporate angels and demons into her novel, a natural decision due to her love of flying.

With the help of her friends who have edited several rounds of drafts, Corno has made sure that what she writes is coherent to others. Corno said asking peers and classmates who understand her writing style to give candid and honest feedback is especially important to improve the quality of her writing.

Junior Lisa Yu, one of Corno's close friends who has edited Corno's novel, said Corno's attitude toward her work is inspiring.

"[Corno] is one of the most prolific writers I've ever met," Yu said. "She's always receptive to criticism and looks to improve herself and her work."

Corno said one of her biggest chal-

really make a serious dent, is to decrease class size."

If the administration moves away from the current model and reduces the number of students in each class, there would be fewer essays to score, assignments to check and tests to grade, significantly diminishing the long hours of grading.

Though at times the workload can become stressful, Ritchie ultimately loves being a teacher.

"I absolutely love planning; this is the fun stuff," said Ritchie. "Curriculum creation and revision are incredibly rewarding and enjoyable. This is how teachers stay life-long learners." ♦

lenges is to make sure her events happen chronologically and make sense to her audience.

Even though Corno said her progress has been limited due to a rigorous academic schedule during junior year, she is writing her ninth chapter out of an intended 32. She has not decided a title yet, but Corno is using "Conquering Trust" as a placeholder until she finishes she complete novel.

"The plot line is not completely finalized yet, but I like how I can be creative with whatever happens in the novel and end the book any way I want," Corno said. "As of now, I want to write until I feel like I've reached a point where the main story is done but I can still branch off of it if I want to."

Aiming to complete the book next year, Corno hopes to publish her novel with a company or an independent publisher after completing her freshman year of college.

Despite her passion for writing, Corno said she does not plan on pursuing creative writing as a full-time job in the future; instead, she wants to minor in the subject.

"Creative writing is such a good outlet and a positive way to express myself in a way that other forms of art may not provide," Corno said. "It's a little like painting, except with words." ♦

>> TheStats

3 sets played

The boys' volleyball team beat Valley Christian High on March 27, winning three straight sets. "Valley Christian is a really tough team in the upper league, but they rested their best player," junior setter Chester Leung said. "We really stepped up big and played our butts off."

4 runs batted in

Junior third baseman Ellie Lee had four RBIs in the 6-3 win against Sacred Heart Cathedral on March 14. "Every time I'm in the box, it's an opportunity to get a hit and I'm just doing whatever I can to get one," Lee said.

WHO'S HOT

No Neel, no problem

Despite an ankle injury to No. 1 singles player senior Neel Bedekar, the boys' tennis team has only one loss in seven league games. "It was really tough at first to deal with the loss of [Bedekar], but we realized we had to train harder in order to fill his void," current No. 1 singles junior Karthik Padmanabhan said.

WHO'S NOT

Drowning in losses

The girls' swim team, with only 13 swimmers on varsity, has yet to win a meet this season. "We lost a lot of seniors who went off to college and students who transferred to Los Gatos," senior freestyler Amanda Moriarty said.

>> TheRANKINGS

- 1 ^ Boys' Tennis (7-1)
- 2 ^ Boys' Golf (6-2)
- 3 ^ Badminton (1-0)
- 4 ^ Softball (6-3-1)
- 5 = Boys' Volleyball (11-7)
- 6 = Girls' Lacrosse (2-2)
- 7 = Girls' Track (1-2)
- 8 v Baseball (1-5)
- 9 v Boys' Lacrosse (1-5)
- 10 v Boys' Track (0-3)
- 11 v Boys' Swimming (0-2)
- 12 v Girls' Swimming (0-2)

Car enthusiasts obsess over automobiles

By Aditya Chaudhry & Vibha Seshadri

Every morning, the parking lot is filled with an assortment of car brands, ranging from Toyota Civics to Ford Mustangs. What most people don't realize is that some students use these cars — and other ones they never drive — for recreational racing, an expensive but thrilling hobby that many find addicting.

Senior Alex Whitman has been a car enthusiast since age 2. As a toddler, he played with Hot Wheels, but recently he has moved on to more exciting pursuits.

In an event called autocross, Whitman goes to an open parking lot where different car clubs assemble cones around the lot. People come to these parking lots and race for time. Whitman has been participating in autocross with his father for the past two years and averages around 45 seconds per race. Each race is approximately three fourths of a mile.

"I think it's eye opening because a lot of kids think they

are the best drivers in the world, and then you go [to autocross] and actually try it, and you realize how bad you are at driving," Whitman said. "But you learn a lot."

In addition to autocross, Whitman follows professional racing such as Formula one and Team Lotus.

Aside from racing, Whitman has invested time into learning about the engineering of cars. This past summer, Whitman worked at Suspension Performance in Mountain View, where he helped the mechanics with various tasks such as changing the oil and brake pads.

"Driving itself is a fun experience, but also the engineering that goes into making cars also captured my imagination," Whitman said.

Whitman plans to major in mechanical engineering in college, saying that cars have had "a big impact on what I plan to do with my life."

Junior Giulia Corno has also been impacted by car culture. Corno's love for cars is heavily influenced by her dad. Her father often tells her stories



Senior Alex Whitman poses next to the Fiat he drives at autocross.

about driving experiences in Italy. Because Italy has a plethora of twisty mountain roads and a lack of speed limits, her father learned how to drive under different conditions, which Corno said rubbed off onto her.

"I'll see a car that I know everything about it because my dad told me or I looked it up," Corno said. "Usually [I know] the engine, horsepower, torque, model year and stuff like that."

Corno especially loves Ford Mustangs, an American muscle car known for its horsepower. Corno has spent so much time reading about Mustangs that she can name specific designers of the car and new features on many models.

Corno hopes one day she can race her Mustangs at Laguna Seca.

"Cars has defined a part of me," Corno said. "My passion for cars is another aspect of my personality." ♦

Fishy or fair? Debating effects of supplements



Always smiLIN' Allison Lin

Benefits of supplements

For his part, Camp is confident about taking nutritional supplements in his diet. He told me about his personal routines for supplement intake along with his safe usage and progressive results.

Before his junior year, Camp lifted simply to aid whichever seasonal sport he was playing, whether it was football, wrestling or baseball. After learning the fundamentals of weight lifting, he "fell in love" with the sport of weightlifting itself.

"I began researching good form, and along with that, supplements," Camp said.

Camp takes whey protein, fish oil, a multivitamin and creatine monohydrate on a daily basis. As long as there is no over-dosing, these supplements pose no major risks. Besides dehydration, which can be solved by taking more fluids, he said they have not caused harmful side effects.

Camp began this diet the summer before his junior year and is continuing throughout his sports seasons.

In addition to the supplements Camp is accustomed to, athletes from different sports have researched and experimented with other types of nutritional enhancers.

It is crucial that athletes consult a health specialist or nutritionist if there is any question as to what type or amount is appropriate.

Risks of supplements Nutritional supplements can pose rapid and potentially unsafe changes in body composition or appearance. Athletes, especially young athletes, are often influenced by media and become prime targets for nutrition fraud.

Most of the time, stores and their employees are unable to give unbiased or

and the right amount of rest. In fact, young athletes between the age of 10-18 are encouraged by nutritionists to take natural supplements such as fish oils, multi-vitamins, whey protein or probiotics.

reliable information about supplements, their usage and their side effects.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) website, the FDA does not regulate nutritional supplements in the same way it regulates other conventional foods and drug products.

That means that these firms are responsible for evaluating the safety and labeling of their products before marketing to ensure that they meet all the requirements of DSHEA and FDA regulations. The FDA is simply responsible for taking action against any adulterated or misbranded dietary supplement product after it reaches the market.

On top of the minimal regulation, health studies have shown negative side effects to overdosing on vitamins, according to Cari Nierenberg's article, "Getting Too Much of Vitamins and Minerals."

This being said, it's best to view supplements the same way as you would over-the-counter drugs. When children are sick, parents pick up a bottle of cough syrup or a pack

of antibiotics. When the patient takes the prescribed amount for his or her weight and age, it is a perfectly safe. Likewise, as long as athletes are not overdosing on supplements and drinking or consuming an unprecedented amount, there are no major risks.

Furthermore, "daily value" is the amount of a vitamin or nutrient that a person should get for optimal health.

In all, most athletes add supplements to their diets to give themselves an extra edge. As long as an athlete does not over-dose or excessively replaces meals with supplements, taking them is a very safe and beneficial thing to do.

"It has helped to an extent, but no supplement will do the work for me," Camp said. "They can, however, prove helpful when I'm in need of a quick meal, haven't hit my micronutrients, and need overall recovery of the body." ♦

"It has helped to an extent, but no supplement will do the work for me."
junior Adam Camp



GRAPHICS BY HELEN CHEN

TAKE A HIKE

WANT TO EXPLORE THE GREAT OUTDOORS? HERE ARE THE FALCON'S BEST BETS!

2. Villa Montalvo
Location: 15400 Montalvo Road, a 2-3 minute drive from the high school.
Length: A quick 2-mile hike, 1 mile up and 1 mile down, that usually takes around 30 minutes to an hour depending on which trail is chosen.
Review: Villa Montalvo is packed during weekend mornings, so make sure to arrive early in order to get a parking space. The trail is filled with trees and shade on the way up to the lookout so it can get a little bit chilly. However, the top of the lookout point is usually quite sunny (also a great place to take pictures for those hikers who aren't completely worn out).
Best Trails: The Lookout trail is Villa Montalvo's most popular trail. Hikers

wishing for a more secluded hike on the way up can also take the nature and creek trails before converging onto the Lookout trail. These are just a couple of the plethora of trails that all end at the lookout point and are all roughly the same mileage to hike up.
Best times to go: All trails end at the common point of the end of the Lookout trail that overlooks the entire Bay Area landscape. This view at any time of the day is breathtaking, but is especially beautiful at sunrise and sunset. I have heard of many climbing the lookout point trail at night to see a view-point of nightlights, even though I have never done this feat myself. ♦
 — Gwynevere Hunger

5. Mission Peak
Location: One entrance is at Ohlone College Park, 43600 Mission Blvd. in Fremont (a 30-minute drive). The second entrance is on 1880 Stanford Avenue in Fremont (also a 30-minute drive).
Length: Six miles total (three miles up to the peak and three miles down the mountain). It usually takes three to four hours to complete the trail.
Best times to go: Early morning or late afternoon/night. The trail has little shade so it is more comfortable to hike during the cooler parts of the day. Also, the view of the sunrise and sunset from the peak is spectacular.
Review: Be forewarned, this trail is not easy. Unless you want blisters wear

good hiking shoes. Also, bring at least two bottles of water per person (my family had to ration off the last drops of water towards the end of the hike). The ascent is steep no matter which entrance (Ohlone College or Stanford) you take, though the Ohlone College trail has a more gradual ascent. To be frank, the scenery is ugly — you'll climb hill after hill of dead grass accompanied by flying insects and crows but the view at the top makes the climb worth it. Aside from the Instagram-worthy totem pole, you'll be rewarded with a dramatic backdrop of the South Bay ranging from the Santa Cruz Mountains to the Sierra Nevada. ♦
 — Sabrina Chen

1. Castle Rock
Location: 15000 Skyline Boulevard in Los Gatos. (25-minute drive). Note that this address takes you to the maintenance entrance of the park; to get to the parking lot for the start of the hike, you must drive about 0.5 miles further along Highway 35.
Length: Saratoga Gap/Ridge Trail Loop: 5.6 miles. It takes about two and a half hours to complete the trail.
 Castle Rock: 0.3 miles. It takes less than 30 minutes to complete the trail.
Best times to go: Early morning (before 10 a.m.), as the parking lot gets extremely crowded around noon.
Review: This is a perfect trail for families and friends, or if you need some time to connect with nature alone. Most of the hike is in the shade and relatively flat, with the exception of a few steep hills. It is important to wear hiking shoes with a good grip — my sister and I learned our lesson trying to rock climb with tennis shoes.
 The trail itself is a bit difficult to follow, but you should keep your eye out for the Saratoga Gap trail markers that eventually lead to the Ridge Trail. The views of the forest scenery are breathtaking, despite the sounds of passing cars on Highway 9 and rifle shots from the nearby shooting range. ♦
 — Sabrina Chen



6. Rancho San Antonio
Location: Los Altos.
Length: Rancho San Antonio, located just off Interstate 280, offers two major trails: the PG&E trail, which is a reputedly difficult nine miles, or the easier, two-mile Deer Hollow Farm one. I chose the second.
Best time to go: The overall hike is easy, and with relatively little foliage shading the path, and the abundance of other people near you makes it virtually impossible to get lost. It's good for a group, too, because of the wide paths and the frequent shaded areas. Any time of day should be fine, although I recommend the morning.
Review: Some parts of the trail are quite stunning; where the white-trunked trees lean over you, you can imagine them as benevolent nature gods, shielding you from danger as you embark on a quest of the same magnitude as Frodo's in Lord of the Rings.
 In addition, if you want to run, it seems to be a good place to do it. You won't crash into hyperactive dogs, at least; they aren't allowed. For those considering Rancho San Antonio, I'd advise coming early in the morning to avoid too many other people. Alternatively — or in addition — you might want to try the PG&E trail. ♦
 — Ashley Chen

3. Fremont Older
Location: There are two main entrances into Fremont Older, one from Prospect Road, and the other is through Garrod Farms (in the hills above Saratoga, just off of Mt. Eden Road). I recommend taking the route through Garrod's because it's only a 10-minute drive from school. Also, note that Fremont Older closes at sunset.
Trails: An easy trail to start on is taking Coyote Ridge up to Maisie's Peak. It's about a 30-45 minute hike and less than a mile depending on which entrance you use. There are minimal hills and a fantastic view at the peak where the entire Santa Clara Valley is visible. Beyond Maisie's Peak are longer hikes. If you continuing on Coyote Ridge, the trail goes deeper into the hills and around dusk and dawn the preserve's wildlife comes out, like deer, bobcats and bunnies. It's a 3.5-mile hike, but once you reach a gate, you will have

to go back the way you came because beyond it is private property. For more views of the valley, there's the Seven Springs Loop Trial, which is about a 3-mile loop from Prospect Road that takes about two and a half hours.
Best times to go: In the hotter seasons, morning is the best because it's not blistering hot and you can see wildlife. In the colder seasons late morning and midday are nice because there's some sun. Horseback riders and bikers are more prevalent on weekends, riders are less likely to ride at dusk and bikers usually go in the mornings.
Review: Announce your presence to horseback riders so you won't spook their horses. This is especially important if you're biking or jogging. Watch out for ticks and burrs if you bring your dog along. Also, bring poop bags since there are none provided. ♦
 — Megan MacInnes

4. Steven's Creek Reservoir
Location: Intersection of Heatherstone Way and Dale Avenue in Mountain View.
Length: The official trail is a little less than 7 miles and is clearly designed for people, as the periodic narrow straits demonstrate.
Best time to go: In general, heat isn't a huge problem, thanks to the trail's moderate elevation changes (it's nothing strenuous, even for a junior who often lifts her APUSH textbook for exercise), and the frequent shaded areas.
Review: With pathways dappled with polka dots of sunlight, Stevens Creek is one of the more gorgeous and beautiful hiking opportunities in the Saratoga area.
 Like everywhere in California, it has suffered as a result of the recent drought; the reservoir is surrounded by unsightly bathtub rings, which can

also be seen as pretty gradations of sand.
 I also did not see any ducks or herons; the publication Bay Area Hiker misled me.
 Despite this, Stevens Creek Reservoir is still worth a visit; ducks or no, you will find yourself enjoying the breathtaking California scenery.
 Although it's technically nothing special — more of the typical turtle bushes (not the official name) crouching on gentle sloping hills, and splashes of muted berry red among a backdrop of sandy prairie color, that you might see on Interstate 280 — the hiking experience forces you to appreciate it.
 Take note that it costs \$6 to park, unless you park farther away and want to walk like the cheapskate I am. (It's not too far, though). ♦
 — Ashley Chen

BOYS' TENNIS

Injury to Bedekar forces Falcons to fill void

By Maya Ravichandran & Simi Srivastava

With only one loss to Monta Vista High School out of the seven total league matches played, the boys' tennis team is proving to once again be one of the top teams in the area.

Even without their top player, senior Neel Bedekar, they beat Los Altos 7-0 on March 24.

Bedekar, usually the team's No. 1 singles player, is out with an ankle injury and has not played in the past few matches. Bedekar tripped while walking and hurt his ankle.

Freshman Dean Stratakos has moved up in the lineup to No. 4 singles void caused by the shift.

"I am quite confident we will still win the league and get the league title," Bedekar said. "Even though [my injury] has hurt the team a bit, I'll be back for CCS for sure."

The new players on the team have contributed to the team's success.

Sophomore Matt Kermin and junior Abhay Aanabathula play No. 3 doubles and have stepped up, according to Bedekar.

The team beat Palo Alto 6-1 on March 19 and won 7-0 against Lynbrook on March 17.

The team lost to Monta Vista 4-3 on March 10, even though they previously beat the Mataradors 6-1.

Even so, the Falcons remain atop the De Anza League because Monta Vista was also upset by Gunn.

During California High School Tennis Classic in Fresno on March 6-7, which attracted 122 teams, the Falcons made it to the finals by beating Bellarmine in the semifinals but lost to Menlo School 6-1 in the finals.

However, the team had a scare in one



Junior No. 1 singles Karthik Padmanabhan hits a backhand against Palo Alto on March 19.

of their earlier matches against Palisades Charter High School, a team from Southern California.

Bedekar played a really "nerve-racking match. It was 8-8 and it could have gone either way. It came down to 10-8 in the third set tiebreaker."

According to Bedekar, the team almost won on six separate occasions.

"If we had won one more point, it would have been over," Bedekar said. "But it wasn't. So luckily that one final match, we were able to win."

The team will play the first round of CCS on May 6.

"We're hoping to make a deep run at CCS and hopefully get to finals again and contest Menlo," Bedekar said. ♦

BADMINTON

Team undergoes change in lineups due to injuries

By SpringMa & EileenToh

Despite playing with a lineup missing several key players, the Falcons began league play with a home win against Cupertino on March 24.

Senior Max Chang, the No. 1 boys' doubles player, has a stress fracture in his foot, No. 2 girls' doubles player junior Mena Wang has sprained her ankle and No. 2 boys' doubles player sophomore Josh Li has a fractured wrist.

Despite his injury before beginning the season, Li said he is on the "road to recovery" and will be on the court again in mid-April. For the past several weeks, Li has had to leave his boys' doubles

partner, sophomore Jason Zhao.

"I went from playing every day to not playing for a whole two months, so it has definitely been hard to cope with," Li said. "My wrist has been feeling better though, so I'm definitely looking forward to playing again."

Similarly, Chang and Wang, who also play dou-

blers, senior Kevin Lian and senior Audrey Sun, are looking forward to their recovery.

Despite injuries, the team defeated Cupertino 20-10, the No. 3 team in the SCVAL league.

"We had to shift many players around to positions they may or may not have been used to playing," assistant coach Chris Do said.

"[Cupertino] is a very strong team, so I'm very happy for

our team."

The team compensated for the loss of key players with cohesive play, winning a majority of its matches, such as mixed doubles No. 2 (juniors Karen Chen and Partha Shah) and girls' singles No. 2 (freshman Mana Shimokawa).

Do remains hopeful, however, that the team will "adapt to the current situation as well as they can, until all of the injured players can return."

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the team's games against Palo Alto on April 2 and Lynbrook, one of the Falcons' main competitors, on April 7. The team will next play Gunn on April 14 and Los Altos on April 16. ♦

"We had to shift players around to positions they may or may not have been used to playing."
 assistant coach Chris Do

BOYS' GOLF

Undefeated streak broken

By MichelleCen & LarissaChiu

The boys' golf team is currently 6-2 and, despite recent victories, is experiencing a minor slump. Everyone from last year's team, except for No. 1 player senior Arman Vaziri, has been averaging worse scores than last year.

Though the team is not performing at its best, the Falcons remain second in the De Anza League and have continued to win matches. The Falcons beat Monta Vista by 20 points on March 23, achieving redemption after losing to Monta Vista on Feb. 24 by one stroke, which broke the Falcons' two-year league winning streak.

On March 9, the team beat Milpitas by over 100 points and repeated the feat on March 11. The team scored another win when it faced Los Gatos again, a team it had lost to by 15 strokes before, and defeated them 189-212 on March 3.

Because the Saratoga Country Club golf was aerated from March 15-21, the team

could not practice together. Despite this obstacle the team is still experiencing, senior Robby Gragnola sees the team's potential for improvement.

"Every week there are sometimes one or two people who aren't playing as well as their average. Sometimes it's just a bad day," Gragnola said. "We need to practice harder to meet our high expectations and our average."

To train, the Falcons hold inner, mock competitions such as Ultimate Shot. Players of different levels play against each other, preparing themselves for the situations in a real match.

Future matches include Wilcox on March 30 and Santa Clara on April 1. With only a few matches left in the season, the Falcons hope that they will win their final matches while continuing to improve each week, and hopefully make the league tournament.

To reach CCS, the Falcons must remain as one of the top two teams in the league; currently, only Los Gatos is ahead of them. ♦

SWIMMING

Six individuals qualify for CCS

By ShreyaTumu & TiffanyZheng

Despite two early-season team losses, the Falcon swim team has seen several CCS-qualifying performances. The team fell to Los Gatos on March 13 and Monta Vista on March 19, leaving the team with a 0-2 record as they advance towards leagues in late May. The girls' varsity team lost 101-69 to Monta Vista, while the boys' team lost 122-48.

During the Monta Vista meet, sophomore Stefanie Ting and freshman Jeanette Khowong made CCS times in the 200 yard individual medley, an event where swimmers swim all four strokes: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle. Ting swam a 2:13.54, while Khowong swam a 2:14.86.

In the 100 yard freestyle, freshman Colina Guan and senior Andre Baluni made CCS cuts with times of 54.76 and

49.35. Senior Yayla Sezinger made CCS in the 500-yard freestyle with a time of 5:30.27.

Freshman Anna Zhou made CCS in the 100-yard backstroke with a time of 1:01.76. Ting also made CCS in the 100 yard breaststroke with a time of 1:07.26.

In the LG meet, Guan made CCS in the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 25.82; senior Madison Gress was close to a CCS cut with a time 26.40. Baluni also made a CCS cut with a time of 22.92. Khowong snagged a CCS time in the 100 yard backstroke with a time of 59.24.

The team has four more meets before leagues begin. Yang expects to win half of the remaining meets. The team will face Palo Alto on April 2 and Gunn on April 17.

"I'm not too confident about winning these because Paly and Gunn are strong teams," Yang said. ♦



Yang

In the last two meets of the season, the team will face Homestead and Los Altos in late April.

"I feel so much better about these meets," Yang said. "I think we have a pretty good chance of winning both of them."

This season, star swimmers include Baluni and junior Jack Xie.

"Baluni has made all the CCS cuts and has been in all of our relays," Yang said. "He has definitely made a really huge contribution."

Because Xie transferred schools from China this year, the start of his year has been delayed.

The addition of strong freshman swimmers is helping the team with their loss of key players. The freshmen have contributed by gaining points in various events and relays.

"Because we have so many fast swimmers, our relays for the girl's team are really good but we are just lacking depth," Yang said. ♦

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

Falcons win big against top dogs in league

By Stefanie Ting
& Isabelle Tseng

The boys' volleyball team has started the season off strong, winning several preseason games against higher-league teams, with an overall record of 11-7 as of March 27. To make CCS, the team will need to win its league since they are in the lower division.

On March 27, the team played Valley Christian, one of the best teams in the league, at home, winning 3-0.

"It was generally a great effort from us," junior setter Chester Leung said. "We played hard and won."

Two days before, the boys beat Los Altos, the top team in the league, 3-1. Los Altos was missing its best player, junior Nathan Smith.

"We won relatively easily, but we let up too much in the third set so we lost [the third set]," Leung said. "We just need to maintain high energy and stay focused."

On March 23, the team competed against King's Academy, a team that has just dropped down from a higher league. SHS won 25-8 in all three sets.

"They hung with us for a little bit of the first set," Leung said. "But once we

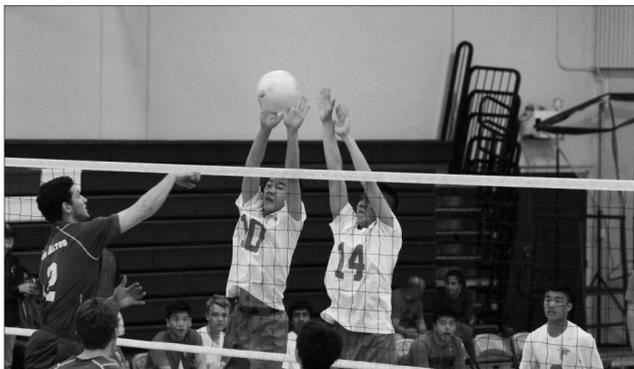
got going, we kept pushing, and they couldn't keep up."

The Falcons played its first league game against Santa Clara on March 18, which the Falcons easily won 25-8 in all three sets.

On March 14, the team participated in the Battle of the Bay, a tournament for high schools in Northern California. Saratoga faced Carmel High School, Pacific Collegiate High School, Bellarmine College Preparatory, Homestead High School and Mt. Madonna High School.

The team's first match of the tournament was against Bellarmine, one of the best high school teams in the area. Bellarmine competes in the A league, while Saratoga competes in the C league. The Falcons played well, leading for most of the game despite the fight Bellarmine put up. Toward the end, however, the point gap closed. The game ended with scores of 25-22 and 33-31, the win going to the Bells.

"We're generally a no-name school in volleyball because we haven't had a history of winning or being good, until last year when we won leagues," Leung explained. "Everyone in the gym was surprised that we could compete with Bellarmine at such a high level."



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA

Juniors Spencer Yen and Gabriel Fong block the ball against Los Altos on March 25.

With the absence of senior outside hitter Michael Cole and others due to vacations, SAT and other conflicts, the Falcons finished third overall in the tournament. However, the team remains optimistic for its future performances.

"Ultimately we lost but I think the game showed us what we had as a team," Leung said.

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the March 31 game against Fremont, the April 1 game against Wilcox High School, the April 2 game against Menlo-Atherton High School and the April 3 game against Cupertino High School. The team takes on Los Altos on April 17 and Santa Clara on April 22. ♦

BOYS' TRACK

Halfway finished with season, team still winless

By Karissa Dong
& Ami Nachiappan

Halfway through the 100m dash at an away meet against Santa Clara on March 26, senior sprinter Tony Holt realized he wasn't running full speed. He urged himself to focus on the race, but his hamstring had been bothering him since his first jump earlier in the meet.

"I was going all the way, but I wasn't giving it everything I had," Holt said. "If my hamstring hadn't hurt that badly, things would've been better."

With minor injuries and mishaps in this rough start to the season, the boys lost 72-55 against Santa Clara.

At another away meet at Homestead on March 17, the team lost 83-43, despite laudable performances by several distance runners. Senior Andrew Harter placed first, junior Stephen Law and senior Rohith Krishna placed fourth and seventh in the 800m.

Many of these long-distance athletes

also qualified for the K-Bell invitational at Los Gatos on March 14. Senior Steven Sum placed first in the 1600m with a time of 4:19, Harter placed 23rd with a time of 4:35, Krishna placed 53rd with a time of 4:46 and Law placed 57th with a time of 4:47.

"We only can improve from here because we're a young team," head coach Archie Ljepava said. "It's going to take a couple of years of regrowth, but we'll be back to where we were last year."

Against Cupertino on March 12 at a home meet, the boys also lost 75-48. In the 3200m event, Sum placed first, Law second and Krishna third.

Last year, the boys ended with a 5-1 record. This year, the team's record in the upper league currently stands as 0-3. Krishna believes that the team will improve over this season.

"Now we know where we're at in terms of how fast we are and what we need to work on," he said.

Most of these long-distance runners

have trained together in cross country and track for all four years of high school, but for the seniors, this season is the last time they will run together.

"I want to give it my all in the last season of my track career," Krishna said. "Still, I feel kind of sad, but [the end] has to come at some point."

The distance team qualified for Leagues last year and this year's El Camino League finals meet will be held on May 6. To qualify for the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League (SCVAL) on May 15, individual athletes must place within the top nine of their event in league finals; to gain entrance into CCS, they must place within top three in SCVAL.

"For the team, it's a lot about improvement because everyone's at a different stage in their track careers," said Krishna. "I qualified last year and hope to make it to CCS this year."

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon could not cover the home meet against Fremont on April 2. ♦



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA

Junior Vincent Faylor jumps over hurdles for the 65 meter hurdles against Cupertino High School on March 12.

GIRLS' TRACK

Team attempts to recover from early season losses

By Karissa Dong
& Ami Nachiappan

Using her last burst of energy to push ahead of her opponents, junior Kimberly Chen sprinted to the finish of the 400m race at the away track meet against Homestead on March 17. With a time of 1:04.85, she placed first in the event.

"There is always room for improvement, but I did better than the week before, so I was happy [with the win]," she said.

The meet resulted in a 68-55 loss, despite strong performances by several star athletes: junior Janani Velchamy placed first in triple jump with a distance of 31'4", senior Puck de Roos first and freshman Riley Carter second in the high jump.

Senior sprinter Allison Chan, who ran the 4x100m and 4x400m relays as well as

the 100m and 200m dashes, said that the Homestead meet was an improvement from the first meet of the season against Cupertino on March 12.

"[The meet] went a lot better because I was getting used to the competition again, as opposed to the first meet," Chan said.

The girls lost to Cupertino 79-48. At Cupertino, Carter participated in the long jump, 800m, 4x400 relay and high jump. She placed third in her long

jump event and second in high jump.

"[The meet] was definitely fun," Carter said. "I was first scared and stressed,

but the girls were really nice and it was fun to be able to compete at the varsity level."

On the other hand, Chan has participated in track for all four

years of high school. As the season progresses, she hopes to win more individual events at invitationals as well.

"At the meet against Cupertino, I

At the first meet, I wasn't sure where I stood from last year, but we all had personal goals.



senior Allison Chan

BASEBALL

Win over Milpitas points Falcons in right direction

By Allison Lin

As the season began, coaches, players and fans of the baseball team agreed that it was going to be a season of rebuilding. After losing nine players from last year's team to graduation, including most of the outfield, current junior and senior players are striving to help new team members pick up the competitive pace this season.

So far, the team is 1-5 in the upper De Anza league. The boys have lost to tough teams such as Wilcox and Los Gatos. However, they have been able to capture a few some non-league wins on days when they've hit better.

On March 27, the team claimed a much-needed victory over Milpitas. Before this home game, the Falcons stood at a 0-5 in league. Having lost 3-2 to the Trojans two days earlier in an away game in the bottom of the 10th inning, the team knew a win at home was key.

Both teams remained scoreless in the first two innings. The Falcons managed to score one run in the bottom

of the third, but the action truly began at the bottom of the fifth with the Falcons at bat.

Senior infielder Adin Roskoph and freshman infielder Robert Scott each hit singles. Senior infielder Andrew Chen hit a triple, resulting in two RBIs. Senior infielder Joey Medeiros also hit a single, also getting an RBI. Finally, junior infielder Tyler Yoshihara also hit a triple and scored a run for the Falcons.

At the top of the sixth, junior pitcher Cole Petters endured a tough inning. With calls by the umpire that players deemed unfair and improved hitting from the Trojans, the Falcons gave up four runs. Senior infielder Evan Lindeman relieved Petters and recorded the final out.

Ahead by a run, the Falcons got the final out and claimed the victory, 5-4. This win revived the team's spirit and they went on to defeat Oak Grove High in a non-league game 8-3 the following day.

Before the victory over Milpitas, the Falcons suffered five consecutive losses. In the series against longtime rival Los Ga-

tos, the team lost 4-1 in an away game on March 19. The team's defense worked better in this game than the home game two days before when they lost 8-1, according to Petters.

On March 13, the team faced Wilcox in a league game at home. The team was unable to make a comeback in the final innings and lost 10-3. They lost 5-1 against Wilcox on March 11 as well.

Even though the team has suffered tough losses, they have always focused on "executing their brand of baseball and not trying to do too much," according to senior infielder Billy Vithanage. Head coach Adam Varteressian encourages his players to feel confident in themselves and do the little things right.

"There are three things we say we want to do," Vithanage said. "If we can throw strikes, play catch and run the bases, then we will win."

The Falcons pulled a major upset against Campolindo, winning 14-7, on March 7. Campolindo has a reputation of being a dynamic team, with



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA

Junior pitcher Tyler Yoshihara throws a curveball against Milpitas at home on March 27. The Falcons pulled through with a close 5-4 win.

huge players and a strong lineup. Their head coach is retired Major League Baseball player Wayne Franklin, who played for numerous MLB teams in a six-year career.

"We were told Campolindo would be the best team we would play against all year," senior infielder Billy Vithanage said. "From the moment we got [to Campolindo High School],

they had little respect for us because of our head coach."

Most teams that face the fierce Cougars are intimidated by their history of wins and CCS titles. However, the Falcons prepared for the game with a calm and determined mindset. Confident with their own game, the Falcons travelled to Moraga, Calif., ready to face a tough opponent. ♦

SOFTBALL

Win after win: New coach helps girls pile up victories

By Ariel Liu
& Rachel Zhang

"Hey! Keep going! Don't stop now!!" The new, energetic softball coach Chris Smith shouts these words in an attempt to keep the girls focused as they push through the last round of sprints in their three-hour practice.

In Smith's first year as the varsity coach, Smith has proved to be both a tough disciplinarian and an encouraging mentor.

"He's been awesome," senior catcher Analisa Ruff said. "We have really good and effective three-hour practices every day and we get a lot done."

The practices led the team to win all six of their games from March 6 to 16.

However, the team lost 7-3 to Homestead on March 26. Homestead got off to an early 7-0 lead after the second inning, and the Falcons couldn't catch up.

"We didn't start the game ready," sophomore center fielder Natasha Ramakrishnan said. "We waited until the end of the game to start hitting."

On March 14, the Falcons faced Sacred Heart Cathedral, a private school known to be tough.

However, by the end of the afternoon, the Falcons were victorious, once again, winning 6-3.

"Sacred Heart plays in the very difficult Catholic League, and so a win against them was very remarkable," Ramakrishnan said.

Junior third baseman Ellie Lee scored

four RBIs, and junior pitcher and shortstop Eleni Spirakis pitched all seven innings with four strikeouts and one earned run.

The team also had a close game with Cupertino on March 11 with a final score of 14-13.

Saratoga was down by 13-3 in the fifth inning, falling far behind Cupertino. As each inning progressed, they slowly clawed back and were tied 13-13 in the second to last inning.

Spirakis scored a walk-off home run in the ninth inning, solidifying the Falcons' win.

Smith has revamped the team's practices to incorporate more cardio workouts.

"Everything in practice is timed out

to the minute," Lee said. "He is always trying to keep us focused."

With more communication drills and exercises in practices, the team has become more comfortable with each other on the field, playing a part in their success. Looking forward to the rest of the season, the Falcons hope to maintain their record.

"My goal is to win a lot of games this season and do as best as we can," sophomore shortstop and pitcher Rachel Davey said.

The team played Sobrato on March 28 and Los Gatos on March 31, but the Falcon could not include the results of these games due to printing deadlines. The team will play Los Altos on April 14 and Gunn on April 16. ♦

BOYS' LACROSSE

Team struggles from inexperience

By Aditya Chaudhry
& Jihau Yu

With a 14-0 loss to Los Gatos High School on March 27, the boys' lacrosse team dropped its record to 1-5 overall and 0-3 in the De Anza League.

Before the loss to Los Gatos, the Falcons lost to Gunn 11-7 on March 20 and Palo Alto 16-5 on March 18 and beat San Jose Latino Prep 15-4 on March 17.

Sophomore midfielder Aiden Peck said that at first, Gunn jumped out to a big lead as the size and experience of the Titans was overwhelming.

The Falcons managed to cut down the lead to two goals over the course of the rest of the game, but the score never got closer, eventually ending in an 11-7 defeat.

"It was pretty much a neck-and-neck game; however, the early deficit was too much to overcome," Peck said.

Peck said the game against Palo Alto was similar to the Gunn game as both teams had more experienced players.

Despite the consecutive losses, Peck saw some positive takeaways.

"For such a young team we did manage to score a lot of goals which is something we can hopefully build off of," Peck said.

According to head coach Bill Krutz, the team has struggled due to its inexperience, as the majority of the team is comprised of both freshman and sophomores.

In addition, the team has struggled with the transition to the upper league.

"We are basically playing upper league games this year with a really young team with a lot of new players," Kratz said. "As a result, we are basically playing in a varsity league with a junior varsity team."

Instead of focusing on the results, Kratz seeks to improve the players' skills and to make sure players are getting better as the season progresses.

So far, Kratz has been impressed with the significant improvement of all the players and the contribution that they have made to the team.

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon could not cover the games against Leland on April 1. ♦

GIRLS' LACROSSE

Season starts on the rocks

By Gwynevere Hunger

With brand new coaches for the season, the girls' lacrosse team has begun the league season with a 2-2 record. The lack of players due to extended winter sports forced many to miss practices in the beginning, in turn affecting the team's performance.

"This was hard on the team because we could not do certain drills or learn new plays," sophomore midfielder Kelsey Kinoshitta said.

An important rival game occurred on March 26 when the team beat rival Los Gatos 13-11. The last two points that scored Saratoga the win were shot by sophomore midfielder Julia Vita and junior forward Talia Clement. This win secured the team's fifth win against LG in the past three years. Clement, Vita and senior Christina Crolla have been leading the team in scoring.

The girls lost 11-4 to Burlingame on March 20 and lost 9-4 to Gunn the previous day. Coach Danny Wallace was unable to be at those games for person-

al reasons, affecting the team's defense in both games to not have his insight for plays during the game.

Palo Alto has been girls' lacrosse's toughest competition for years and on March 17, the girls lost 15-6 to them. Many lacrosse players complained that the referees did not call many of the illegal plays that the Palo Alto team played, resulting in the loss. However, the girl's lacrosse players did not stoop down to their level and played clean.

The new coaches Wallace and Krista Cavanaugh have also been teaching the team new strategies that will help them recover. Based on last year's league championship win, the team hopes to reach at least CCS playoffs.

"We have a good chance of making leagues this year if we all put in the time and effort to make it the best team that it can be," junior Maya Kumar said.

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon could not cover the March 31 game against Leland. The Falcons also play Pioneer on April 2. ♦

>> snapshots



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA



FALCON // LAUREN LOUIE

Senior Tony Holt competes in the long jump event at the home track meet on March 12.

Senior Joey Medeiros dribbles during the March Madness quarterfinals on March 27.

Sophomore David Lung drums during winter percussion rehearsal on March 24.

Seniors Dan Kawadri and Matt Nobles sing a duet at the dress rehearsal for the spring musical, "The Mystery of Edwin Drood." The musical runs April 24, 25, 26 and May 1 and 2.

Junior's search for prom dress a tiring quest

Sweeter Than You

Sweeya Raj



When I was an underclassman, finding the perfect prom dress seemed like a carefree, simple task — a fun day at the mall with friends, trying on tons of gorgeous dresses in every color imaginable. What more could a girl want?

But when I was actually faced with finding my own dress, I dreaded the addition of yet another responsibility tacked onto the craziness of junior year. Despite my reluctance to spend a whole day shopping instead of doing the APUSH homework due Monday, my friend convinced me to go to the mall on March 20 in search of the perfect dress.

We got to the mall at 8:30 p.m., one

hour before it closed, and naively thought we would be able to find dresses quickly if we went straight to Macy's prom dress section. When we got there, we immediately grabbed every dress that caught our attention and went into the dressing rooms with our arms full of lace and chiffon.

After trying on every dress in sight, we exited the store empty-handed. Everything either didn't fit right or was just NOT flattering. One dress was high-low and neon yellow with way too many beads.

Disgruntled, we walked around the mall to look for other stores with prom dresses, but everything was closed because we had wasted too much time in Macy's. We left upset, but planned to continue looking the next day.

We met again in the morning, and my friend suggested going to Eastridge mall; half an hour later, we found ourselves at a run-down mall in East

San Jose. We cautiously walked in and asked the cashier at Macy's to direct us to the prom dresses section, to which she replied that they didn't have any in the store yet. JCPenney's gave us the same answer, and we finally realized that the mall she was talking about was Oakridge, not Eastridge.

Another 20 minutes later, we found ourselves at Oakridge, which seemed much more familiar and welcoming. However, their prom dress selection was even smaller than Valley Fair's. I was so disappointed that I couldn't put to use my \$300 worth of gift cards to Macy's that had been piling up at home.

We decided to give up when we came across Windsor, a store with a small selection of prom dresses in the back. I saw a light purple, long dress with silver beads on a high-hanging rack, and tried moving it around until it finally fell on me, leaving me avalanched.

I went to the dressing room and tried

it on and instantly loved it. I texted a picture to my family and made sure they approved of the dress before I bought it. Upon looking at the price tag, I found out that it was \$200, more than I wanted to spend on a dress I was only going to wear once.

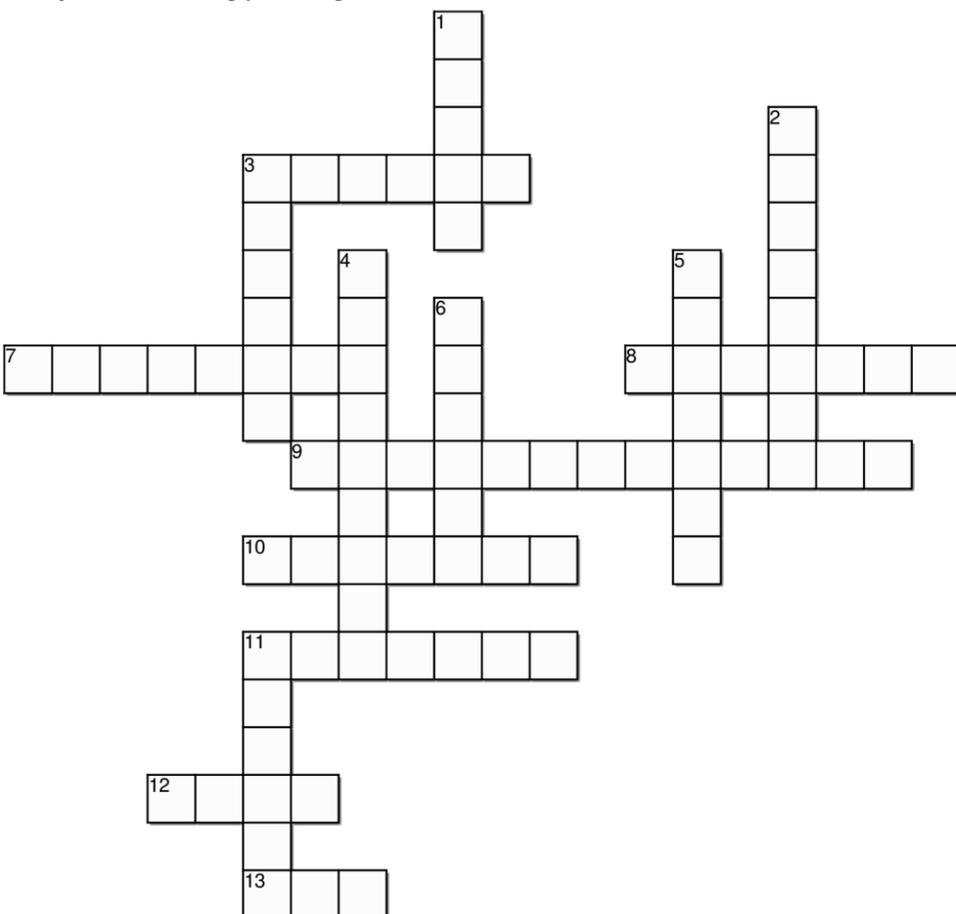
We went back to Valley Fair, determined to find a dress, but only saw the same dresses we had the day before.

Finally, I arrived home exhausted. My family instantly began asking me to see my new dress, but I stopped them in their excitement, explaining that it was too expensive.

My mom, surprisingly, said that I only have one junior prom, and I might as well just buy the dress if I liked it. I was ecstatic, but didn't want to go back to the mall and find it; I'd had enough shopping for a lifetime. Though I vowed I never would, I ended up buying the dress online. I finally found that perfect dress that I always dreamed of. ♦

>> CROSSWORD

Answers can be found in this issue. Key online at saratogafalcon.org.



Across

- 3. The boys' golf team is ____ place in SCVAL
- 7. Website where President Obama posted a controversial video
- 8. Junior Yena Jeong uses this online forum as art inspiration
- 9. Who did the boys' volleyball team defeat on March 20?
- 10. Where dance team competed at Nationals
- 11. Where can you get milk foam on your pearl milk tea?
- 12. Name of organization that hosted its fourth benefit concert on March 13
- 13. Sophomore Kushagro Bhattacharjee's role model

Down

- 1. First Latina Disney princess
- 2. Name of 2014 alumnus Jason Li's second startup
- 3. Dance that kicked off Spring Fling Week on March 28
- 4. Reporter who loves Miley Cyrus
- 5. Jon ____ is planning to retire from 'The Daily Show'
- 6. Company that is planning to make self-driving cars
- 11. Theme of this year's Junior Prom

>> Spring Ma and Eileen Toh

topten

APRIL FOOL'S PRANKS

- 10 **Sign language.** Invent a hand gesture and use it to greet everyone, who'll assume he's out of the loop.
- 9 **Caffeine.** Replace your buddy's morning coffee with decaf — and watch their day crumble before your eyes.
- 8 **Fun drinks.** Put a colored beverage in a transparent cleaner bottle and drink it in front of your friends.
- 7 **Home screen.** Delete one app on your friend's home screen; he or she won't be able to guess which one.
- 6 **Identity crisis.** Switch around people's names in someone's phone contacts.
- 5 **Photog.** Walk around with a camera and pretend you're a part of HOSH.
- 4 **College.** Wear a sweatshirt from a prestigious university and tell everyone you finally committed!
- 3 **Headphones.** Make everyone repeat themselves to you by having headphones in your ears all day.
- 2 **Makeover.** Post a selfie with outrageously colored hair Photoshopped to your head.
- 1 **A newspaper.** Make an entire April Fool's newspaper issue full of false information.

>> Simi Srivastava